

Glossary of Film Terms

Definitions from David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

angle of framing	The position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows: above it, looking down (a high angle); horizontal, on the same level (a straight-on angle); looking up (a low angle). Also called camera angle.
animation	Any process whereby artificial movement is created by photographing a series of drawings (see also <i>cel animation</i>), objects, or computer images one by one. Small changes in position, recorded frame by frame, create the illusion of movement.
aspect ratio	The relationship of the frame's width to its height.
backlighting	Illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of highlighting on those figures.
canted framing	A view in which the frame is not level; either the right or left side is lower than the other, causing objects in the scene to appear slanted out of an upright position.
cinematography	A general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase.
close-up	A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen.
contrast	In cinematography, the difference between the brightest and darkest areas within the frame.
crane shot	A shot with a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction.
crosscutting	Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously.
cut	1. In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another. See also <i>jump cut</i> .
cut-in	An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.
deep focus	A use of the camera lens and lighting that keeps both the close and distant planes being photographed in sharp focus.
deep space	An arrangement of mise-en-scene elements so that there is a considerable distance between the plane closest to the camera and the one farthest away. Any or all of these planes may be in focus. (See <i>shallow space</i> .)
depth of field	The measurements of the closest and farthest planes in front of the camera lens between which everything will be in sharp focus. A depth of field from 5 to 16 feet, for example, would mean everything closer than 5 feet and farther than 16 feet would be out of focus.
diegesis	In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The diegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen.
diegetic sound	Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world. See also <i>nondiegetic sound</i> .
dissolve	A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears; for a moment the two images blend in <i>superimposition</i> .
editing	1. In filmmaking, the task of selecting and joining camera takes. 2. In the finished film, the set of techniques that governs the relations among shots.
establishing shot	A shot, usually involving a distant framing, that shows the spatial relations among