

FILM GLOSSARY

Close-Up (CU)	A shot in which the head of a person, a small object, or part of an object, fills the screen.
Extreme Close-Up (ECU)	A shot very close to the subject, so that only a small portion or detail is shown or the entirety of a small object. Such a shot of a performer would only show part of the face, the mouth, eyes, etc.
Medium Shot (MS)	A shot that generally shows a character from the knees or waist up, or the full figure of a seated character.
Medium Close-Up (MCU)	A shot somewhere between a medium shot and close-up; generally one that shows a character's head and shoulders with some background.
Long/Wide Shot (LS/WS)	A shot that shows the subject at a distance; characters are seen in their entirety with some area above and below them also visible.
Extreme Long Shot (ELS)	A shot that is taken at a great distance from the subject and frequently offers a wide view of a location. Such an image is often used as an "establishing shot."
Establishing Shot	The opening shot of a sequence, which establishes location, time, mood, etc. Establishing shots are usually long shots or extreme long shots.
Master Shot	The continuous shot of an entire scene filmed generally in a wide shot and used in the master-scene technique. Medium shots, close-ups, etc. can later be intercut.
Insert	A shot of an object, character, or part of a scene that will later be inserted into the scene during editing.
Cutaway	A shot away from the main action but used to join two shots to the main action.
Two Shot	Generally a medium or close up in which two people fill the frame, frequently used for conversation scenes.
Three Shot	A shot of three people, normally medium shot or medium close up.

O.T.S.	Abbreviation for “Over The Shoulder;” this is a shot where the camera is placed behind one character and looks over his or her shoulder onto another character or a subject. The framing is such that part of the foreground character remains in the shot.
O.S.	Abbreviation for “off screen;” used to indicate a sound or dialogue that can be heard from outside the frame.
P.O.V.	Abbreviation for “Point Of View;” a shot that represents the viewpoint or vision of a character so that the audience sees what the character sees.
M.O.S.	Indicates a shot in which no sound is recorded. The term M.O.S. derives from early German directors who wanted a scene shot, “mit out sound.”
Eye-Level	A standard shot taken from approximately five or six feet off the ground to represents the point of view of an observer of average height.
Low-Angle Shot	A shot taken with the camera closer to the ground than an eye-level shot so that characters and objects seem taller and more imposing.
High-Angle Shot	A shot taken with the camera higher than an eye-level shot so that characters and objects seem smaller or vulnerable.
Dutch-Tilt/Canted	A shot in which the camera is tilted to the side; the result can create an unbalanced frame which could be used for a disorienting, subjective, or hallucinatory effect.
Pan	A shot in which the camera moves horizontally around a fixed axis (typically a tripod head) to follow action or survey an area.
Tilt	A shot in which the camera moves vertically along a fixed axis (typically a tripod head) to follow action or survey an area.
Dolly In/Out	A shot in which the camera moves toward or away from the subject by means of a wheeled support, or dolly. Also known as a “push in/pull out.”

Zoom In/Out	To vary the focal length of a zoom lens during a shot so that the subject is magnified or decreased in size. Although a zoom in/out has the perception of camera movement, there is no change of perspective without a camera move.
Aspect Ratio	The shape of the final frame made by dividing the width of the frame by the height of the frame. Aspect ratios are expressed as either a decimal (e.g. 1.85) or as a ratio (e.g. 16x9).
Cut	(1) The immediate transition during editing from the last frame of one shot to the first frame of the next shot. (2) The term used typically by the director to indicate the current take is over and the camera should stop rolling. (3) The current edited version of the film, sequence, scene, etc.
Fade In	An effect used at the beginning of a sequence in which the image arises from screen darkness.
Fade Out	An effect at the end of a sequence in which the image fades to black.
Dissolve	A transition between two scenes where the first merges imperceptibly into the second. The effect is created by the end of one shot fading out while the beginning of the next shot fades in.
Scene	A collection of shots in one location that show a particular action.
Sequence	A collection of scenes that typically reside in a similar location or time and are used to express a part of the narrative.
Montage	A collection of images cut together to create an overall idea or ideas. A montage is often used to cover a passage of time otherwise deemed impractical using typical scene based storytelling.
Cut To	A film script designation for cutting to a new scene.
Frame Rate	The number of individual frames that are exposed per second in the camera. The standard speed is 24 frames

per second (fps). Slow and Fast motion may be achieved by changing the camera speed.

Camera Speed	Same as Frame Rate.
Overcrank	To run the camera at a frame rate faster than the projector's frame rate (typically faster than 24fps). The result is slow motion.
Undercrank	To run the camera at a frame rate slower than the projector's frame rate (typically slower than 24fps). The result is fast motion.
Lens	The optical and mechanical device that controls how light enters the camera; specifically changing the light's amount, field of view, and focus.
Aperture	An opening in the lens that allows a specified amount of light to pass through. Typically the aperture is controllable and set to a specific F-Stop or T-Stop.
Lens Speed	The maximum size the aperture of a lens can open in relation to the focal length (i.e. the biggest F-Stop or smallest F-Number) and therefore the maximum volume of light the lens can transmit.
Stop	Any doubling or halving of the amount of light, the time the light is available, or the sensitivity of the film to light.
F-Stop	The specification of the amount of light transmitting through the lens based on the diameter of the aperture. Many lenses allow the F-Stop to be adjusted and therefore allow the filmmaker to specify the amount of light entering the camera. Each change in stop represents twice as much or half as much light transmittance. The F-Number is derived by dividing the focal length of the lens by the diameter of the lens opening. The common F-Stops are: 1, 1.4, 2, 2.8, 4, 5.6, 8, 11, 16, 22 where 1 is the largest aperture.
T-Stop	The actual (True-Stop) amount of light passing through the lens. This measures the amount of light transmittance for a given aperture's diameter while accounting for the amount of light lost or absorbed by the design and materials used in the construction of the lens. This is opposed to an F-Stop's purely mathematical formula.

