

SHAW ACADEMY
NOTES

Diploma in Video



SHAW ACADEMY

Lesson 4

Composition & Movement

Aspect ratio is the width & height of an image or a screen.

William Kennedy Dickson who was working with Thomas Edison on improving the motion picture. Has experimenting with Film trying to figure the best aspect ratio.

He landed on it being 4 perforations high. Which is where the first aspect ratio came from (4:3)

The 'Motion Picture Patent Company' decided that this would be the standard for films being shot in the us from 1909.

It stayed relatively the same until TV arrived into most people's homes. Cinema took a huge hit, it needed to do something to get viewers back in its seats.

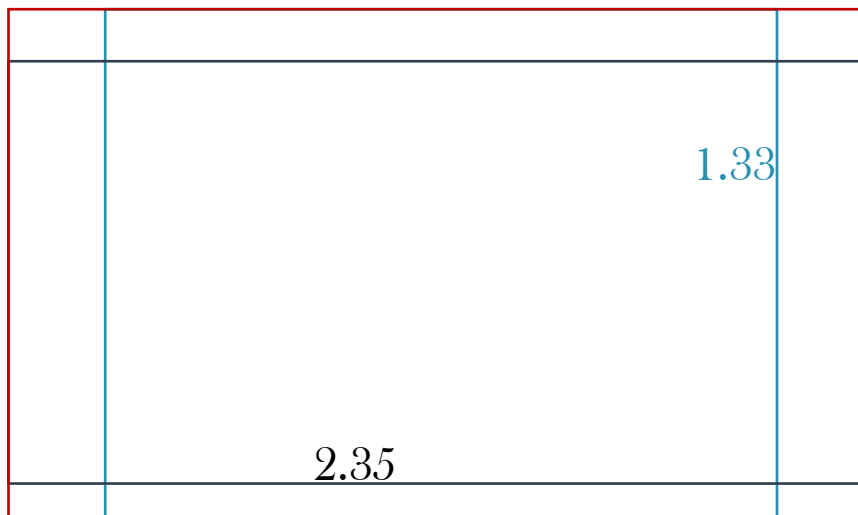
They introduced widescreen. The first wide screen movie showed on September 30th 1952. It was known as Cinerama, which had an aspect ratio of 2.59.

Modern Aspect Ratio:

It was during the plans for the first HD TV that an engineer by the name of Kerns H Powers compromised on the aspect ratio 16:9.

16:9 is a perfect geometric balance of the 2 extremes of ratio that cinema had been during its time.

16:9



Framing:

There are about **6 main types** of shots that you should familiarise yourself with.

Keep in mind there can be more or named differently, depending on

- production company
- Country
- Language

Tip: If working with a new team it is good to consult with them before shoot, to see what they call the shots.

1. **Full/Wide shot**
 2. **Medium full shot**
 3. **Medium**
 4. **Medium close up**
 5. **Close up**
 6. **Extreme close up**
-

Full/Wide Shot –

- Entire subject fits nicely in the frame.
- Allows audience to see the subject in the environment around him/her.
- See how there is nice space between the subject's feet + end of frame. & between the top of the head + top of frame.
- The shot itself doesn't carry a huge amount of emotional weight, so they aren't great for emotional scenes.
- The full shot was very popular in early cinema.
- Heavily used until directors understood the power of the medium shot and close ups

The introduction of a character is crucial to how we will feel about that character, sometimes for the entire film

Medium shot –

- We crop just above the subjects knees
- Making sure to still leave room above their head.

Be careful with this shot not to crop the shot at joints, like the knees and the waste.

Very useful for group shots

Medium close up -

Is a great shot to show less of the environment and we can see much more of the subjects emotional state

Similar to the medium shot

Except:

- Less environment
- More of the subject and their emotional state

Heavily used in movies, documentaries, music videos etc

Close up –

This is when we really start to become close with our subject, allowing us to get very close to the action.

The **subjects takes up the majority of the frame**, we get **very little visibility of the environment**.

This shots are **most effective when trying to portray strong emotional states** of the subject.

Can create a sense of intimacy between the viewer and the subject

Extreme Close up –

This shot is when we get in as close as possible to our subjects face, or their hair, their nails any feature you choose.

Can also be known as a detail shot, which the name gives it away.

This shot is used to show small details that can reveal hidden thoughts, intentions etc

It can also be used to show audience a lot of detail of our subject or an object.

Framing:

There are 3 common mistakes videographers will make when framing a subject:

- Too much headroom
- Too little headroom
- Cutting off limbs. (Not physically so don't worry)

Headroom – What do I mean by headroom?



Headroom = **the space between the top of the subjects head and the frame.**

I like to think of it as breathing space.

Because **too much headroom** can make the subject look like they are drowning in the image

Too little headroom the subject can look cramped or claustrophobic.

