

# MICRO ELEMENTS OF FILM STUDIES

## ANGLES

- **HIGH** The camera is above the subject
- **LOW** The camera is below the subject
- **CANTED** The subject appears tilted
- **EYE LEVEL** Camera is level with subject's eyes
- **BIRD'S EYE** Camera is high in the air
- **WORM'S EYE** Camera is low on the ground

## SHOT SIZE

- **EXTREME LONG SHOT (XLS)** Subject is far away
- **LONG SHOT (LS)** Whole subject can be seen
- **MEDIUM LONG SHOT (MLS)** Top of head to thighs
- **MEDIUM/MID SHOT (MS)** Top of head to waist
- **MEDIUM CLOSE-UP (MCU)** Top of head to chest
- **CLOSE-UP (CU)** Top of head & shoulders
- **BIG CLOSE-UP (BCU)** Whole head
- **EXTREME CLOSE-UP (ECU)** A part of the head

## MOVEMENT

- **PAN** Camera moves left or right-shaking
- **TILT** Camera moves up and down-nodding
- **PED** Camera looks forward, sliding up or down
- **DOLLY** Camera moves forward, fixed position
- **TRACK** Smooth sideways shot. Aka, 'crab'
- **ZOOM** Camera lens moves forward or back
- **CRANE** Not placed on tripod, held 'in hands'
- **STEADICAM** From perspective of a person
- **POV**

## LIGHTING & COLOUR

The brightness, colour, position and size of light. The overall colour, tone or temperature of a scene.

## OTHER ASPECTS

Cinematography may also include features such as aspect ration, film stock, lens, depth of field and more.

## MISE-EN-SCENE

### SETTINGS & PROPS

Where the scene is, when the scene is and the objects used to show this.

### POSITION OF PEOPLE AND OBJECTS

Where people have been told to stand or move based on what the script or Director has decided. Also applies for props—why are certain props in certain places and used or not?

### COSTUME, HAIR & MAKE-UP

Clothes worn & style of hair.

### FACIAL EXPRESSION & BODY LANGUAGE

How people move their body and faces

## EDITING

- **JUMP CUT** Sudden cut from one shot to another
- **FADE-OUT** A fade from one scene to another
- **DISSOLVE** Gradual fade as the image dissolves
- **CUT AWAY** Film cuts to something else off screen.
- **WIPE** Image wipes to reveal a new image.
- **MATCH-ON ACTION** Is a cut that shows two views of the same action.
- **GRAPHIC MATCH** One object is matched by one of a similar shape on the next shot.

## PERFORMANCE

- |             |                |               |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| SHY         | TRANSFORMATIVE | BRASH         |
| FLIRTATIOUS | REALISTIC      | RASH          |
| ADVENTUROUS | SILLY          | IRRESPONSIBLE |
| IMMATURE    | CHILDISH       | CHEMISTRY     |
| WILD        | AGGRESSIVE     | IMPOSING      |
| CAREFREE    | CAMP           | CHILD-LIKE    |
| COURAGEOUS  |                | METHOD ACTING |

## EFFECTS

- |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| DEAFENING | BANG      | HOWL       |
| HARSH     | BUZZ      | ECHOING    |
| LOUD      | CRACKLING | GROWL      |
| SUBTLE    | SCREECH   | WHIMPER    |
| BRASH     | SNAPPING  | RUMBLE     |
| MUFFLED   | THUD      | ROAR       |
| MELODIOUS | RUSTLE    | VOCIFEROUS |

## TYPES

- DIEGETIC** Sound the characters can hear
- NON DIEGETIC** Sound the characters cannot hear
- CONTRAPUNTAL** Sound that is in contrast to the images
- PARALLEL** Sound that is similar to the images

## SOUNDTRACK

- |           |          |          |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| BOMBASTIC | CRAWLING | SPRITELY |
| DRAMATIC  | PIERCING | IMPOSING |
| MOVING    | SHRILL   | PACEY    |
| SWEEPING  | PLAYFUL  | REGAL    |
| EVOCATIVE | DELICATE | LAUGUID  |
| PULSING   | CHILLED  | GLOOMY   |
| FAST      | SOARING  | SCARY    |

## SHOT SIZES

- What is the main object we are focusing on? Is it a person?
- How far away from the camera is the object or person?
- Why do you think the camera is where it is?
- How does the camera draw attention to this person or object?
- Would the film *feel* different if the camera was closer/further away?
- Is one character always shown at the same distance?
- Why is one shot size used consistently, i.e; long shots for locations?
- Does the shot size work to show people in the same way?
- Why might the shot size change, even if the object doesn't?

