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Camera Angles

Learn how to use camera angles and movements in your video projects

Introduction

The way a **camera** is pointed or it's **angle**, can have a big effect on the story:

- Can introduce a person or place and their relationship
- Can affect how we perceive a character
- Can emphasise the size of a place
- Can add dynamics to a shot
- Can put an action into focus
- Etc...

Camera Angles

Topics

1. Camera Angles
2. Camera movement

1. Camera Angles

The terms **Camera Angles** and **Perspective** mean slightly different things to different people:

- may include shot types or frames (film)
- May mean the relationship between the camera and subject (photo)

We will be looking at the practical interpretation of the angle of the camera relative to the **subject** and it's **emotional impact** to the viewer.

1. Camera Angles

Let's use the 1966 film: *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*



1. Camera Angles

We'll start with the **Eye Level Angle (ELA)**:

Characteristics:

- It's the real-world angle we are all used to it
- It is a fairly neutral shot

Meaning:

- Nothing much
- expect to see in real life



1. Camera Angles

But...to create an emotional impact on your audience, you need to leave the **ELA** by “***Stepping into the Action***”!

- Where the camera progresses into and out of a scene
- Each ***step*** or ***frame*** has meaning and is important
- leading the audience into and out of the action/emotion
- It is the order in which ***frames*** are typically presented

Which ***step*** or ***frame*** is the first the audience will typically see?

1. Camera Angles

The **Establishing Shot (ES)**: aka **Master Shot**

Characteristics:

- Used at the beginning of a scene
- may contain a large amount of landscape

Meaning:

- Used to Introduce or establish a location, situation, era, (general setting)



1. Camera Angles

The **Extreme Wide Shot (EWS)**:

Characteristics:

- Used like **ES** may contain a large amount of landscape
- Wide shots are captured with **wide-angle lens**

Meaning:

- Introduces a new location at the beginning of a scene



1. Camera Angles

The **Wide/Long Shot (WS)**: are interchangeable terms

Characteristics:

- Also used like **ES** but tighter

Meaning:

- The specific location where the action will be taking place
- May also introduce the characters



1. Camera Angles

The **Full Shot (FS)**: between the **W/LS** and **MS**

Characteristics:

- displays a character(s) from head to toe

Meaning:

- Introduces characters and relationships
- Emphasis on the subjects not the location



1. Camera Angles

The **Two/Three Shot (2-Shot)**: between the **W/LS** and **MS**

Characteristics:

- Used the same as **FS** when two or three subject are in the frame

Meaning:

- Also shows the relationships



1. Camera Angles

The **Medium Shot (MS)**: between a **FS** and **CU**

Characteristics:

- Shot from the waist up to top of the head

Meaning:

- We see faces and emotional expressions more clearly



1. Camera Angles

The **Medium Two/Three Shot (MED 2-Shot)**: aka **Social Shot**

Characteristics:

- Used the same as **MS** when two or three subject are in the frame
- Shot from the waist up to top of the head

Meaning:

- Conveys relationships and emotions



1. Camera Angles

The **Medium Close Up (MCU)**: between **MS** and **CU**

Characteristics:

- Shot from the chest area up to the top of the head

Meaning:

- facial expressions and conveys emotions



1. Camera Angles

The **American Shot** aka **Three Quarter Shot (3/4 Shot)**:

Characteristics:

- Shot from above the knees (to show the guns) to above the head (to show the hat)
- Used in spaghetti westerns

Meaning:

- costumes and body language



1. Camera Angles

The **Close Up (CU)**: between **MCU** and **XCU**

Characteristics:

- The subject takes up the whole frame
- aka **Personal Shot**
- aka **Tight Shot**

Meaning:

- facial expressions and emotions



1. Camera Angles

The **Extreme Close Up (XCU)**:

Characteristics:

- contains one part of a face

Meaning:

- meant to intensify an emotion
- Create suspense



1. Camera Angles

The **Cut-In shot (CI)** aka an **Insert Shot**

Characteristics:

- Focus is on an item or an action

Meaning:

- Gives context to the scene
- Emphasis on detail



1. Camera Angles

The **Low Angle Shot (LA)**: Opposite of the **HA**

Characteristics:

Shot from a **Low place** and angled **Upwards**

Meaning:

- accentuates the height of a subject
- emphasising power and immensity



1. Camera Angles

A **High Angle Shot (HA)**: Opposite of the **LA**

Characteristics:

- Shot from a **High place** and angled **downwards** (high)

Meaning:

- diminishing effect on the subject
- less powerful, less significant or submissive



1. Camera Angles

The Oblique Angle: aka Dutch Tilt

Characteristics:

- Like the **LA** and **HA** but the camera is slightly tilted
- Meaning:
- evoke unbalance or instability



1. Camera Angles

The **Over-the-Shoulder Shot (OTS)**: face-to-face to focus

Characteristics:

- Shot from over the shoulders of the subjects

Meaning:

- used when two subjects are interacting
- the attention is on one actor at a time
- Uses the **180° Rule**.



