

Glossary of Helpful Terms, Concepts & Advice

Related to the Camera:

- **Camera Parts & Features** - these are standard or basic features on a camera. Your camera may have different features. If you have any questions, please e-mail me.
- **View Finder** - A small eyepiece or screen on the camera that allows you to see the image you're recording. (The camera also acts as a VCR, so you can play back and watch what you have already recorded through the view finder).
- **White Balance** - If you ever ended up with yellow-tinted video, chances are you forgot to white balance. It's worthwhile to white balance every time you use your camera to get the highest quality video. If your camera doesn't have this feature, it may have an automatic or internal system. What white balancing does is adjust the intensity of the colors being recorded according to the existing light. Make sure you white balance every time the lighting conditions change; if you record video inside and then go outside, your lighting conditions have changed and you need to instruct the camera on how to "see" the colors. How do you white balance? You can place a piece of white paper under the light you will shoot under for reference - focus on the paper in the view finder, and press the "White Balance" button. Or you can focus on someone's white T-shirt (make sure it's all white). Or, your camera may have an automatic white balance setting you can use by simply adjusting a switch or pressing a button.
- **Battery** - power source. Make certain you charge them!
- **Fade** - a gradual increase or decrease of the image and sound. You can fade an image to black, or do the reverse.
- **Focus** - There are two ways to focus - auto and manual. When you focus in "manual", you control the focus. To make sure your shots are in focus, zoom in and focus up close first, then zoom back. This insures that what you are shooting is focused to the greatest extent possible. Manual focus is good to use when there is a lot of movement of dominant figures. When the camera is in "auto focus" it will automatically focus on the dominant figure in the center of the view finder. Because it focuses automatically on the dominant figure, it will adjust to whatever becomes dominant. For example, if you are focused on a person several feet away, and someone walks in between the camera and the other person, the camera will adjust to focus on the new dominant figure - the person who walked in front of the camera.
- **High Shutter Speed** - this feature, usually a button on your camera, allows you to capture objects that are moving at a high speed when you use this feature.
- **Boost (gain)(back light)** - this increases light sensitivity for recording in dim conditions. Often results in "grainy" video.
- **Stand by** - the equivalent of a "pause" button. This is often faster than "stop," because the camera does not have to completely restart the movement of the video tape.
- **Time Code** - this is a number (could be seconds or frames) that helps you determine where scenes are located on a video tape. You will see this when you look through your view finder. You can use this, or the counter, when logging your

tape and editing.

- **Frame** - a single, complete video image that lasts 1/30th of a second. There are 30 frames in a second. If your camera or editing system can measure frames, you can use this as a counter to log your video tape.
- **Date/Clock** - generally much easier than setting your VCR! This will show the date and time - sometimes the date and time will not only appear through the view finder, but also on the video (which you may not want). You can use it as a time reference for logging if your camera does not have time code - just turn it on and then off at the beginning of each shot, or let it stay on.
- **B-roll** - this refers to certain video you collect. B-roll is any video that isn't the main action, that illustrates or shows examples. You might think of it as Background-roll. For example, if you are interviewing someone and they're talking about the Golden Gate Bridge, you might then show video of the Golden Gate Bridge (after they are talking, or while they are talking). This is called B-roll. (And no, there is no A-roll).

Microphone - there are several types of microphones that you can use to gather sound depending on your purposes. Generally speaking, the longer the microphone, the more powerful it is in one direction.

- **On Camera Mic** - this is built on the camera. This small microphone is about 1.5 inches long and it is "omni-directional," meaning it will pick up sounds from all directions. This is good to use to capture general audio from an event, but nothing very specific. Since the microphone is closer to you than to your subject, be careful - if you're talking, your voice will dominate.
- **Lavaliere Mic** - this is a small microphone, about one inch tall, that can be clipped onto a piece of clothing about four inches below the speaker's mouth. A thin cord attaches the microphone to a battery pack that the speaker can put in their pocket or clip onto their clothing. Because it is not directly attached to the camera it is called a "wireless" microphone. This is good to use to capture the sound of the speaker. It is generally used when the speaker is moving around, versus sitting still or standing at a podium.
- **Hand Held Mic** - this is a microphone, often attached to the camera by a long cable, that picks up sound very close to it. (It can also be "wireless," meaning it has a battery pack and it not directly attached to the camera). It looks like a ball of ice cream sitting on a sugar cone. As the name implies, you usually hold this in your hand (while interviewing someone, for instance). You can also put in on a table or floor stand.
- **Shotgun Mic** - This long, narrow microphone is designed to pick up sound that is far away. For example, if some people are 30 feet away, and you want to hear what they are saying, point this microphone directly at them. The range of the microphone will vary. You may see this type of microphone used in sports. For example, trying to pick up what the coach is saying to the quarterback on the other side of the field.

