

## **AFI SCREEN EDUCATION PROCESS**

### **Step Two: Screenwriting and Storyboarding**

**Screenwriting–** Movies tell stories with visuals images and sound. Movie stories originate in the mind of a writer who creates a screenplay or script. The screenplay provides a detailed roadmap to the director and other members of the filmmaking team. The screenplay includes all the words spoken by the characters (dialogue), stage directions that indicate all nonverbal actions by characters, elements of setting, sound effects, design and music – in short, the screenwriter writes everything intended for an audience to see and hear.

#### **Challenge:**

Based on the notes you received from your treatment and pitch, write a screenplay that expands on your original treatment. Create and present a full script for peer review that describes story, dialogue, setting and mood.

#### **Exhibit and Summarize:**

Present your screenplay to your group. Have your group select the most appropriate aspects of each individual screenplay. As a group, select the most appropriate and expressive script, and choose the group member(s) who will rewrite the script with the group's revisions.

#### **Handouts:**

Sample Script Page & Formatting Guide

## **AFI SCREEN EDUCATION PROCESS**

### **Step Two: Screenwriting and Storyboarding**

**The Storyboard—A visual script created by a series of pictures that conveys the essential shots of a scene. With simple artwork, even stick figures, the storyboard artist quickly and simply communicates to the entire team the visual components— broken down into individual shots—of the script. The director and cinematographer should be able to determine the position of actors and the direction of their movements, the type and framing of the shot (close-up, long shot, etc.) and the way each shot will fit into preceding and following ones.**

#### **Activating Exercise:**

**Reverse Storyboarding Exercise—Screen a scene from a film with the sound off. Identify each shot by type and by a simply drawn storyboard frame. Discuss why the filmmaker chose the shots and what the audience learned from the shots that were chosen.**

#### **Challenge:**

**Based on your script, visualize the story by creating storyboards to act as the outline for your video shoot. Individually, create a storyboard of the script your team has developed. As a group, present completed storyboards to your peers and teacher for feedback and approval. Your teacher will lead a peer-to-peer review of storyboards comparing them to storyboarding rubrics and overall video project rubrics.**

**Remember the criteria you've already established. Your storyboard may use drawings or photos.**

#### **Things to Think About:**

- Does your storyboard show the important shots that you want in your film?
- Does it show how the film sequence will be paced?
- Will it give enough guidance to the filmmaker? (Expression shots, establishing shots, action shots, relationship shots, etc.)
- Does the storyboard show the action that is happening?

- Does it show what everyone is doing and feeling?
- Could someone else outside of your group clearly understand what it is communicating?

**Exhibit:**

Present your storyboard to your team to gather feedback.

- Why have you chosen these particular shots in this particular order?
- What effect are you trying to show?

As a team, create a revised storyboard or select the most effective from your group.

**Handouts:**

- Storyboarding – shots and definitions
- Blank Storyboards
- Storyboard rubric
- Video project rubric



## Script Formatting Guide

### Cover / Title Page:

Title & screenwriter(s) names in the middle.

Contact information is located in the lower right corner.

### Page Margins:

|        |      |
|--------|------|
| Top:   | 1.0" |
| Bottom | 1.0" |
| Left   | 1.5" |
| Right  | 1.0" |

### Font:

Always use 12-point Courier; no bold face or italics. Use underlines instead.

### Page Numbering:

Place the page number on every page in the upper right corner, except the cover and the first page.

### Spacing:

Double space between slug line, action line, speaking character, stage directions and dialogue. Single space action lines and lines of dialogue.

### The Slug Line:

The general or specific locale and time of day. Always in ALL CAPS.

### Action Line:

Sets the scene with a description of characters, places and action single spaced from margin to margin. New characters are always capitalized. After the characters have been introduced, their names no longer need to be capitalized.

### Character Speaking:

3.5" from left margin and always in ALL CAPS.

### Dialogue:

2.5" from left margin.

### Voice Over:

Indicated by placing (VO) immediately to the right of the character name.

### Off Camera:

To indicate that a character is speaking off screen, place (OC) immediately to the right of the character name. This is sometimes done as (OS) for off screen.

### Stage directions (or parenthetically):

Written in parenthesis and under the name of the character speaking. They should be placed 3.0" from left margin and include what the character is doing within the scene.