1. Camera Angles

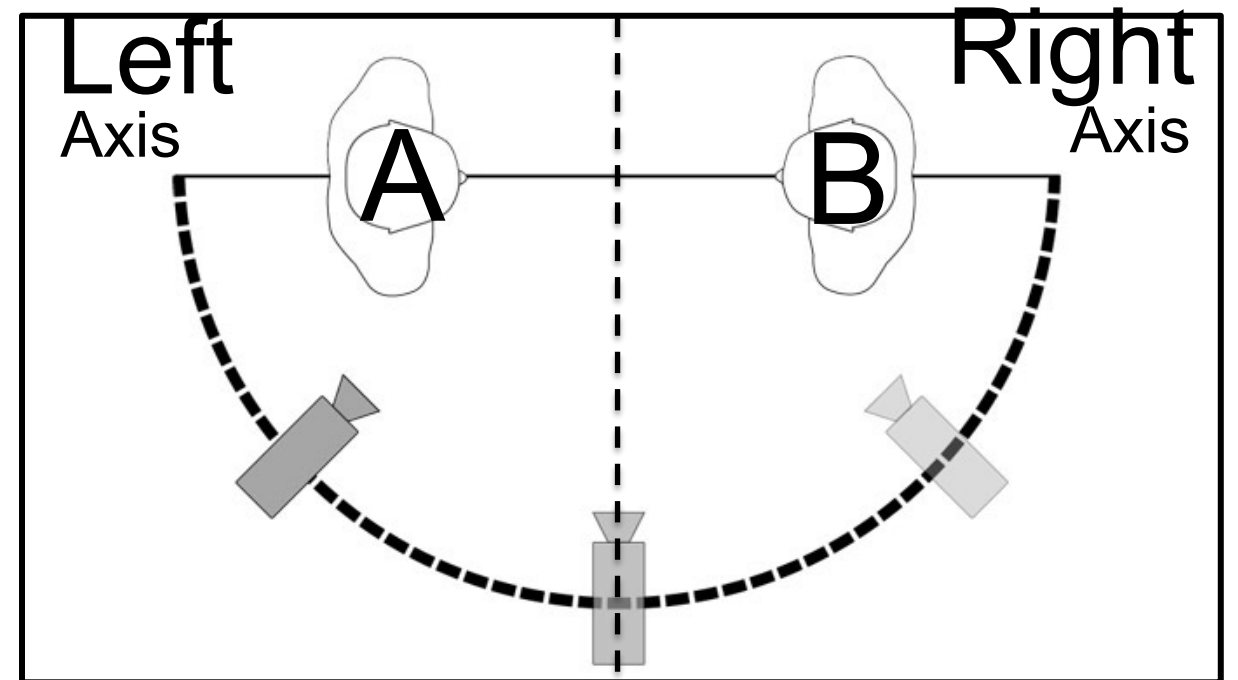
The 180° Rule aka Line of Action:

Characteristics:

- a technique places each of the characters on either the left or right side of the screen

