

Basic Prep & Production

Writing with Visuals

As a media maker, you want to show more than tell and communicate with your audience visually like you would in writing. In video, you use shots, a term for what the audience sees in order to achieve this. Construct your shots with different shot elements to help tell your story. Shot elements act as the visual grammar when creating a video.

Shot Elements – Shot Size

Shot size refers to how much you include in the rectangular frame of the shot. Achieve this by moving (or zooming) the camera back and forth from your objects or subject. *Special Note:* Refrain from zooming while the camera is recording.



Figure 1

Extreme Wide: Also known as an establishing shot, this shot gives an impression of setting for your video, setting up the location and time of the scene. It's always good to start with this shot when changing locations.

Wide: Reveals the character or object in full in their environment. This is a good shot for establishing your character. What they are wearing, holding, or interacting with that gives the audience clues to their personality.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Medium: Closer than a wide shot cutting off the character around the waist, this shot is more personal for the audience. Here we may have dialogue or conversation and more than one character in the shot. This is also a good shot for documentary style interviews.

Close up: Close ups of the characters focus solely on the face and allow you to show emotions clearly to the audience.

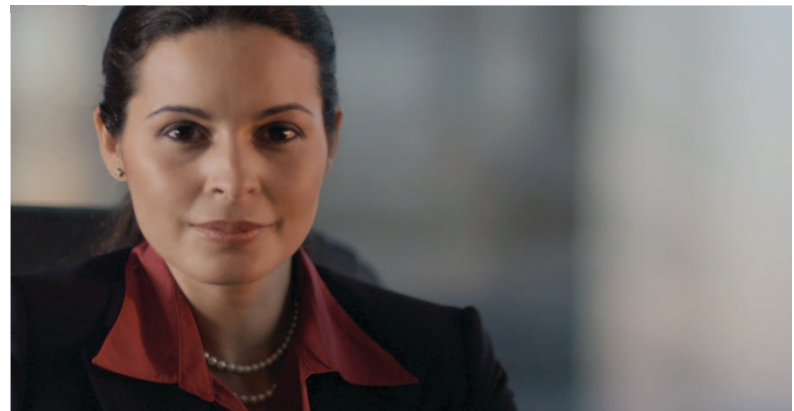


Figure 4



Figure 5

Extreme Close up: Whether it's a character's eyes, hands, or a set of keys; an extreme close up focuses on a single object so that it's clear the audience sees it.

Inserts/B-Roll: Inserts or B-Roll footage can be any of the sizes mentioned above, but inserted over another footage for the audiences benefit, so that the audience can see the insert and hear the audio from the original clip. You would use this in for example an interview where the interviewer is mentioning something and as they are talking there is an insert of what they're talking about.

Shot Elements – Shot Angle

Shot angle is a good way to establish how the audience should feel towards the character or object in the shot.



Figure 6

Eye Level: The camera doesn't have any angle and points directly at the object or subject. Here, the audience is meant to feel neutral to the subject or object. This is a good angle for use in interviews, video resumes, and creates a sense of equality.

High: The camera is looking down on the subject or object. This is meant to make the audience feel that the subject or object is small, vulnerable, or weak. Think about shots of children from the perspective of an adult.



Figure 7



Figure 8

Low: The camera is looking up at the subject or object. This helps to give the audience a sense of the subject or object being powerful and in control. This is a good shot to use with bullies or characters meant to be stern.

Special Note: It's always good to be aware of shot angle in your filming. If a conversation is neutral in nature use an eye level angle even if that means crouching towards the ground or using a tripod at half its height.

Shot Elements – Shot Movement

Shot movement is how the camera moves during a shot. You can follow the subject or object with the camera or use the camera to encompass more of what goes on in the shot.