Camera Shots -There are three basic camera shots

- **Wide shot** (also known as Establishing Shot or Long Shot) This shows the whole scene. Frequently you'll see video pieces begin with a wide shot. It's helpful because it sets the stage - the viewer knows where s/he is. These shots are also good if there's a lot of movement. This might show a person from head to toe.
- **Medium Shot** This shot shows less of a scene than the wide shot. The camera seems closer to the subject (although it may not be if you use your zoom lens). For example, if you were interviewing someone, this shot would show them from about the waist up in a medium shot. Use this when you want a closer look at your subject, or when you need to transition between wide shots and close up shots (it is difficult for the viewer to follow what you are doing if you go straight from a wide shot to a close up shot).

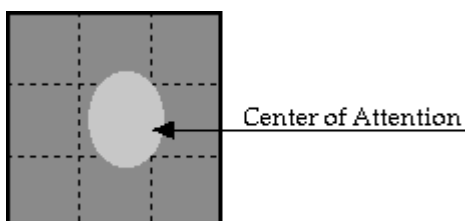
- **Close Up Shot** This shot shows an even smaller part of the subject or scene. Great for showing detail, like a person's emotional face or individual leaves on a tree. If you were interviewing someone, this shot would show the person from the top of the chest or shoulders up. An **Extreme Close Up Shot** is even closer than a Close Up. For example, it is just of the person's eyes, or of a bug gnawing on a leaf.

Other concepts for gathering video

- **Over the Shoulder or Cutaway Shot.** A Cutaway is usually a shot of the interviewer, who can be listening, nodding, or responding to the guest. This is used a lot in interviews to show the person who's asking the questions. It's called "over the shoulder" because the photographer is literally shooting video of the interviewer over the shoulder of the person being interviewed. (An over the shoulder shot is a type of cutaway). These are very useful when editing because it gives you an easy way to transition.
- **Two Shot/Three Shot** - a two shot has two people in the frame. A three shot has three people in the frame. Because you have to be some distance from the people to get them all in the frame, this is usually a medium or wide shot.
- **Sequence** - a term used in gathering video and editing. It refers to a series of related shots. For example, a sequence could be a wide shot of the Bay, followed by a medium shot of a few wind surfers, followed by a single wind surfer zipping through the water.
- **Length of shot** - How long you show each shot depends on what's going on in the shot, and what you're trying to accomplish. If there's a lot of action or movement in a shot, you may use 20 seconds of it or more. If nothing is happening in the shot and you're showing a still scene, you may only use three seconds. When deciding how long to make a shot, keep in mind that your goal is to gain and hold the audience's attention and understanding.

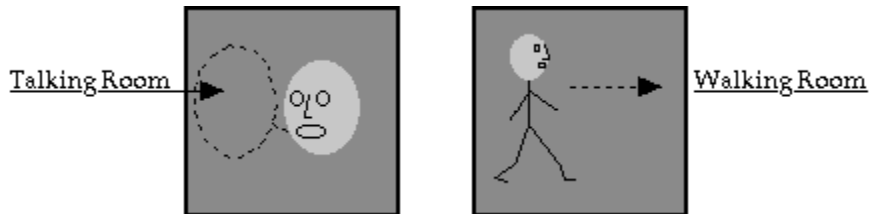
Composition/Framing Your Shots

- **Composition** - There are many ways to compose a shot, depending on your goals. You want to be aware of what is in the shot and what isn't. Can you clearly see what you intend for the viewer to see?
- **Rule of Thirds** - this classic rule suggests that the center of the camera's attention is one-third of the way down from the top of the shot.