**Sound / Music Effects** are always capitalized.

**Camera Directions:** Use sparingly or not at all. Let the director do his job.

SCREENPLAY FORMAT  
by  
Your Name

"SCREENPLAY FORMAT"

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCATION #1 – DAY

This is how to begin your screenplay. Scene headings are typed in capitals and must indicate: interior or exterior, the location, and day or night.

Scene action is double-spaced under the heading in upper and lower case text with double-spacing between paragraphs.

Scene action should only deal with what is happening on the screen and must never stray into superfluous novelistic text related to character thoughts or back-story.

A general rule of thumb is to limit a paragraph of scene action to four or five lines. Consider each paragraph as a significant beat of action within your scene.

INT. LOCATION #2 – NIGHT

Begin a new scene with the heading triple-spaced from the preceding scene. Always follow a scene heading with a line of scene action.

CHARACTER #1

Character cues appear in capitals indented to around the middle of the page, but not centered. The first letter of each cue is always in alignment.

CHARACTER #2

A character is designated by either his/her first or last name, but a role designation may be used instead with personal titles abbreviated. The designated name should remain consistent throughout the script.

(MORE)

INT. LOCATION #2 - DAY

Scene transitions are technical information indicating the method of changing from one scene to another. A general rule of thumb is that every scene will CUT TO: the next if no transition is specified.

Transitions are generally only used in shooting scripts, but if it's absolutely necessary to specify one, it appears against the right-margin like this.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOCATION #1 - NIGHT

Always keep scene headings with the scene action. Don't leave loose headings hanging at the bottom of a page.

It's sometimes a good idea to start a new scene on a new page if there is only a line or two at the bottom of the previous one, but scenes can break over the page easily like this.

LATER

If you need to indicate the passing of time through the same scene then use LATER as a sub-heading. There is no need to continuously repeat the master scene heading.

THE CORNER OF THE ROOM

Similarly, you can break up lengthy and complex scenes by focusing on specific areas of action with a sub-heading. This is useful when scripting large party or group scenes.

EXT. LOCATION #2 - NIGHT

Sometimes it may be necessary to hear characters when we can't actually see them.

CHARACTER #1 (O.S.)

Off Screen means the character is physically present within the scene, but can only be heard; e.g., they are speaking from an adjoining room.

(MORE)

CHARACTER #2 (V.O.)

Voiceover is used when the character is not present within the scene, but can be heard via a mechanical device such as a telephone or radio. It is also used when a character narrates parts of your story.

INTERCUT - INT. LOCATION #1/LOCATION #2 - DAY

If it's necessary to CUT back and forth between simultaneous actions in two different locations in the same scene, then handle your scene heading like this. Use this method when you want to show a phone conversation.

CHARACTER #1

(into phone)

You can then type your dialogue as normal.

CHARACTER #2

(into phone)

Whilst indicating that both characters are on the phone.

EXT./INT. LOCATION #1 - DAY

If you have a scene where the action is continuously moving between the interior and exterior of the same location, such as the hall and driveway of a house, do your scene heading like this.

But use INTERCUT for cutting back and forth between two separate pieces of action inside and outside.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) SERIES OF SHOTS: is a group of short shots which make up a narrative sequence, useful for advancing the story in a rapid or economical way.

(MORE)

B) The shots are presented in logical arrangement for the action with a beginning, middle and end point to the sequence.

C) **MONTAGE:** is a series of two or more images that blend into and out of each other in order to create a particular effect.

D) It is used to create an emotional environment, a main title sequence or when representing archive stock footage.

E) Both **SERIES OF SHOTS:** and **MONTAGE:** are used to avoid multiple scene headings when scenes are deemed too short (often only one shot in length) to conform to the usual formatting rules.

EXT. LOCATION #2 – NIGHT

On-screen texts, such as letters, e-mails or signs, are formatted in a couple of ways. Brief text, such as a sign, can go in the body of the scene action: "THIS IS A SIGN"

"Something longer, like a letter, is formatted like dialogue enclosed within double-quote marks. It can be in normal upper and lower case text, OR ALL IN CAPITALS depending on the text it is representing."

