

# Video Shooting Basics

## Learn the Basic Shots

Boom – shot filmed from above, moving or stationary

Cameo shot – subject is filmed against black or neutral background

Choker – tight close-up on face (also known as extreme close up)

Close shot – subject is shown from top of head to mid-waist

Close-up – shot of part of a subject or object

Cutaway – brief reaction shot

Dolly – moving shot

Establishing shot – shot that shows location and mood

Extreme close-up – small detail of an eye or mouth

Extreme long shot – wide angle shot from a distance, possibly an aerial

Eye level – shot of the subject at eye level including shoulders and head

Flash – very brief shot for shock effect; similar to cutaway

Following shot – shot which follows the subject

Freeze frame – a shot that repeats a single frame and appears “frozen”

Full shot – shot of subject’s entire body

Head-on shot – action comes directly at the camera

High angle shot – looking down on the subject

Long shot – at a distance with surroundings showing

Low angle – filmed looking up at subject

Medium – subject is shown from the knees up

POV – from the character’s point of view

Reaction shot – close-up of a character reacting to something off camera

Reverse angle – two characters in conversation, camera switches between both POV

Tight shot – subject fills whole frame

Two-shot – conversation between two persons

Over-the-shoulder – POV that includes part of person’s body

Pan – camera moves horizontally across a scene

Tilt – camera moves up or down a scene

Always start with Wide and work your way to Tight. You want to do a Wide, Medium, Tight sequence for a professional look. Be sure to pause your recording between each shot to get closer to what you are shooting (preferred) or using the camera's zoom to get in closer. During editing, you'll have lots of choices of shots to choose from.

## **Shot Sequencing Rules during Editing (only break for a GOOD reason or purpose)**

1. Never repeat the same shot (i.e. a Medium Action followed by another Medium Action).
2. Never jump from Wide to Tight. Use the more gradual, Wide-Medium-Tight sequence.

### **“Eyes on Third”**

Keep your subject's eyes on the top third line, whether you're 3 feet, 30 feet, or 300 feet away. This is also known as the Rule of Thirds.

### **“Nose Room”**

Allow visual space in front of your subject's nose in the direction they are looking. This is also called “Looking Room.”

### **“Two Eyes and an Ear”**

Frame an interview subject in 3/4 profile with them looking slightly off camera. You should position yourself right next to your camera on the same eye level as the interview subject.



### **“Cutaways”**

Change position after an interview and shoot footage of the reporter (where they were during the interview) repeating what they were doing during the interview -- listening intently and non-verbally responding to the subject's comments. This allows you to edit with more options.

### **Interview Sound**

Use a microphone when possible for your interview subject. Or have the camera very close to the subject. Avoid interviewing in noisy, crowded hallways.

### **Natural Sound**

Record lots of target and ambient sounds for use during editing.

### **Natural Lighting**

Overcast conditions are the best light to shoot in because there won't be any shadow problems. If there is a direct, bright source of light (like the sun), always put it behind you. Shooting into light rays causes flare spots on the lens.

### **No Windows**

Never shoot an interview subject with a window or bright light behind them. A bright background will cause your subject to appear in silhouette.

### **No Walls**

Never shoot an interview subject right up against a wall, including lockers. That will look like a prison mugshot! Look for ways to add visual distance between your subject and the background.

### **Reflections and Distractions**

Keep a close eye out for reflections and distractions that can be happening in the background during an interview. If you interview in a hallway or a classroom where reflections may occur, make sure you cannot see yourself in the shot. People moving about normally in the background are not distractions.

**Keep it Steady**

Always use a tripod, brace yourself when shooting, or place your camera on an unmovable surface. The objects in your frame should move, not your camera.

**Manual Focus**

Always use manual focus before shooting by zooming all the way in, getting your focus set, and then zooming out to your shot before you begin recording.

**“Firehosing”**

Do not constantly pan back and forth. If you do need to do a pan (moving across from right to left or left to right), point your feet in the direction the pan will end and begin the shot with your waist turned.

**Zooming**

Only use a zoom when you can't interrupt the action to reset your shot selections or when you want to create a single, unique effect. (Rack Focus This unique effect is created by having a near and far object in the shot and slowly changing focus from one to the other while recording. You must be familiar with your camera's settings to get this effect.)