- **Headroom** - A term used with shots of people. This refers to the space above the subject's head. You'll see different amounts of headroom, depending on the intent of the creator of the video. In general, if you're standing right in front of someone, you'll see that they have space all around them - they aren't cut off by a frame. By leaving headroom, or space beside them, you are imitating what you see in real life.
- **Talking/Walking Room** - If you are interviewing someone or have video of someone talking, you generally do not want them looking directly at the camera (again, it depends on your goals - certain situations may call for that). Generally you want the person to be looking off to the left or right of the camera a bit. When you do this, frame your shot so that there is some talking room. That is, you want to leave some extra space in front of their face as if you were going to draw a

dialogue box in for them. This space is "talking room." If the person is talking to another person, this shows space between them. Walking room, if the person in motion, gives them space to walk to. Talking/Walking Room leaves space in the shot for the action, whether it be words or movement.



Shot Angles

Your shot angle is the level from which you look at your subject.

- **Eye-level angle** - One of the most commonly used shots is the eye-level shot. Why? Because it's the perspective most familiar to us - we usually see things from our own eye-level. This angle also causes the least discomfort because we're used to it. If you're shooting a person, make sure you shoot at their eye-level, not yours.
- **Low Angle** - In this shot the camera looks up at the subject, making it seem important, powerful, or perhaps larger than it is to the viewer. For example, you might be sitting on the ground looking up at someone who is standing. Click [here](#) for an example.
- **High Angle** - In this shot the camera looks down on the subject, decreasing its importance. The subject looks smaller. It often gives the audience a sense of power, or the subject a sense of helplessness. In this case, you'd be higher than the other person (maybe they're sitting, or maybe you're standing on a desk) looking down on that person.

Shot Movement

- **Pan** - A shot taken moving on a horizontal plane (from left to right, right to left). If you want to show a frisbee flying across a field, you might use this shot to follow the frisbee from one person to another.
- **Tilt** - Camera movement in a vertical plane. (up or down) If you want to show a tall building but you can't get it all in your shot, you might start at the bottom of the building and go up to the top.
- **Zoom** - This shot brings you closer to the subject. For example, from a Wide Shot to a Medium Shot or Close Shot. If you are looking at the Golden Gate Bridge, and you want to see individual people walking across it, you might zoom in.
- **Reverse Zoom** - This shot moves you farther away from the subject. For example, from a Close Shot to Medium Shot or a Wide Shot. If you have a Close Up shot of a flower, and want to see the entire field that the flower is in, you can reverse zoom.

Three notes about shot movement:

1. A note about photographer responsibility: you owe it to your viewers not to make them motion sick, unless, of course, that is your goal! Rapid pans, tilts, repeated zooms can make a person feel woozy, and may also prevent them from clearly seeing the video you collected.
2. The standard rule with moving shots is this: whenever possible, start your sequence stationary on a subject, then pan/tilt/zoom/reverse zoom, then hold stationary again. This helps enormously for editing purposes. For example, if you

want to move your camera from one end of a mountain range to another, start while focused on one side of the mountain range and hold that shot for three seconds (stationary position), then pan to the other side (slowly enough so the video won't be a blur), then stay focused on the other end of the mountain range for three seconds (stationary position). If you edit or cut away in the middle of a pan/zoom/tilt/reverse zoom, you may make your viewer disoriented.

3. In general, use shot movement(s) sparingly. Try to put a still shot (no pan, tilt, or zooming) in between two pans/tilts/zooms. This gives the viewer a moment to get their bearings.

To use a Tripod, or not to use a Tripod? that is the question

And the answer depends on what you are trying to do. If you're chasing your subject or want to imitate an earthquake you probably won't use a tripod because you need to be moving. Or if you want to give the viewer the impression of walking or running, then you may not want to use a tripod.

Basically, if you want a stable, smooth shot, use a tripod whenever possible. If you do not have a tripod, invent one. Your body is a natural tripod. You can also lean up against a tree or wall or sit on a chair for stability.

- Proper set up - use a wide footprint (the legs of the tripod should be as far apart as possible for the height you want it set at).
- Tripod Motion - when you use a tripod, you securely attach the camera to the top of it. The camera can now be moved in two ways - pan (side to side) or tilt (up or down).