FADE TO:

INT. LOCATION #2 – NIGHT

It is standard practice to sign-off a film script with **THE END** centered on the page, preceded by **FADE OUT.**

**FADE OUT:** only ever appears at the end of a feature-length screenplay, or an act in a television script. If you want to indicate a **FADE OUT:** and a **FADE IN:** within the body of the script, then the correct transitional term is **FADE TO:** as above.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**

PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE

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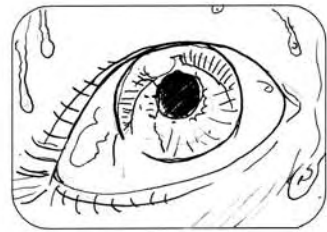
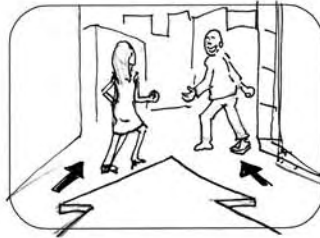
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AFI SCREEN EDUCATION

STORYBOARD GLOSSARY OF COMMON FILM SHOTS

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Illustrated by  
Scott Hardman



© American Film Institute, 2004

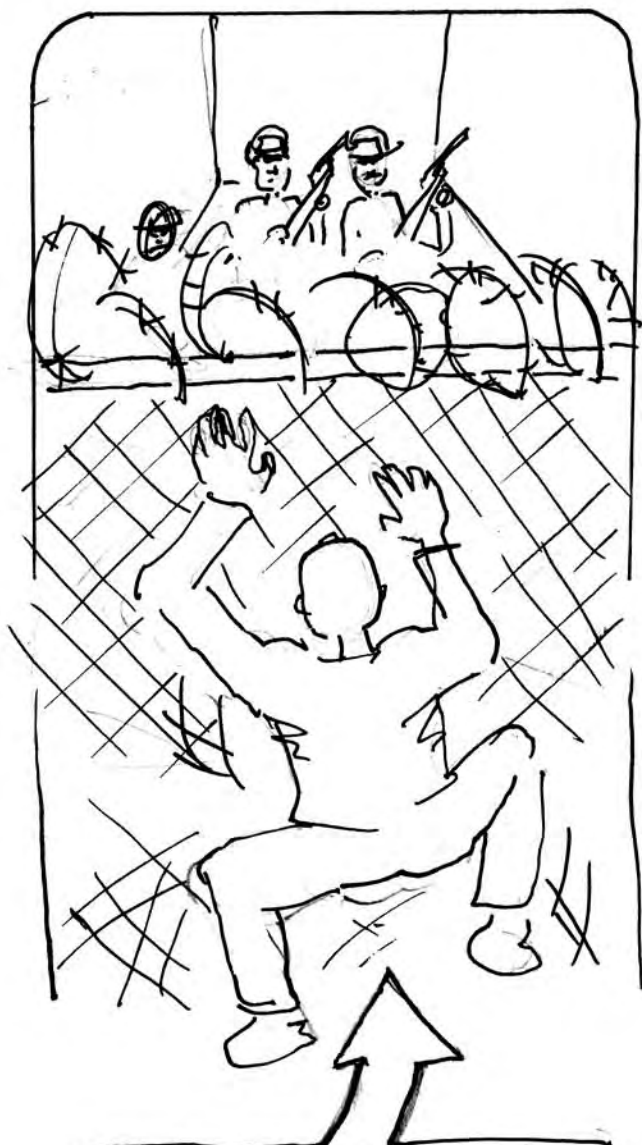
## INTRODUCTION

**Storyboards** are illustrations displayed in sequence for the purpose of crafting an animated or live-action film.

In preparing to shoot a motion picture, a storyboard provides a visual layout of events as they are to be seen through the camera lens. When storyboarding, most technical details involved in crafting a film can be efficiently described in pictures, or in corollary notation.

A **storyboard** is essentially a large comic of the film or some section of the film, produced before filming to help directors and cinematographers visualize scenes and identify potential problems before they occur. Some directors storyboard extensively before taking the pitch to their funders. Others only storyboard complex scenes, or not at all.

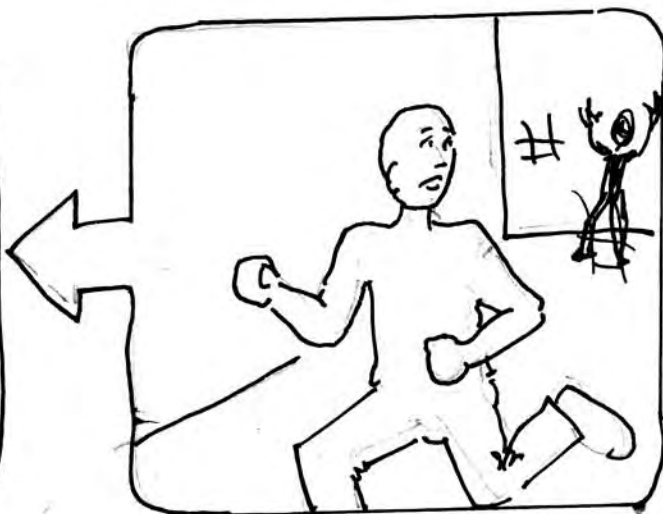
In animation and special effects, the storyboarding stage is essential and may be followed by simplified video mock-ups called “animatics” to give a better idea of how the scene will look with motion.