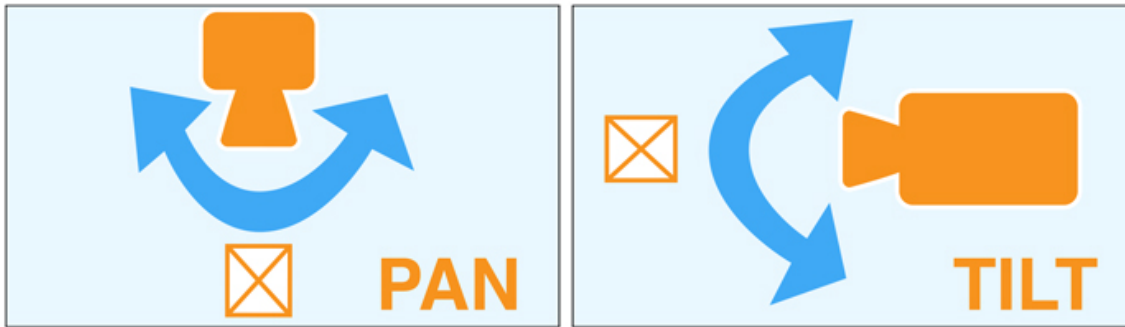


Figure 9

Pan: When the camera moves left to right, or vice versa, from a single pivot point.

Tilt: When the camera moves up to down, or vice versa, from single pivot point.

Special Note: It's good to use a tripod when moving the camera during a shot. This creates smooth movement that will not be distracting.

Vertical Video

When you work with a camera that allows you to shoot with different orientations – for example your phone or an iPad – you should always avoid unintentional vertical video. Vertical video happens when you hold your phone/iPad vertically while filming. This creates a situation where when you try to edit your project, black bars will fill in on the sides of the video to make it fit the horizontal aspect ratio. Horizontal video allows for your audience to see more than vertical video.

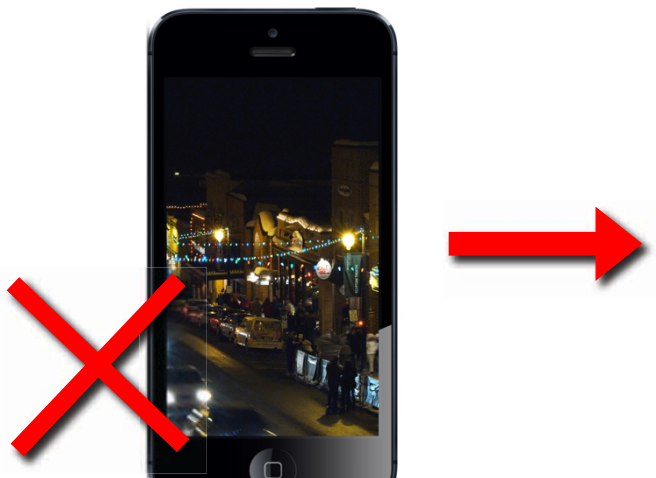


Figure 9

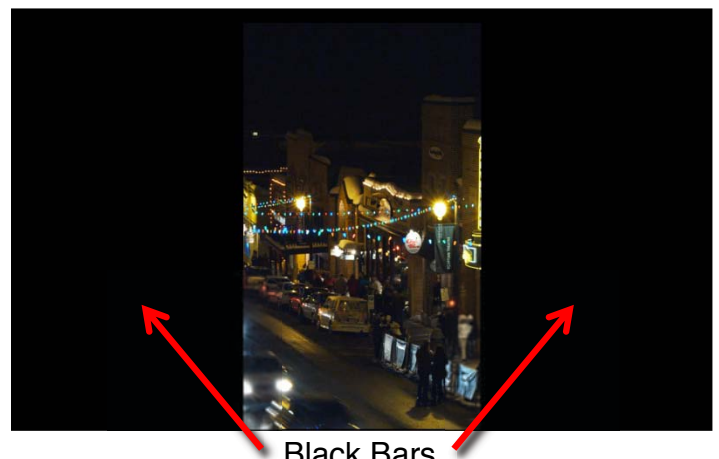


Figure 10

Black Bars

A good way to remember to avoid vertical video is to look at the screen on your device. **If the screen is horizontal, your video will be horizontal.**



