

Video Production Jargon

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action axis An imaginary line drawn between two subjects or along a line of motion to maintain continuity of screen direction. Crossing it from one shot to the next creates an error in continuity. It is also referred to as the "180-degree rule."

closeup (CU) A tightly framed camera shot in which the principal subject is viewed at close range, appearing large and dominant on screen. Pulled back slightly is a "medium closeup" while zoomed in very close is an "extreme closeup (ECU or XCU).

composition Visual make-up of a video picture, including such variables as balance, framing, field of view and texture all aesthetic considerations. Combined qualities form an image that's pleasing to view.

depth of field Range in front of a camera's lens in which objects appear in focus. Depth of field varies with subject-to-camera distance, focal length of a camera lens and a camera's aperture setting.

essential area Boundaries within which contents of a television picture are sure to be seen, regardless of masking differences in receiver displays. Also called the "critical area" or "safe action area," it encompasses the inner 80 percent of the screen

establishing shot Opening image of a program or scene. Usually, it's a wide and/or distant perspective that orients viewers to the overall setting and surroundings.

follow focus Controlling lens focus so that an image maintains sharpness and clarity despite camcorder and/or subject

movement.

framing Act of composing a shot in a camcorder's viewfinder for desired content, angle and field of view.

headroom Space between the top of a subject's head and a monitor's upper-screen edge. Too much headroom makes the subject appear to fall out of the frame.

long shot (LS) Camera view of a subject or scene from a distance, showing a broad perspective.

medium shot (MS) Defines any camera perspective between long shot and closeup, viewing the subjects from a medium distance.

nose room The distance between the subject and the edge of the frame in the direction the subject is looking. Also called "look room."

over-the-shoulder shot View of the primary subject with the back of another person's shoulder and head in the foreground. Often used in interview situations.

pan Horizontal camera pivot, right to left or left to right, from a stationary position.

pedestal A camera move vertically lowering or raising the camcorder, approaching either the floor or the ceiling, while keeping the camera level.

point-of-view shot (POV) Shot perspective whereby the video camera assumes a subject's view and thus viewers see what the subject sees.

rack focus Shifting focus between subjects in the background and foreground so a viewer's attention moves from subject to subject as the focus shifts.

remote Video shoot performed on location, outside a controlled studio environment.

rule of thirds Composition theory based on dividing the screen

into thirds vertically and horizontally and the placement of the main subject along those lines.

scene In the language of moving images, a sequence of related shots usually constituting action in one particular location. [See shot]

shot Intentional, isolated camera views, which collectively comprise a particular scene. [See scene]

two-shot A camera view including two subjects, most generally applicable to interview situations.

tilt Vertical camcorder rotation (up and down) from a single axis, as on a tripod.

tracking Lateral camcorder movement that travels with a moving subject. The camcorder should maintain a regulated distance from the subject.

vignette Visual special effect whereby viewers see images through a perceived keyhole, heart shape, diamond, etc. In low-budget form, vignettes are achieved by aiming the camera through a cutout of a desired vignette.

whip pan (swish pan) Extremely rapid camera movement from left to right or right to left, appearing as an image blur. Two such pans in the same direction, edited together one moving from, the other moving to a stationary shot can effectively convey the passage of time or a change of location.

zoom Variance of focal length from wide-angle to telephoto, or vice versa, in one continuous move. "Zoom in" and "zoom out" are common terms.