## BOOM SHOT

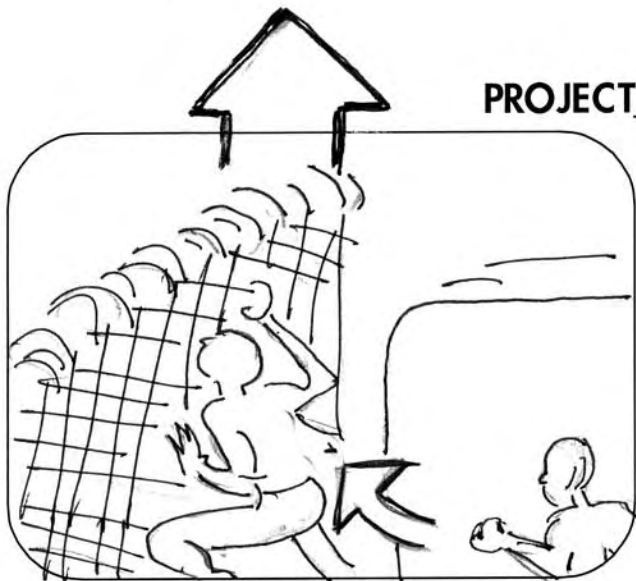
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A shot filmed from a moving boom, incorporating different camera angles and levels.



PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



### BOOM

A shot filmed from a moving boom, incorporating different camera angles and levels.



### CAMEO SHOT

A shot in which the subject is filmed against a black or neutral background.



### CHOKER

A tight close-up, usually only showing a subject's face.

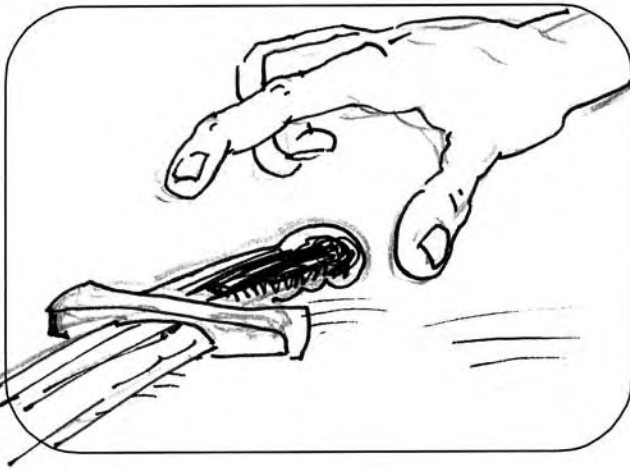
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



### CLOSE SHOT (CS)

A shot in which the subject is shown from the top of the head to mid-waist.



### CLOSE-UP (CU)

A shot of an isolated part of a subject or object, such as the head or hand.

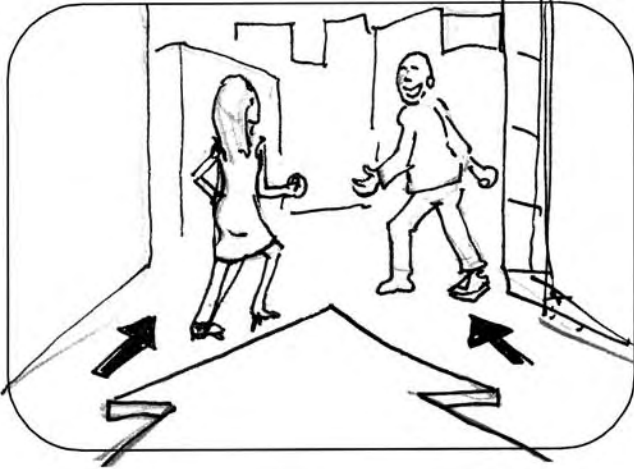


### CUTAWAY

A shot that is related to the main action of the scene but briefly leaves it, such as an audience member's reaction to a show.