## CAMERA ANGLES

- Where is the camera placed?
- Where is the camera in relation to the main object or person?
- Is the camera looking 'straight on' to the person or object?
- Or is the camera looking at an 'angle'?
- What is the angle trying to communicate?
- Does the angle make a person appear taller or shorter?
- How does the angle chosen help to suggest something?
- Why do you think the angle has been chosen?
- How would it look if the angle was different in some way?

## WHAT IS CINEMATOGRAPHY?

Cinematography is a term that applies to both mise-en-scene and to camera 'work'. It is concerned with the shot size, the camera angle, the movement of the camera and also other elements such as focus, colour, light and shade, ratio, camera stock and lens/camera type. Most of this you will not be expected to know/analyse, but it's important to know that cinematography can include aspects of camera work and mise-en-scene.

## CAMERA MOVEMENT

- Does the camera stay still or does it move at all?
- When the camera moves, what direction does it move?
- How can we describe the movement of the camera?
- Does the movement have a specific term or name?
- What is this movement showing us that it didn't show before?
- Is the movement from the whole camera or the lens zooming?
- Does the movement help to emphasise someone or something?
- What is the connection between what we see at the start of the camera movement, to what we see at the end of the movement?

### CAMERA MOVEMENT

- Pan
- Tilt
- Dolly
- Zoom
- Crane
- Ped
- Track
- Crab
- Steadicam

### SHOT ANGLE

- High
- Low
- Canted
- Eye-level
- Bird's Eye
- Worm's Eye

### SHOT SIZE

- Extreme long shot (XLS)
- Long shot (LS)
- Medium long shot (MLS)
- Medium shot (MS)
- Medium close-up (MCU)
- Close-up (CU)
- Big close-up (BCU)
- Extreme close-up (ECU)

SHOT SIZES

CAMERA ANGLES

DESCRIPTION OF SCENE

CAMERA MOVEMENT

MOST IMPORTANT SHOTS OR MOVEMENTS

## **SETTING & PROPS**

- Where is this scene taking place?
- What do we learn about the situation?
- Was an establishing shot used to set the scene?
- How does the setting communicate ideas about the film?
- Is the setting a generic convention?
- What props can we see?
- Do the props help to establish a time or place?
- Are there any significant props?

## **COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP:**

- How are people dressed?
- Does anyone stand out with their costume? In what way?
- What does the clothing of everyone suggest about the situation or scene?
- Is hair used to signify anything about any characters?
- Do people have make up on? Who? Why?
- Is make-up used as a visual effect to create a specific appearance for a character?

## **FACIAL EXPRESSION AND BODY LANGUAGE:**

- Are the actors using their faces in an interesting way? Are they pulling a certain face?! What does this tell us?
- How are people standing? Are they posing in a certain way of using their body to communicate their feelings at all?
- What can we learn about people based just on their faces and how they're reacting to others around them? Is it suggesting anything about their feelings, emotions or character as a person?

## **LIGHTING AND COLOUR :**

- Is this scene bright/dark? What colours stand out? Is anything particularly bright? Where is the light coming from?
- Are there any parts of the scene that are darker than others?
- Why is this lighting like this? What does it tell us about the time of day or the situation as a whole?
- What does the colour or light tell us about the people or scene?
- Has the overall colour been graded in post-production? Why?

## **POSITIONING OF OBJECTS AND PEOPLE:**

- Where are the people standing? Is anyone in a place that really stands out? Where?
- Who is the most important person in this scene? How can we tell this?
- What do we learn about this situation or scene based on what we can see in terms of where people and objects are?
- What does the composition of the scene direct us to look at?
- Are any props placed in a significant place? For what reason?

**SETTING & PROPS**

**COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP:**

**FACIAL EXPRESSION AND BODY LANGUAGE:**

**LIGHTING AND COLOUR :**

**POSITIONING OF OBJECTS AND PEOPLE:**

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## **PRODUCTION DESIGN:**

- How would you describe the overall look of the film?
- Does the mise-en-scene create a time period or help to establish a genre?
- Is character or personality reflected in the production design? How is this achieved?

## **FACIAL EXPRESSION AND BODY LANGUAGE:**

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## **STOCK & ASPECT RATIO**

- How does the film stock appear; clean and clear, dirty or mottled?
- Has film stock been used or has the film been digitally graded to create grain? Why?
- What aspect ratio is the film? Why was that chosen?