Figure 11



The Rule of Thirds

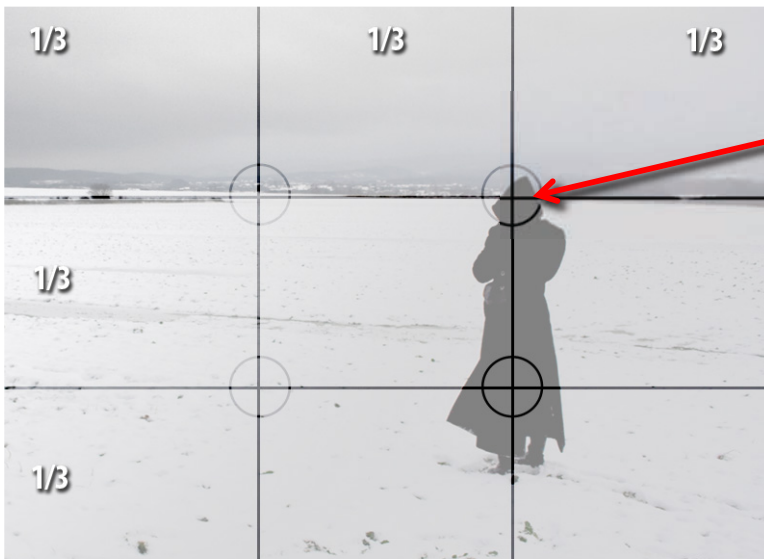


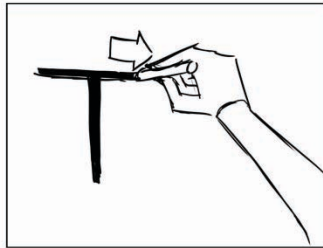
Figure 12

Notice that the figure is lined up along the third divide line. Their head is lined up on the intersection.

A helpful composition technique is the rule of third. Basically with the rule of thirds, you take a shot, break it into three section vertically and horizontally where the lines divide the shot into sections and at those intersection point, line up your important subject and objects. The rule of thirds is important because it helps create a sense of balance between the positive space of your subject and the negative space around them

Storyboards & Shot Lists

With this information on shot design, you can build storyboards and make shot lists to keep track of the footage you gather and the overall look of the piece.

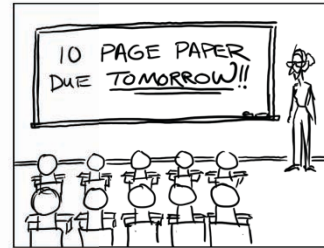


(Close Up)
Teacher: Seeing you all can work so fast and provide perfected works...



(Medium Shot)
Teacher continues writing on the wall (hear the sound effects)

Students start to gasp and moan at the sight of what's on the board



(Wide Shot)
Teacher: ...I am sure this assignment will not be a problem for you, as your previous ones this semester.



(Low Angle)
Rodney stands in protest

Rodney: We already got another paper due tomorrow for this class! That's not fair!!



(Wide Shot)
Teacher walks back to her desk

Teacher: Well then Mr. Dotter...



(Medium Shot)
Teacher: ...I suggest you get started..

Figure 13

Storyboards: Storyboards are a series of images in order of how they will be shown. Often used with narrative productions, storyboards offer a visual of how you want the video to look and include notes, shot elements, and character movement.

Shot Lists: Shot lists are simply a list of all the footage you want to include in your video. More useful with non narrative productions like documentaries, the shot list should include things like interviews, insert footage, and any images or audio you may need.

Lighting

When filming, try to work in a well-lit area. Natural light works best, but some things to keep in mind with natural light include:

1. ☐ Pay attention to the direction of the light: If the light is coming from a single direction, it may create stark shadows.
2. ☐ You can lighten up your shadows by using a reflector to bounce your light creating a second source of light. This will help with the quality of your film.
3. ☐ When filming, keep the brightest light source behind you. This will help with lighting your subject.
4. ☐ Avoid windows behind the subject you are filming. An auto-correcting camera like the shoot and shares will adjust for the brightness of the light and make your subject darker.

Audio

Always keep in mind the audio as you are filming. Are there birds chirping? Are you near a busy street? These can create audio concerns that are difficult to fix when you are editing in postproduction. To help dampen loud noises you can't do anything about, film with the intrusive audio source behind you. Also be sure to use the foam sock when using the audio recorder to help dampen wind and air condition noises.

Index

Figure 1 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 2 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 3 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 4 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 5 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 6 – Stock Footage, CATLABS Collections

Figure 7 – Maddy by Christian Reusch. [Flickr.com/photos/kriis__xx](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kriis__xx)

Figure 8 – Group Shot by Jayel Aheram. [Flickr.com/photos/aheram](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aheram)

Figure 9 – Produced by the Panther Tech

Figure 10 – Produced by the Panther Tech

Figure 11 – Produced by the Panther Tech

Figure 12 – Third Rule by Chaky. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Third-Rule.jpg>

Figure 13 – Produced by the Panther Tech