Focal Plane ϕ	The imaginary plane within the camera at which the film deliberately gets exposed to light. Many critical measurements, including focus and focal length originate at the focal plane. It is indicated on the outside of the camera by a circle with a line running vertically through its center:
Focal Length	The distance between the optical center of a lens and the focal plane, normally measured in millimeters, when a far object comes into critical focus and with the lens's focus set at infinity. Different focal lengths change how many degrees of view the lens can "see." Wider focal lengths have a wider field-of-view (FOV) whereas longer focal lengths have a narrower FOV.
Prime Lens	A fixed-focal length lens. Multiple prime lenses make up a prime lens kit.
Zoom Lens	A lens with an adjustable focal length.
Exposure	<p>(1) Light striking a photographic element, which causes an image to be produced either chemically or electronically.</p> <p>(2) The measured or perceived accuracy of an exposed image's overall brightness or darkness based on the amount of light used.</p>
Focus	<p>(1) The plane in front of the camera in which a lens is optically tuned to provide the sharpest image.</p> <p>(2) The perceived level of sharpness or blurriness within a frame. The focus can be changed by adjusting the lens's focus ring and is dependent upon the scene's point of interest and director's request.</p>
Depth of Field	Abbreviated: DOF. The range of acceptable focus in front of the camera; usually given as a distance from the focal plane to the nearest point of acceptable focus and the distance from the focal plane to the farthest point of acceptable focus. It varies based upon which focal lengths, shooting apertures, and focus distances are used.
Base	The transparent and flexible support on which photographic emulsions are coated to make photographic film. The base is commonly made of cellulose acetate.

Emulsion	<p>(1) Broadly, any light-sensitive photographic material consisting of a gelatin containing silver halide bonded together with a base and any other layers or ingredients that may be required to produce a film having desirable photographic and mechanical properties.</p> <p>(2) In discussing the anatomy of a photographic film, the emulsion layer is any coating that contains light sensitive silver halide crystals, and is distinguished from backing, base, substratum, or filter layers.</p>
Film Speed (Rating)	A numerical rating of the sensitivity of a given film stock to light. Known as "ASA" (determined by the American Standards Association), "ISO" (International Standards Organization) or EI (Exposure Index). Smaller numbers are considered "slower" and are less sensitive to light; bigger numbers are considered "faster" and are more sensitive to light.
Reciprocity	The assumption that $\text{Exposure} = \text{Light} \times \text{Time}$. Exposure will change if the amount of light or time is modified without compensation from the other element.
Footcandle	A measurement of light. Determined by the amount of luminance produced by one candela at one foot.
Light Meter	An instrument used to measure the amount of light present. A reflective meter reads reflected light off a subject with regards to color, illumination, and reflectivity. An incident meter reads the amount of light falling striking a point, calibrated off an 18% reflective grey-card. Most light meters include a built-in calculator to determine a suggested F-Stop to create a proper exposure based on the film's speed and the camera's frame rate.
Three-Point Lighting	A very basic and widely employed lighting setup consisting of three lights: the key light, the fill light, and the back light. Many other lighting setups can derive from these simple elements.
Key Light	The "main" light on a subject. The key light's position, intensity, color, and quality help dictate the mood of the lighting design. With a moving subject, the key light might switch from one light source to another.
Fill Light	The light that fills in the shaded side of the subject, which was created by the key light, and helps control the key to

fill ratio. This is the second light in three-point lighting and is typically set relative to the key light on the opposite side of the subject. Fill light is typically a very soft light and can be created by bouncing light instead of using a physical lamp.

Back light

The light that shines on the part of the subject furthest from the camera. This light creates separation from the background and is sometimes completely unmotivated by any source within the set. This is the third light in three-point lighting.

Ratio

The general term for describing the difference between the light and shade of a subject. The “contrast ratio” or “key to fill ratio” is the quotient between the intensities of light of the key side of a subject to its fill, or shade side. (e.g. a 2:1 ratio means the key light is twice as bright or 1 stop brighter than the fill.)

Contrast

(1) The general term for a film stock’s property called “gamma” (γ), which is measured by analyzing the sensitometric (characteristic) curve of a given stock and determining the rate at which tone separation changes over two given exposures.
(2) The ability of a photographic material, developer, or process as a whole to differentiate among small graduations in the tones of the subject.
(3) See Latitude.

Latitude

The range of tones to which a photographic stock is sensitive. It is typically measured by the ratio between the extreme opacities to the extreme densities of a film stock or the extreme highlights to extreme lowlights of video. This range is also described as “scale” or “contrast” and is typically measured in stops of light.