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**SETTING & PROPS**

**COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP:**

**PRODUCTION DESIGN:**

**FACIAL EXPRESSION AND BODY LANGUAGE:**

**STOCK & ASPECT RATIO**

**LIGHTING AND COLOUR :**

**POSITIONING OF OBJECTS AND PEOPLE:**

## **SOUNDTRACK**

- Is a recognisable song playing? Do you think it fits the scene?
- What does that song make you think of or suggest?
- Does the song tell us about the character or their situation?
- How do the songs chosen make you or the characters react?
- In what way would a scene feel if a different song was chosen?
- If there are lyrics, do they suggest anything about the film?
- Does the pace of the song suggest something about the tone or the feeling of the scene? What is it trying to tell us?
- What does the song choice tell us about the target audience?

## **THE SCORE**

- Is the music fast or slow? Does it increase or decrease in pace?
- Does the music fit with what's happening on screen?
- Does the speed of the music change when something happens on screen? What does this suggest if so?
- Is the music high or low in pitch?
- What does the pitch of the music suggest about the action?
- How do you think that the music is trying to make the audience feel? What clues in the score tell us this?

## **DESCRIPTION OF SOUND IN THE CLIP**

- What types of sound can you hear? Soundtrack? Sound effects?
- Are the sounds diegetic or non-diegetic? If unsure, try to imagine being in the position of the characters in the scene-do you think they can hear the sounds? Can they only hear some of them?
- Is the music playing a recognisable song? This is the soundtrack.
- Or is the music more traditional, created with an orchestra, usually without lyrics or singing? If so, this is called the score.
- Are any sounds louder than others? Which ones? Why?

## **SOUND EFFECTS**

- What sounds that aren't music can you hear?
- What do those sounds tell the audience is happening?
- Can the characters hear the sound effects?
- How do the sound effects make the audience react?
- Are some of the sound effects louder than others? Why?
- How were these sound effects created? Are they 'natural' sounding or do you think they were added via foley work?
- How do the sound effects contribute to genre and/or narrative?

## **MOST NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF SOUND**

- Listen to the extract without watching; what sounds stand out the most? Why are they so important do you think?
- What is the loudest part of the sound? Why?
- How clear is the dialogue? Can you hear people talking?
- Is the dialogue being supported by a score or song? If so, what does it suggest about the words being said?
- How are people talking? Do the sound excited, panicked, calm or something else? What does this suggest to the audience?



**SOUNDTRACK**

**THE SCORE**

**DESCRIPTION OF SOUND IN THE CLIP**

SOUND

**SOUND EFFECTS**

**MOST NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF SOUND**

## SOUNDTRACK

- Does the soundtrack use any songs you recognise?
- If you recognise the songs, do you think it fits the scene & film?
- What does that song make you think of or suggest?
- Does the song tell us something about the character or their situation?
- Is there a link between the songs chosen? Do the artists have anything in common or a specific audience type they share?
- If you don't recognise any songs, why might that be?
- How do the songs chosen make you or the characters react?
- In what way would a scene feel if a different song was chosen?

## THE SCORE

- Is the score noticeable? Does it stand out? When? Why then?
- Do you notice the score more during certain types of scenes?
- Overall, what emotions do you think the score is trying to create?
- Would you say the score was fast, or slow? Does it change?
- Is the score high or low? When does this change or develop?
- Are any leitmotif's being used at all? How can you tell?
- Why do you think a leitmotif is used for some characters?
- Has a sound bridge been used at all? What purpose did it serve?
- Would you say the sound is contrapuntal or parallel?

## EDITING WITH SOUND

- **Sound bridge** - When sound carries over a visual transition in a film. This connects the mood from one scene to another.
- **Contrapuntal sound** - The sounds or music used is in contrast with the scene it has been inserted into.
- **Parallel sound** - The sounds of music suit and fit with the scene it has been inserted into.

## WHAT TYPE OF SOUND IS IT?

Try watching a film with your eyes closed-can you tell what is happening just through the use of sound?

**Score** is the music written to be played in the background of the film.

**Soundtrack** is a collection of pre-recorded songs chosen to represent the mood and feeling of the film.

**Sound effects** are sounds other than speech that helps to emphasise the sound that something makes, are also vital for any film.

## POST-PRODUCTION SOUND

- **ADR** - Additional dialogue recording; the method of having an actor re-record dialogue or other sounds after filming.
- **Synchronous sound** - Sound that is matched to certain movements occurring in the scene e.g when footsteps correspond to feet walking.
- **Ambient sound** - Sound which helps to set a scene by providing background noise.

