

Videography terms

Use types of shots in your commercial to ensure variety. On your storyboard form, indicate the type of shot using the abbreviations given here. Not all definitions have abbreviations.

ESTABLISHING/WIDE SHOT (WS): Every piece must have one. It's usually a long shot (perhaps of a high angle) of the setting that puts the viewer in the frame of mind. Ex: A story about a soccer game will show the field.

MEDIUM SHOT (MS): Find something within the establishing shot to frame and shoot in a medium distance shot. This provides a natural and logical sense of motion into the setting. (Two students sitting in the stands.)

CLOSE-UP (CU): Find something within the medium shot to focus on and **fill the frame** (fingers on a keyboard, hand on a hip, the spatula flipping the burger, keys into the ignition, foot kicking the ball, etc).

EXTREME CLOSE-UP (ECU): Same as close-up except that the subject *more than* fills the frame. Foreheads and chins on faces are cut out and only the focal point of action is shown with little perspective. These shots can show the tension in people's faces, the detail of hands at work, blades of grass blowing in the wind, etc.

PANS (PAN): Can move from top to bottom, up to down, left to right (but not usually right to left). Vary the speeds in your pans. Do several takes. Pans must have a clear, steady start and finish. Give 2 seconds of rest at the beginning and end to ensure a clear stop and finish.

ZOOM-IN/ZOOM-OUT (FG=FOREGROUND; BG=BACKGROUND): Pacing is key. You can have "MTV" effects where the zoom is manual and rapid, but make sure that's the tone you are setting for the whole piece. Otherwise use the auto zoom-in/zoom-out feature on your camera. Like pans, zooms must have clear starts and stops. When you zoom out, leave an uninteresting shot for something more interesting. For zoom-ins, don't zoom to something inanimate. For example, zoom out from the clock on the wall to the student laughing, not the other way around.

WRAC/PULLED FOCUS (PF, FG, BG): Shows more than 1 subject in a row giving the illusion of depth. Focus on the subject in the foreground, then focus on the subject in the background. You can reverse the process going from background to foreground.

OVER THE SHOULDER (OTS): The camera takes the point of view (POV) of a third person listening in on the conversation between two people. The camera literally shoots over the shoulder of one of the subjects speaking.

ANGLES: Point the viewfinder straight up so you can hold the camera lower, looking down through the finder. Feel free to stand on chairs, get on your knees, lie on the floor, find the angle that shows the scene differently. Showing subjects from low camera angles makes them seem more important, larger and grander. Taking high angles on the subjects makes them seem smaller, insignificant.

STAND-UP: Usually comes in the middle or end of piece. This is the reporter speaking on-air, facing the camera. Don't begin piece with stand-up unless you're live on location transitioning to taped story. Don't do anything unprofessional in these shoots—practice your script in advance. Frame yourself facing *slightly* left or right for depth, shoot from chest up and don't "eat the mic."

KINETIC CAMERA MOVEMENT: Shoulder mounted videography is inherently unstable, but sometimes you want to exaggerate the feeling by moving around subjects (like *ER* in an emergency situation or *NYPD Blue*.) Be careful when you zoom in, the lens is more sensitive to the slightest movements including deep breathing. Some videographers won't drink caffeine or smoke before special assignments to avoid camera jiggles.