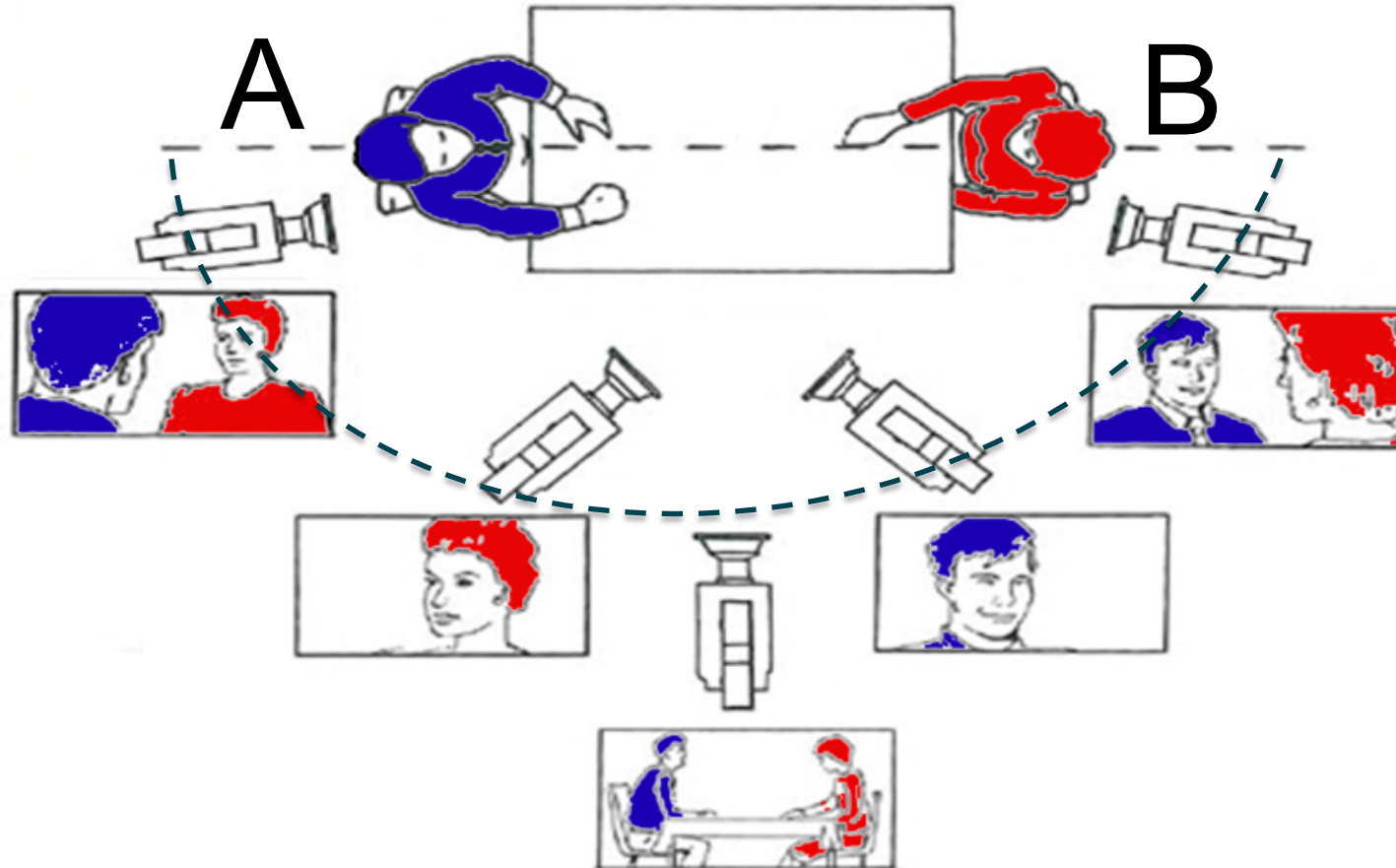
Meaning:

- To not confuse audiences with the composition



1. Camera Angles

No matter where the camera is positioned on the **180 ° axis**, Character **A** will always be on the **left** and **B** on the **right**.



1. Camera Angles

The **Bird's Eye** shot (BES): Drone Shot

Characteristics:

- Shot from directly above the setting

Meaning:

- the viewer to see things the characters can't
- Unfamiliar shot



1. Camera Angles

A Point-of-View (POV):

Characteristics:

- Shot from the direction of what the character sees

Meaning:

- Create suspense
- Put the audience into the action
- Evoke emotion





Guided Practice

Identify the camera angle from the storyboard image:

- Open **tgtbatu_Assignment.docx** found on Canvas
- Write the abbreviations at the top of the frame

The Good the Bad and the Ugly – Final Shoot Out - Storyboards

1	EWS	2	LS	3	WS/2S
					
We See: American dessert		We See: Grave stones in rows		We See: BLONDIE and TICO	

4		5		6	
					
We See: ANGEL EYES, BLONDIE and TICO move backwards into position.		We See: ANGEL EYES, adjusting his jacket to expose his gun.		We See: BLONDIE confidently anticipating the pending danger.	