In my opinion this image has slightly too much head room.

Angles:

There are 5 angles you should get familiar with. I think these can be some of the most useful and can really help you convey your story or give the audience or provoke the emotion you are trying to achieve out of the audience.

1. **Eye Level**
2. **Low Angle**
3. **High Angle**
4. **Pov**
5. **Over the shoulder**

Eye level – is how it describes. Used in most interviews. Natural angle.

Low Angle – This angle is great for showing the subject as a dominant character.

By getting down low, way under the eye level the subject appears very strong, powerful.

It can strike the audience with fear, anxiousness etc.

Its often used in situations where a parent would be giving out to the child, the angle would be very low, shooting upwards on the parent.

Dominant, in charge, powerful, scary, position of power.

High Angle -

This is opposite to the Low angle. We shoot above the subject looking down on them. This can give the appearance of the subject being isolated and shrunk in the frame.

Poor Matilda here looking very scared, intimidated, anxious, appears isolated in the frame.

POV (Point of View):

Bringing us right into the action as the subject see's it.

Something that has become **widely used especially due to the advancements in technology**. It stands for point of view and it gives us an insight into the view of the subject.

Before cameras where very big and heavy so it was difficult to achieve these shots. Now cameras being much smaller and lighter its much easier to achieve this shot and I think its very cool looking and engaging.

Very useful in action and horror movies.

Over the shoulder –

Is usually used when filming a conversation. It show a connection between the two subjects.

Mise on Scène:

Mise on Scène is a term borrowed from a French theatrical expression, meaning roughly “put into the scene”. Mise en scène encompasses the most recognizable attributes of a film:

the setting and the actors; it includes costumes and make-up, props, and all the other natural and artificial details that characterize the spaces filmed.

- **Recognizable Attributes of the story**
- **The Set**
- **Actors**
- **Costumes**
- **Make-up**
- **Props**
- **Lighting**

In other words, mise-en-scène describes the stuff in the frame and the way it is shown and arranged.

Motion:

Film making is defined by motion. Motion in the frame, motion of the camera itself.

Basic Movements

- Back and forth - Dolly in/Dolly out
- Side to side - Tracking
- Around the subject – an Arc
- Up and down - Panning and Tilting

Pan:

You might be familiar with this camera movement already.

A pan is when you move camera left to right horizontally.

So horizontal is across (left and right), Vertical is up and down.

This shot is used to follow a subject, show distance and can be great for showing an environment.

You want to:

- Start the shot with the camera still
- Then smoothly pan across (as smooth as possible)
- Finally let the camera become still again and finish your shot.

There is **nothing worse than an unsmooth pan, it can be very choppy and difficult or displeasing to the audiences eyes.**

Remember not to have your tripod too tight, it should be at a nice conferrable resistance, so that you can achieve a continuous smooth movement.

Tilting:

Is when we **move the camera up & down.**

Similar to the pan except the movement is on the vertical axis (up & down)

Both can take place in the same movement.

There can be **used to show new elements in the scene & create an element of surprise or wonder.**

The tilt is often very popular at the end of Hollywood blockbusters, tilting from the action up to the sky, more than likely playing to feel good music and then fade to credits.

This shot is all about a little bit of practice.

The Arc

The subject is usually still or not doing much movement. The camera provides the motion by circling the subject.

You may have seen this type of shot, its used a lot when someone is visiting a new city and they are looking up at the skyscrapers in aw and the camera is moving around them.

This shot is usually achieved by using a moving dolly or a steady cam. It can be quite difficult to pull off hand held due to you have to make many steps around the subject and can encounter a lot of camera shake.

Tracking:

Another great camera movement that can really increase how professional your shots look is a tracking shot. Its achieve by following the subject by moving side to side. Whatever direction the subject is moving.

Can be used very effectively to set pace in your scene.

Zooming in/out:

With a zoom the camera does not do any movement. It is a simple as a push of a button or smoothly turning your zoom wheel on the lens.

Its not a very popular look nowadays, it was mainly used around the 70's and has a very dated look and its main use in recent times would be in establishing shots or time lapse.

The zoom feature is very important for a videographer. Can anyone tell me why? Focus!

We zoom in on the subjects eyes, sharpen the focus and zoom back out and recompose.

It is used still today but more so for a comedic effect.

The Dolly zoom:

The dolly zoom is when you move the camera in, whilst zooming out on the camera simultaneously.

Or vise versa.

Its achieved usually by using a dolly, slider or a track. The effect allows for the foreground/subject to stay relatively the same size while the background grows or shrinks. (gets distorted)

The shot became famous after the 1958 classic '*Vertigo*' by Alfred Hitchcock.

The dolly zoom can be very useful when trying to make a scene unsettling, scary or distorting.

Thank you

Diploma in Video



SHAW ACADEMY