Shot size, camera angles, point of view and camera movement

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When filming, the positioning of the camera is vital in creating the mood, setting and characterisation. In early films, the whole human figure could be seen at all times from the frontal position, as if the audience was watching action on a stage. By adjusting shot size and camera angles, today's directors can lure the audience into a closer relationship with the characters on the screen.

Shot size refers to the relative size of a subject on the screen, the distance of the subject from the camera, and the implied distance of the audience from the subject.

1. Match the key term to its definition by placing the corresponding letter next to each key term.

Key term	Definition
long shot ( )	A. A camera shot in which a person's head and shoulders take up the whole screen.
medium shot ( )	B. A camera shot framing the whole human in the context of their environment.
close-up ( )	C. A camera shot framing a person from the middle half of their body, such as from the waist upwards.

Camera angle refers to the angle from which a camera shot is taken. A camera can be directed at its subject from any angle, but the four main angles are neutral, high, low and oblique.

Word bank

up eye down low higher

tilting skewed horizontal

2. Use the word bank to fill in the missing words from the following definitions.

   a. A neutral angle shot positions the camera at level, without .

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b. A high angle shot positions the camera at a _____ level than the subject on screen, with the camera tilting _____ towards the subject.

c. A _____ angle shot positions the camera at a lower level (below eye level) than the subject on screen, with the camera tilted _____ towards the subject.

d. An oblique angle shot positions the camera to one side so the _____ line is not level and the world is represented from a _____ perspective.

Another critical component of the camera position for the director is the perspective from which the camera and the viewers see the action. Point of view refers to the perspective from which the camera is positioned to view the action in a shot. In a point-of-view shot, the camera position is aligned with the viewing position of a character on the screen.

Camera movement refers to the motion of the camera in relation to what is being filmed. The first cameras were too large to move and so it was the motion in the picture rather than the motion of the camera that created the on-screen action.

A handheld camera, panning, tracking, tilting and crane shots are all examples of camera movement.



3. Match the key terms to their correct definitions by inserting the term in the correct definition that follows.

Key terms

panning shot tracking shot crane shot

tilting shot handheld camera

Definitions

a. A [ ] is a camera movement that scans screen space along the horizontal plane, moving right to left to give the impression of a head turning, often to follow a moving figure.

b. A [ ] can be used for both static and mobile framing. A static camera can be tilted up, down or at an oblique sideways angle and locked in position on a tripod to shoot from a high, low or oblique angle.

c. A [ ], also known as a travelling shot, is a mobile framing technique where the camera is mounted on tracks, wheels or any device that allows it to move through space and follow the action.

d. A [ ] enables a wide range of sophisticated camera movements by mounting the camera on a vehicle with wheels as well as an elevated mechanical arm that can move the camera, up, down or sideways.

e. A [ ] is a mobile framing technique in which the cinematographer carries the camera instead of using a tripod, producing a wide range of movements with a jerky appearance.