7		8		9	
					
We See: BLONDIE looking at ANGEL EYES,		We See: ANGEL EYES, looking at BLONDIE.		We See: ANGEL EYES, Hand move slowly along belt towards gun.	

10		11		12	
					

2. Camera movement

One aspect of cinematography that strongly separates it from still photography is the ability to move the camera.

- movement plays a considerable role in the emotional language
- Techniques range from **panning** and **tilting**
- to **dolling**, **tracking** and **craning**
- cameras can also be **handheld**
- Or use Personal stabilizing platforms known as the **Steadicams**

2. Camera movement

A **Static shot** is when the camera is locked down on tripod.

Characteristics:

- Smooth and settling to the viewer

Meaning:

- Allows for focus on the subjects

A **Handheld** shot is the opposite.

- Characteristics:

It is bumpier and sometimes suggests instability

Meaning:

- Often exaggerated by juxtaposing with smooth or locked down shot.

2. Camera movement

Tilting is a vertical shift in viewpoint from a fixed position

Characteristics:

- Used in **bird's eye** shots or to show a drop distance or down to look at the ground (**Tilt-Down**)
- like tipping your head back to look at the sky (**Tilt-Up**)



2. Camera movement

Panning is used to give the viewer a panoramic view.

- horizontal shift in viewpoint from a fixed position
- like turning your head side-to-side
- Mostly used to establish a scenes or setting



2. Camera movement

Dollying is achieved by placing the camera on a moving platform.

Characteristics:

- The camera is usually mounted on a trolley
- used to move the camera closer or farther from the subject
- It can be used to follow a character

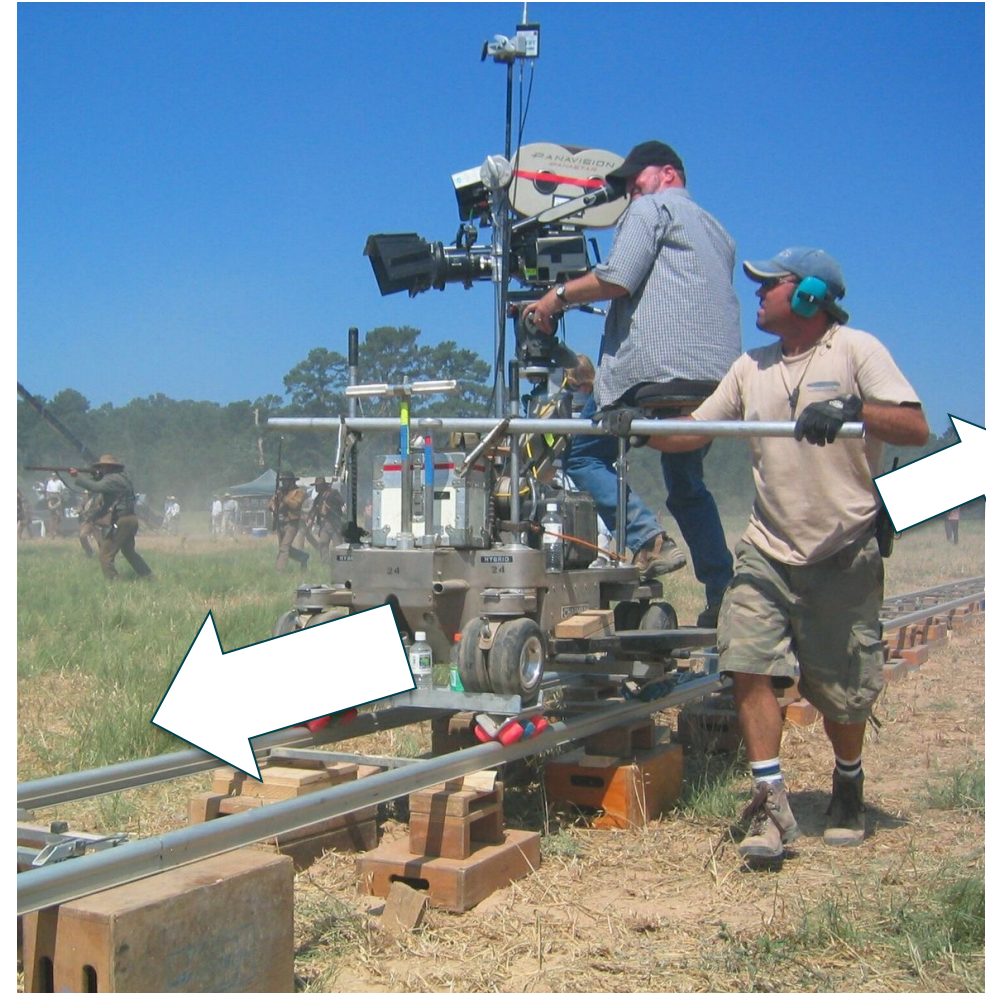


2. Camera movement

Tracking is also achieved by placing the camera on a moving platform to move it from left or right.