## SOUND EFFECTS

- What sound effects stand out?
- Are sound effects more noticeable at any point?
- How do the sound effects have an impact on the film or a scene?
- How has the use of foley work impacted on the effects?
- What do the sound effects communicate to the audience?
- Do the sound effects help to tell us something about a prop?
- Are these sounds diegetic? Why? What is the purpose?
- What ambient sounds do you think may have been added? Why?
- Do any of the effects come from ADR work at all? How can you tell?

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Diegetic** - Sound that occurs within the world of the film.
- **Non-diegetic** - Sound that does NOT occur within the world of the film; the characters cannot hear this sound
- **Dialogue** - Commonly used as way of referring to the sound of two people talking.
- **Sound bridge** - When sound carries over a visual transition in a film.
- **Leitmotif** - A frequently recurring bit of melody or soundtrack which is associated with a person, thing, or emotion; Leitmotiv is German for "leading theme." Often used as a 'theme tune' for a specific character.
- **Asynchronous sound** - Sound which is NOT in-sync with the action on the screen - both in terms of timing and atmosphere.

**SOUNDTRACK**

**THE SCORE**

**EDITING WITH SOUND**

**WHAT TYPE OF SOUND IS IT?**

**POST-PRODUCTION SOUND**

**SOUND EFFECTS**

**KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

## TRANSITIONS

- How does the film move from scene to another?
- Is there something visually on screen that joins two different scenes?
- Does one shot or scene physically move in or out of the frame?
- Why do you think a transition has been used? What does it suggest about the scene, character, film or tries to tell the audience?
- How would the audience react if a different transition has been used?
- If a dissolve is used, what two things does it join and why?
- What does a fade to black suggest?

## PACE

- How quickly do the images on screen change?
- How would you describe the pace of the scene overall; fast or slow? Could you think of other words to describe this pace?
- Do some shots stay on screen longer than others? Why?
- If pace is slow, what is it trying to emphasise or make clear?
- How does the pace link with other elements of film language, such as the soundtrack or score, performance or mise-en-scene?
- What does the pace suggest overall?

## WHAT IS EDITING?

Editing is the process of assembling different shots into a coherent order. This is largely done in post-production and will involve using different techniques and skills to produce a whole film. Editing is vital as it allows the film to communicate to an audience and also perhaps restrict or play with what the audience is being allowed to know and when. Editing is a complicated and exciting area of film studies as there are so many possible approaches with how to edit a film and why certain techniques have been used.

## WHAT DOES THE EDITING COMMUNICATE?

- Why does the film cut from one shot to another?
- How does the editing help to propel the story along?
- Does the sound carry across or stop with the cut?
- Has the editing directly created tension or suspense? How?
- Does the film use a variety of editing transitions? Why?
- Has sound been used to emphasis a cut? How? Why?
- How have any cuts been hidden? Why was this done?
- What does the editing suggest to the audience?

## KEY TERMS

- |                      |                      |                   |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| • Kuleshov           | • Director's cut     | • Dailies         |
| • Continuity editing | • Non-linear editing | • Eisenstein      |
| • Montage            | • Final cut          | • Juxtapose       |
| • Transition         | • 180 degree rule    | • Superimposition |
| • Cross-cutting      | • Sequence           | • Ellipsis        |
| • Flashback          | • Master shot        | • Insert          |
| • Editor             | • Rushes             | •                 |

