Reading a frame

Full course PDF

Learn framing, camera, light, prompts and delivery through short lessons and practice.

2. Reading a frame

The subject’s size within the frame. Name the term: _____.

Shot scale

The subject’s size within the frame.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

The subject occupies little of an expansive view. Name the term: _____.

Extreme long shot

The subject occupies little of an expansive view.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

A standing figure fits nearly the full frame height. Name the term: _____.

Long shot

A standing figure fits nearly the full frame height.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

A person is framed approximately from the chest upward. Name the term: _____.

Medium close-up

A person is framed approximately from the chest upward.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

A head or comparably sized object dominates the frame. Name the term: _____.

Close-up

A head or comparably sized object dominates the frame.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

A small detail dominates the image. Name the term: _____.

Extreme close-up

A small detail dominates the image.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

The camera looks from above the subject. Name the term: _____.

High angle

The camera looks from above the subject.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

The camera looks from below the subject. Name the term: _____.

Low angle

The camera looks from below the subject.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

The frame is rolled away from level. Name the term: _____.

Canted framing

The frame is rolled away from level.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

The image approximates what a character sees. Name the term: _____.

Point of view

The image approximates what a character sees.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

Shot-size labels depend on context; they are not universal cuts. Name the term: _____.

Scale boundaries

Shot-size labels depend on context; they are not universal cuts.

Working definitions with sources; labels describe practices rather than guaranteed model behaviour.

https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/cinematography/ · 2026-09-16

How would you use this principle: Operate the intention, not the actor?

a move that anticipates a turn reads as authorship, a move that chases it reads as an accident. Learn the action well enough to be very slightly early, every time.

https://shotcraft.video/learn/crafts/camera-operator/

How would you use this principle: Composition is the management of empty space?

where you leave room tells an audience where to expect something. A walking figure with lead room feels ordinary; the same figure pressed against the leading edge feels pursued, and nothing else in the frame has to change.

https://shotcraft.video/learn/crafts/camera-operator/

How would you use this principle: Match the look, not just the side of the line?

coverage cuts together when the height and angle of an eyeline agree, not merely when both singles stay within the same 180 degrees. Two performances photographed hours apart become one conversation only if the looks line up.

https://shotcraft.video/learn/crafts/camera-operator/

How would you use this principle: The settle is part of the move?

audiences forgive a rough start far more readily than a frame that never comes to rest. Decide the final frame first and work backwards to the start position.

https://shotcraft.video/learn/crafts/camera-operator/

How would you use this principle: The operator is the last human filter before recording?

nobody in post can put back what the frame excluded, so a problem seen in the eyepiece has to be said out loud before the take, not after it.

https://shotcraft.video/learn/crafts/camera-operator/

Progress can be exported to a file and imported again. With no server, that file is the only real guarantee — browsers do clear storage.