Characteristics:

- The camera is also usually rolling on tracks or a trolley to give a smoother motion
- most commonly to explore a room
- gives the viewer a detailed tour of a situation
- It can also be used to follow a character



2. Camera movement

A **crane shot** is often used by composers of films to signify the end of a film or scene.

Characteristics:

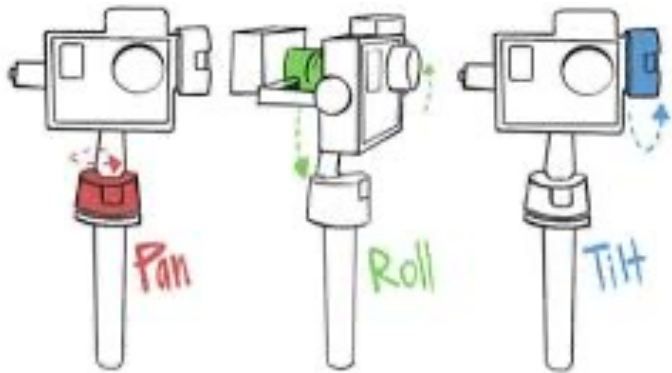
- The camera is mounted on a crane arm and/or mounted on a trolley
- Can Pan, tilt, track or dolly
- it can move upwards or downwards and side to side while holding the camera in an upright position



2. Camera movement

The **Steadicam**: Steady shot with a roaming camera
Characteristics:

- The camera is mounted to a body harness and stabilization arm.
- It allows the operator to move naturally
- isolating the movements of the camera
- Most uses a **3-axis *Gimbal*** and ***weights***



2. Camera movement

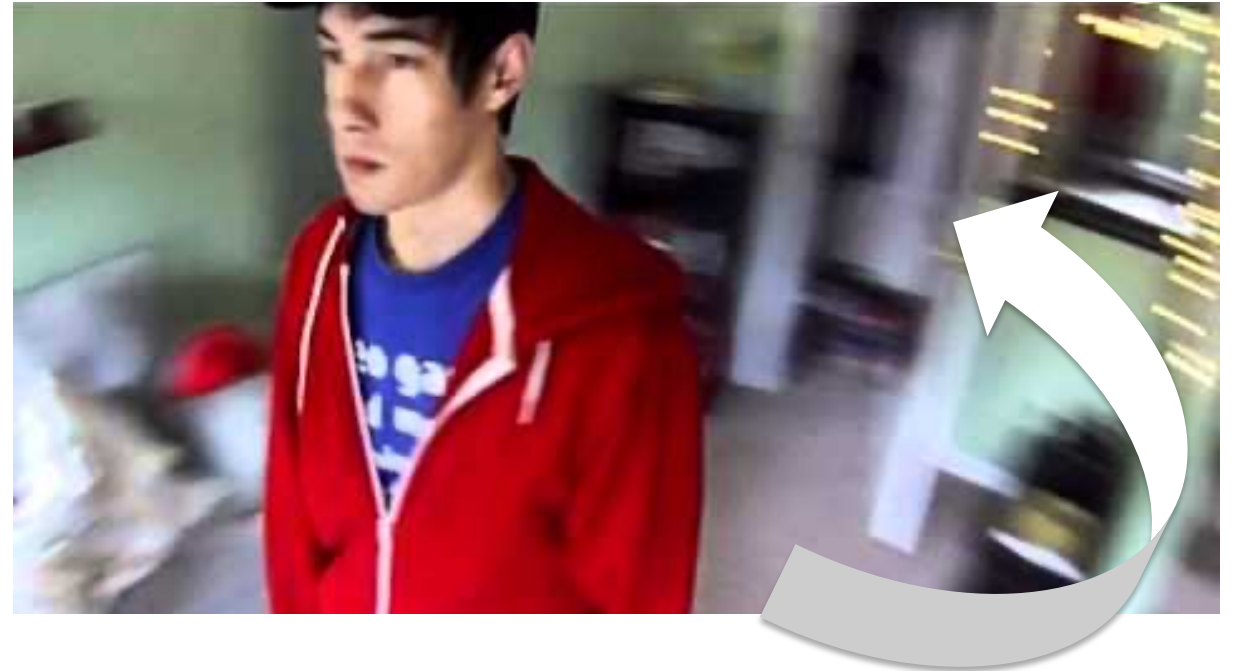
Rotation Shot: has a Disorienting effect

Characteristics:

- Rotation indicates changeover from normal to surreal.
- The camera is usually mounted on a trolley

Meaning:

- Works as a metaphor characterizing the tone of the sequence.