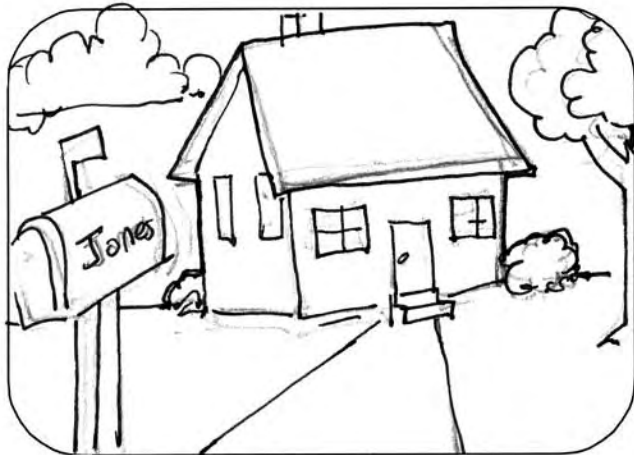
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



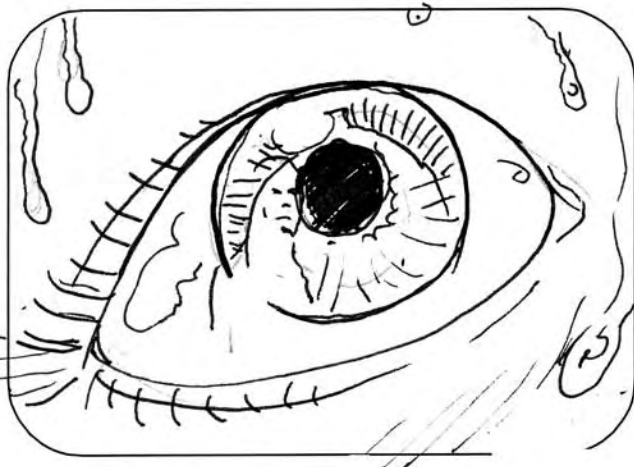
### DOLLY SHOT

A moving shot,  
accomplished by  
moving the camera as  
if on a set of tracks.



### ESTABLISHING SHOT

A long shot that shows  
location and mood.

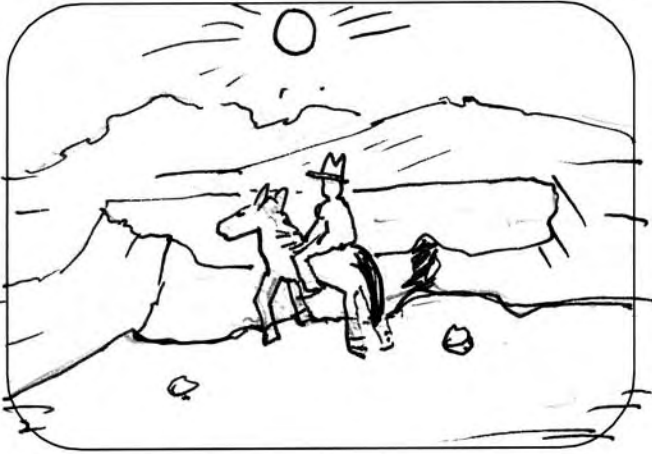


### EXTREME CLOSE-UP (ECU, XCU)

A magnified shot of a  
small detail, such as a  
subject's eyes.

PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



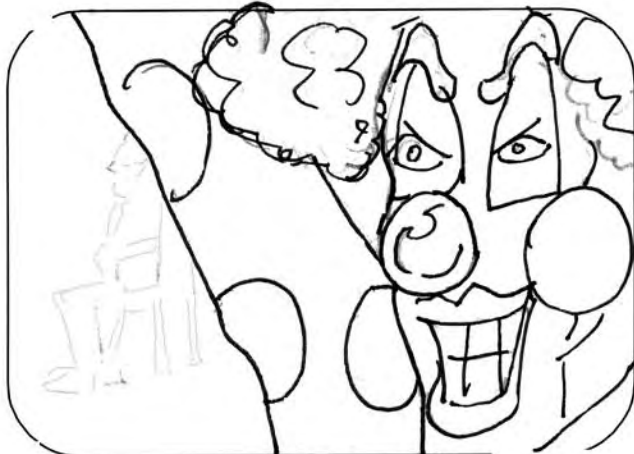
**EXTREME LONG SHOT (ELS, XLS)**

**A wide angle shot from a great distance, such as an aerial or high angle shot of a location.**



**EYE LEVEL SHOT**

**A shot of the subject at eye level.**

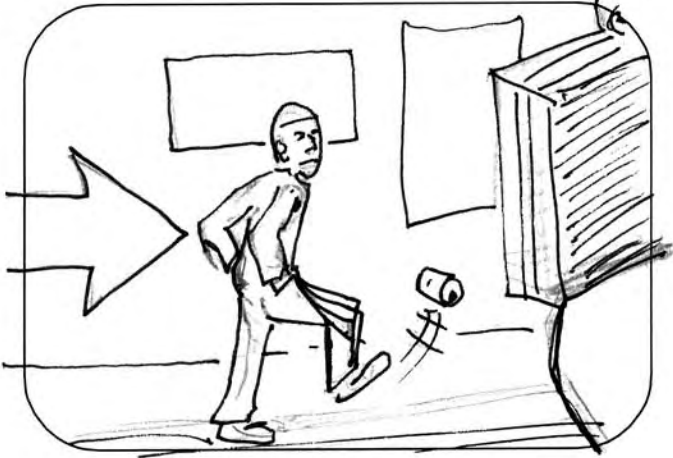


**FLASH**

**A very brief shot, often for shock effect.**

PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



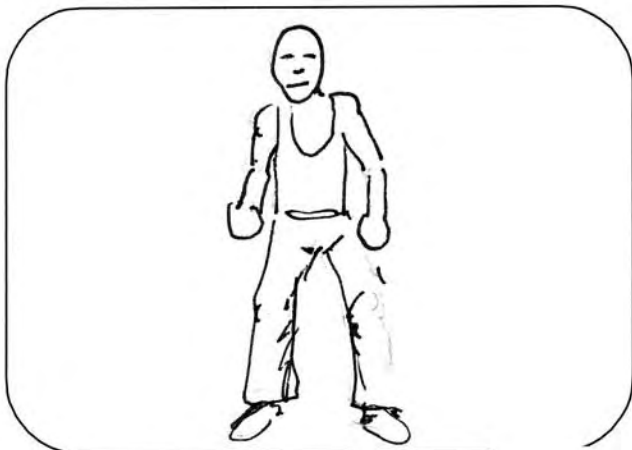
### FOLLOW SHOT

A shot in which the camera follows the subject.



### FREEZE FRAME

A shot that results from repeating the same frame so the subject appears frozen.

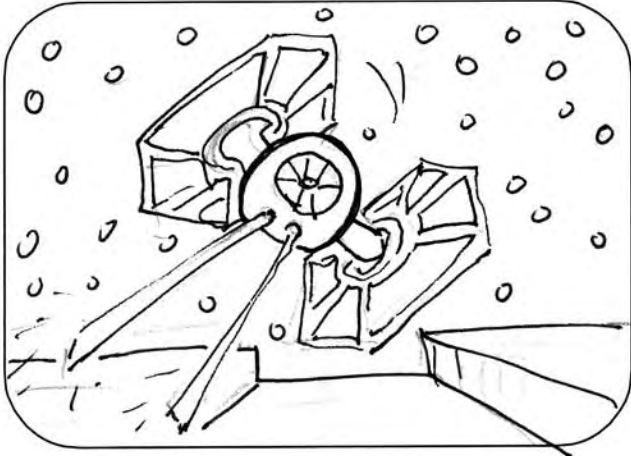


### FULL SHOT (FS)

A long shot that captures the subject's entire body head to toe.

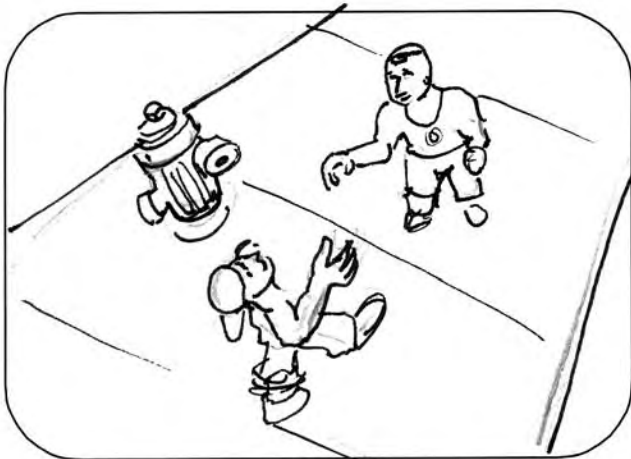
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



