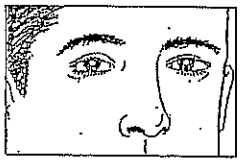
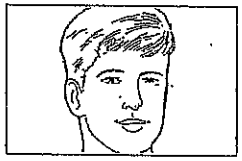
Basic camera shot types

Extreme close-up (ECU)



- Draws attention to a precise detail.
- Useful for making a character's feelings intimate to the viewer.
- May disorientate or disturb the viewer.
- Situates the audience in an intimate relationship with the character or action.

Close-up (CU)



- Concentrates the viewer's attention.
- Useful for showing character introspection or emotion.
- Useful for registering reaction (see 'Reaction shot'.)
- Situates the audience in a privileged relationship with the character or action.

Medium shot or Mid-shot (MS)

- Shows a character in their immediate environment.
- Can still show a character's emotion.
- Allows for the inclusion of two people in a frame. ('two-shot'.)

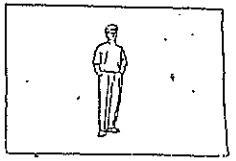
Medium long shot (MLS)

- Situates a character in their immediate environment.
- Useful for action sequences, where emotion is still important.
- Useful for showing relationship between background and foreground elements.

POV shot

Steady Cam.

Long shot (LS)



- Useful for showing wider context.
- Often used as an 'Establishing shot', at the beginning of a sequence.
- Situates the audience at a distance from the character or action.

High angle shot

- Useful for suggesting a character's smallness, weakness or isolation.
- Situates the audience in a powerful position.

Low angle shot

- Useful for suggesting a character's bigness, strength or dominance.
- Situates the audience in a weak position.

Front angle

- Suggests viewer involvement.
- This might be a strong or a frightening situation for the viewer.

Rear angle

- Situates the audience in a powerful, but detached position.
- Useful for concealing a character's emotions, and so concentrating on action.

Oblique angle

- Signifies audience detachment.

Reaction shot

- Usually a close-up, showing a character's emotional reaction to words or events.

+ cropping