2. Camera movement

Zoom In/Out: has a contextual effect

Characteristics:

- the camera's lens moves closer to or further away from the subject
- The camera could be mounted on a trolley or not
- **Widen** = zooming out – **Tighten** = zooming in

Meaning:

- Sometimes used to Create suspense
- adds context to a subject in relation to his setting or actions



2. Camera movement

Dramatic Zoom or Track-In: gives a dramatic effect

Characteristics:

- The camera is usually mounted on a trolley
- foreground or background become compressed or de-compressed
- narrowing effect - **Push-Out**, zooming out - **Pull-Back**, dollied backwards
- widening effect – **Push-In**, dollied forward - **Pull-Out** zooming in

Meaning:

- To Create suspense



Camera Angles

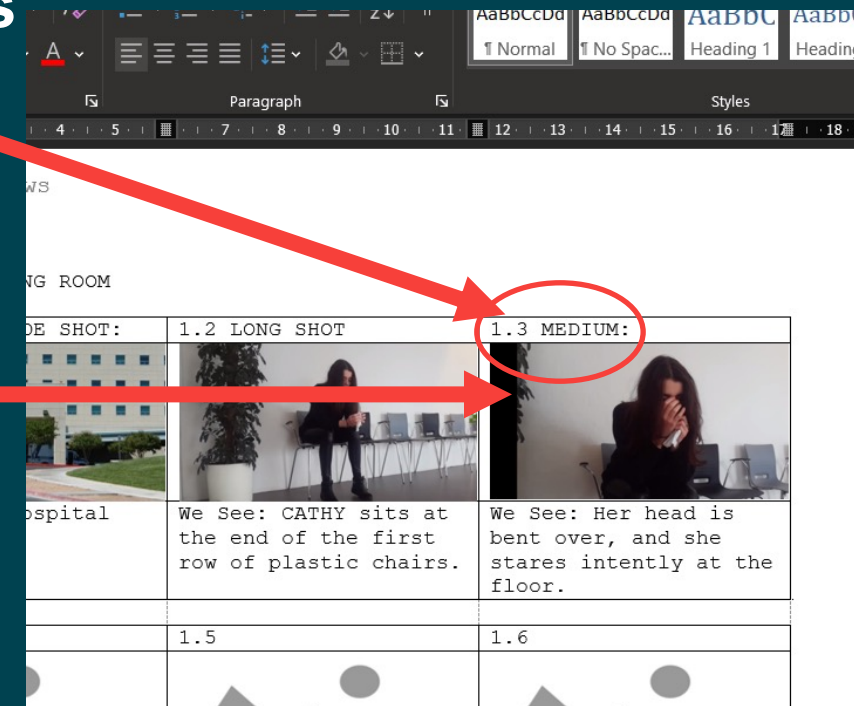
Summary

1. **Camera Angles** - the angle of the camera relative to the subject and its emotional impact to the viewer
2. **Camera movement** – the movement of the camera in relation to the subject and the setting

Independent Practice

It's time to take some photos! Open the **Bad News - Script and Storyboard** found on Canvas:

- Piece together the actions in the scene in chronological order
- Add your **images** and **camera angles /movements** to the **Bad News - Storyboard.docx**
- Use the corresponding storyboard panel
- Have fun!



Reflection

Use 5 - 10 minutes to review the **Subject** of today's lecture:

List the **Topics**:

- What do they mean to you?
- Which **Topic** was the most interesting and why?
- How can you begin to start working this knowledge?
- What new questions have arisen?
- What are you still wondering about?

Resources

Literature

- R. Hunt, J. Marland. 2015. *The Language of Film*. Fairchild Books Pp 120 - 130

Videos

- [15 Essential Camera Shots, Angles and Movements in Filmmaking](#)