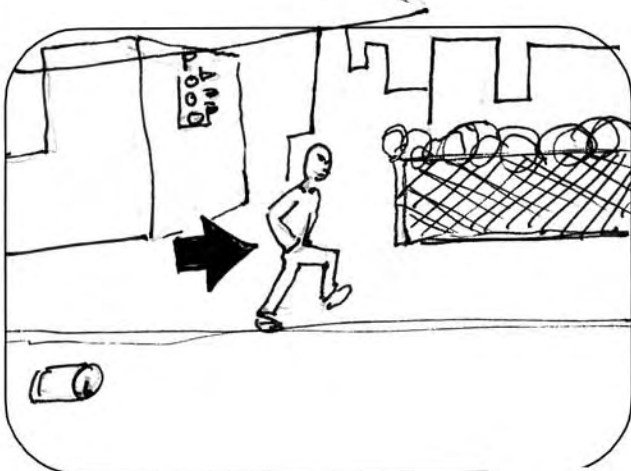
### HEAD-ON SHOT

A shot where the action comes directly at the camera.



### HIGH ANGLE SHOT

A shot filmed from high above the subject(s).



### LONG SHOT (LS)

A shot in which the subject(s) is at a distance, often showing surroundings.

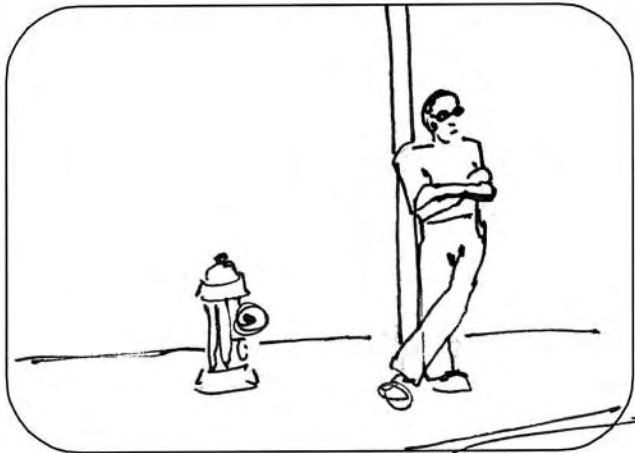
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



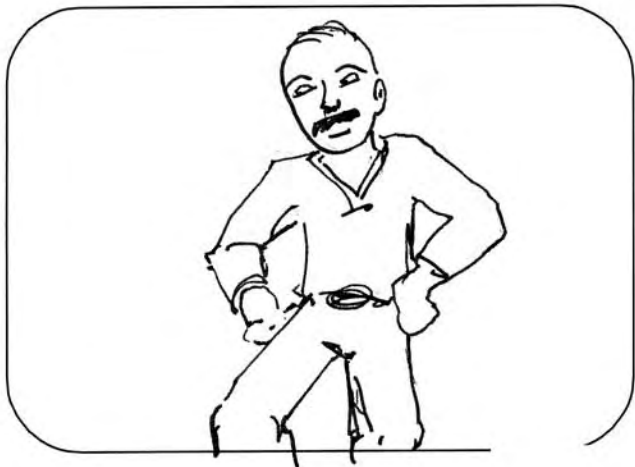
**LOW-ANGLE SHOT**

A shot filmed down low,  
often looking up at  
the subject(s).



**MEDIUM-LONG SHOT (MLS)**

A shot wider than a  
medium shot but longer  
than a wide shot.



**MEDIUM SHOT (MS)**

A shot where the  
subject(s) is shown from  
the knees up.

PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



**POINT-OF-VIEW SHOT (P.O.V.)**

A shot from the character's point of view.



**REACTION SHOT**

A close shot of a character reacting to something off camera.



**REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT**

A shot that is the opposite of the preceding shot such as two characters in conversation.