**TRANSITIONS**

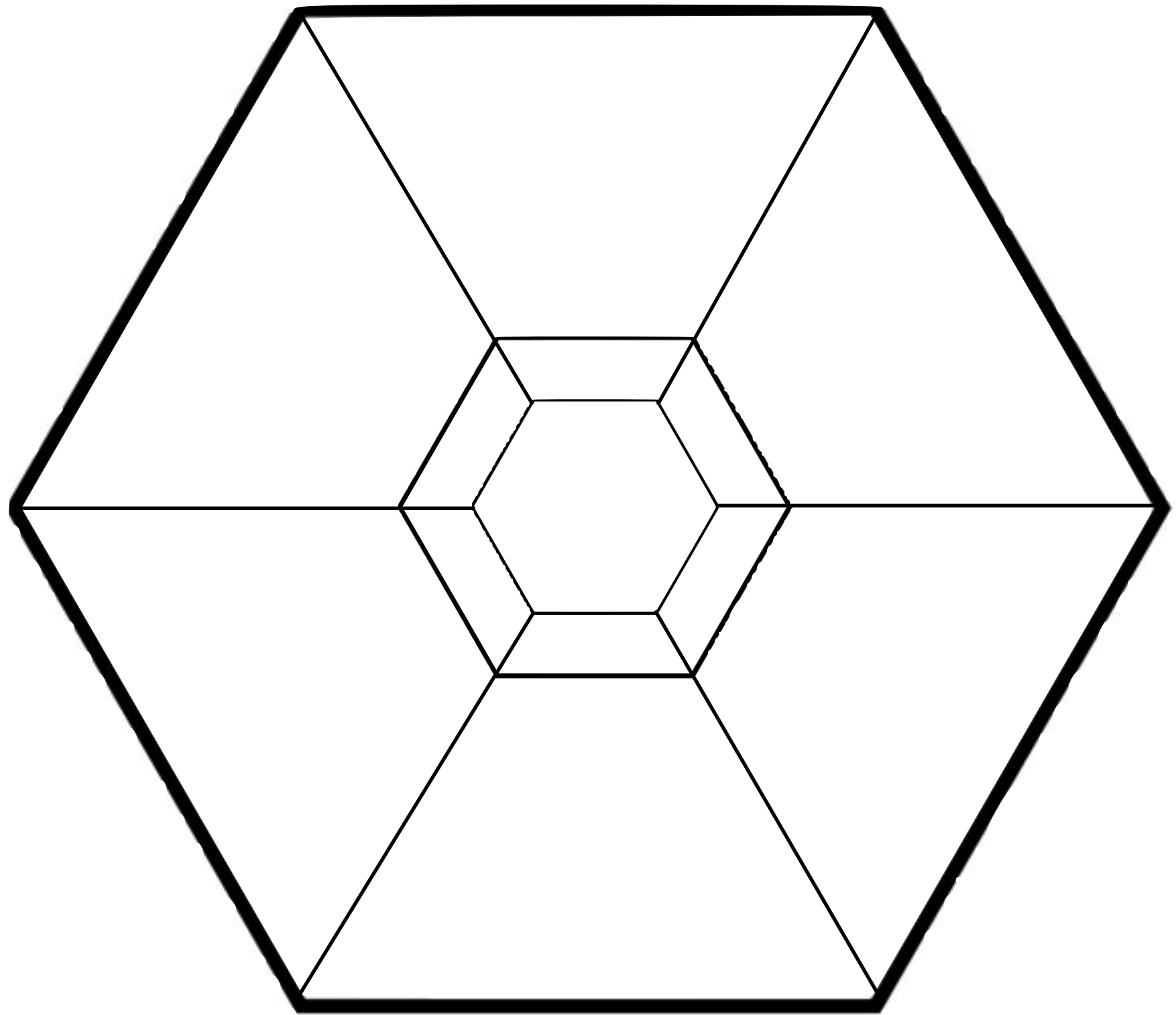
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**DESCRIPTION OF EDITING IN SCENE**

EDITING

**WHAT DOES THE EDITING COMMUNICATE?**

**NOTABLE MOMENTS OF EDITING IN THE SCENE**





Thanks for taking the time to check out this resource; it's been designed to help students focus on "micro-elements" of Film that can be applied and used in both Film and Media studies when analysing a key scene or key text. By way of a quick explanation of how I use these "revision mats" in my own lessons:

The first, main 'mat' includes the 5 main aspects of film language which is then either broken down into further 'sub-aspects' or includes some key vocabulary that could be used to help explain that element. I often ask students to have this with them as a way of prompting their memories in regards to the differing elements, or will ask members of groups to focus on just one element each with the group then producing an overall analysis of *all* elements.

To compliment each aspect (apart from 'Performance' (which I'm yet to finish!) is an individual 'mat' that offers further specific details and key ideas. Most of these 'mats' then feature a range of questions that act as prompts for each 'sub-aspects'. Directly after each 'mat' is a blank 'mat' of the same layout that is designed to be used to take notes on each section. Some elements then have a further 'stretch and challenge' mat with more in-depth questions and further 'sub-aspects' to really develop a deep and thorough appreciation for each elements. These too feature a blank 'mat' directly afterwards to aid in note taking.

Finally, a blank 'analysis hexagon' has also been included. I, and my students, find these incredibly useful when analysing a range of different elements at once. The small hexagon in the middle is best used to write the question being asked, the overall idea for analysis or simply the name of the film or a summary of the clip being studied. The small rhombus shapes can then be filled in with the aspect/element of film language being studied and then finally, the largest blank space can be used to take notes on the specific examples of film language.

I hope you find these resources as useful and I do and please get in touch with any suggestions/recommendations or queries about this or any other of my resources.

Many thanks,  
Ian.