Related to Editing

There are two ways to edit analog video:

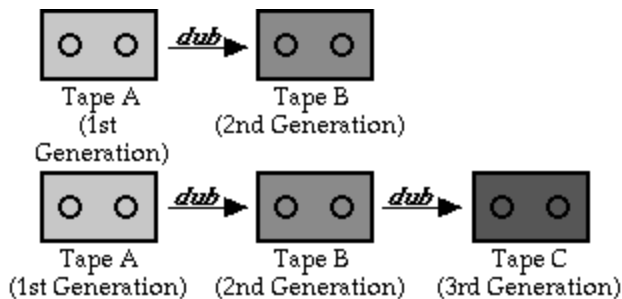
- Assemble Edit - Used to copy an entire video, or pieces of a video, onto a new master video tape (one which does not already have a recorded signal or control track (black)). This process records the video and audio together as one signal (which cannot be divided) and combines them on to another tape. This is often used to make complete copies of programs.
- Insert Edit - This process allows you to edit audio and video, separately or together, onto a master tape with control track (black). This process requires a master tape with control track.

Terms and concepts related to editing:

- **Control Track (or "black")** - An area on a video tape where magnetic impulses have been recorded. The magnetic impulses act like glue, holding down the new video you record there. This is necessary for insert editing, however may not be for assemble editing.
- **In Point (Inset Point)** - The place on the tape where you want to start your edit.
- **Out Point (Outset Point)** - The place on the tape where you want to finish your edit.
- **Natural Sound or Nat Sound** - just that, natural sound you pick up through the camera microphone (versus sound captured through an interview mic).
- **Pre-roll** - the amount of time (in frames or seconds) that it takes for the camera to start rolling before you are actually recording or editing. This allows the tape to come up to speed before the edit is made. How long is this? It varies by editing

system - could be from 2 -10 seconds.

- **Voice Over** - an off-camera narrator who puts their voice over the video. The purpose of the voice over is to describe what is happening on the video or provide information.
- **Master** - the original version of your raw footage tape. An original edited tape is called an edited master.
- **Dub** - To copy. You can "dub" or "double" a tape. If you copy or "dub" Tape B from Tape A, you have gone a "generation" of tape. That is to say, Tape B is not the original. If you copy Tape C from Tape B, you have gone down two generations in quality - it is a copy of a copy. In general, to get the highest quality copies, try to make all of your copies from Tape A, the master.



- **Cut** - The instantaneous, direct switch from one picture to another.
- **Drop Out** - video tape images and sound are recorded on magnetic oxide on the tape. A drop out is a place in the tape where the oxide is gone, so instead of video there will be a disturbance on the tape. Drop outs occur over time and their chances increase with the number of times the tape is used. That's why it's always a good idea to use good quality new tapes to record something important, and to only reuse a tape 2 or 3 times.
- **Monitor** - A CRT (cathode ray tube) without a tuner (for receiving broadcast TV signals) that accepts video and/or audio signals; basically a TV that only accepts video from a source attached to it. The monitors are hooked up to VCRs.

Miscellaneous Terms

There are several ways to make a rough or general representation of your production before any video is gathered. The purpose of doing this is to help you plan what you need to gather to create your production. There are three types of this planning tool:

- **The Storyboard** - usually a series of drawings depicting what you plan to do. See the Story Boarding Activity.
- **The Shot List** - a list of shots you want to gather
- **The Script** - a written description of the video and audio you want to get.
- **Check List** - part of planning your video shoot is making sure you have everything you're going to need (cables, lights, microphone, video tape, tripod, camera, shot list, etc.). Test all equipment before you get out in the field. Better to replace a dead battery before you leave for a shoot, than have to cancel the shoot when you get there.
- **Talent** - this often refers to the main person on the screen, such as a news anchor or an interview show host.
- **Talking head** - this refers to a full screen shot (usually medium or close up) of a person talking. Often a derogatory term "just a bunch of talking heads," meaning that it wasn't very interesting visually. *Note:* Be careful when setting up an interview to make sure that there is nothing in the background that might look odd. For example, if there is a tree in the background, be sure that it doesn't look like it's growing out of the subject's head.
- **Tree full of owls** - The crowd watching you work. Picture this - you're interviewing someone for a story. Behind that person are a bunch of people watching you interview this person. They are the owls. You're bound to run into this - people are attracted to video cameras.

- **Point of View** - the perspective from which you are shooting. For example, you might be a neutral observer, recording events without taking sides. Or you could be omniscient, showing all points of view. Or perhaps personal, from one person's point of view.

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