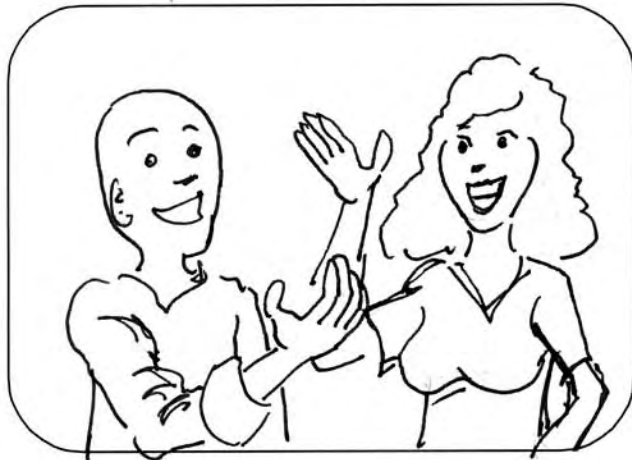
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

SCENE



### TIGHT SHOT

A shot where the subject fills the whole frame.



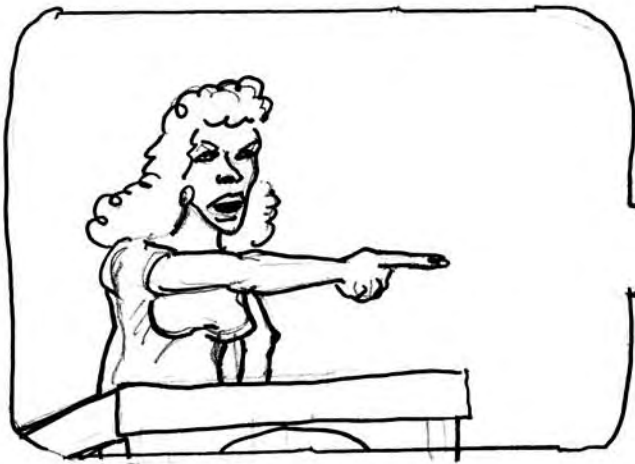
### TWO-SHOT

A medium or close shot wide enough for two people, often used to film a conversation.

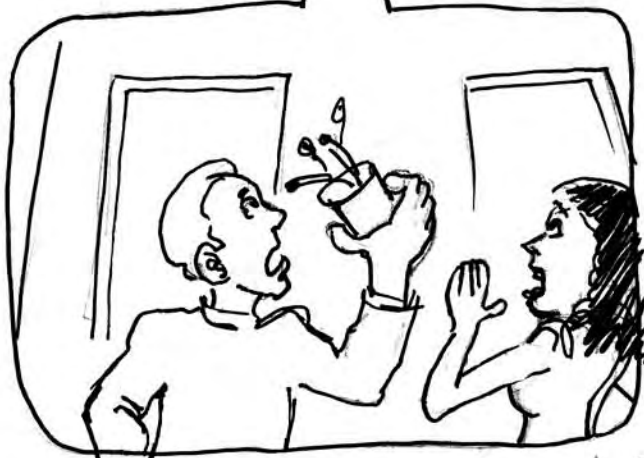
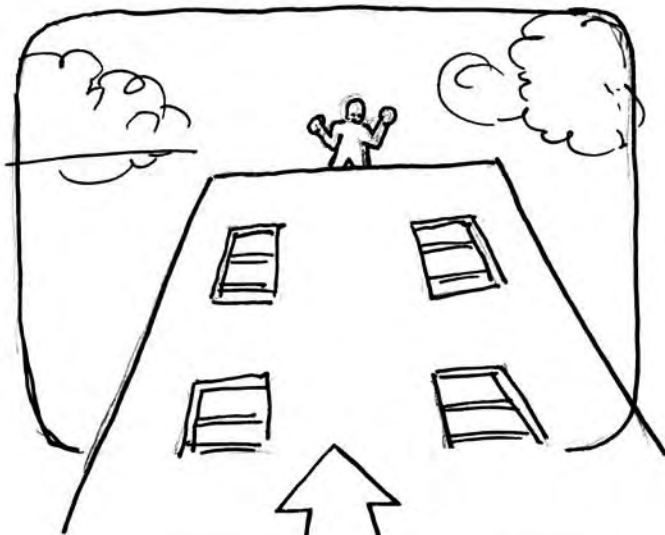


### OVER-THE-SHOULDER (OTS)

A shot that shows us a character's point of view, but includes part of that character's shoulder or side of their head in the shot.



PAN SHOT A shot in which the camera moves horizontally around a fixed axis from one part of a scene to another.



TILT SHOT

A shot where the camera moves up or down along a vertical axis, as when it looks at a building from bottom to top.