

# Pictorial Continuity – Planning, Shooting and Editing

Pictorial continuity is the proper selection of motion picture sequences to create a smoothly flowing, coherent motion picture story.

**Shot types:** Long shot, Medium Shot and Close-up allow us to specify most kinds of shots.

## Long Shot (LS)

1. Shows entire action
2. Can be a landscape or a shot from the feet to the top of the head. There are many variations.
3. Usually used as an establishing shot to give audience broad information about the sequence.
4. Avoid cutting from one long shot to another.
5. Should be far enough back so all action can be recorded without moving camera (although this is not a rule).
6. The long shot often serves as a master shot (where the scene is shot in its entirety). Action can be restaged to film medium and close-up shots which can be inserted in editing.

## Medium Shot (MS)

1. If of a person, generally from the waist to the top of the head.
2. Gives the audience more information about the character & story, than the long shot.
3. Generally a bridge between the long-shot and the close-up.

## Close-up (CU)

1. Gets the audience more involved with the character or subject.
2. There are variations (CU, Extreme CU)
3. Don't jump from the long shot to a close-up. Jarring and sometimes confusing.
4. CU shots are used to show the characters' emotions or details of a scene.

## Establishing and Re-establishing shots

1. Informs audience of location and time of following scene.
2. Re-establish if a new character is introduced, the audience needs reminding of the location (and positioning of characters), to create a breather if the scene is intense, or to end a scene.

## Shooting for smooth editing

1. When covering action with multiple shots, repeat the action the same way each time (ex: Hand picks up pen with RIGHT hand).
2. Always overlap action from shot to shot so that editor has option to cut in various ways (ex: man walks through door completely in both shots)
3. When shooting a new set-up, change the size of the image, or the angle, or both.

**Insert** (sometimes called cut-in): Close-up of a detail of the main action. CU, XCU or MS. Often an object.

(Ex: close-up of knife in man's hand)

**Cutaway:** Shot of something related to the main action, but not in the main action (ex: man watching a fight....the fight is the main action)

Inserts and cutaways can be used in editing to cover discontinuities in the action.

**Parallel Editing** Cutting back and forth between two or more simultaneous events can be used to build suspense, to make comparisons, and to weave a more complex story with multiple characters.

**The Long Take** Great for giving viewer a sense of the real time and space of event, allows viewer to focus on character and drama, but can become static.

## Important aspects of editing

1. Match the action (do not noticeably leave out action or repeat it).
2. Keep the continuity of the story so the audience doesn't get confused.

### **Screen Direction**

1. Sudden change in screen direction, unaccounted for by the action within the shot, can confuse the audience.
2. Follow the 180 degree rule at all times.
3. When possible, keep the action moving in the same direction from shot to shot.
4. If one character is following another, they should be going in the same screen direction.
5. If one character is approaching another, they should face each other (going in opposite screen direction).
6. When a change is made it should be under the following circumstances:
  - a. The subject makes a change within the shot (while the camera is rolling)
  - b. The camera makes a change within the shot
  - c. A neutral insert or cutaway bridge the screen direction change.
  - d. A point-of-view bridges the screen direction change.
  - e. Change of location (ex: from interior to exterior or from desert to seashore)

### **Point of View and Eyeline Matches**

1. What the subject is seeing is important; putting the viewer in the character's position increases identification.
2. The subject looking followed by a cut to what they are looking at guides audience attention.

### **Panning and Zooms**

1. Panning is useful for following action or to photograph certain static scenes where the pan can make clearer either the size or the relationship of the parts.
2. Camera steadiness is important. Use a tripod whenever possible.
3. Hold the camera still at the end of each pan. If the action is not followed through, let it go completely out of the frame prior to stopping the camera.
4. Avoid cutting from an action pan to a still scene.
5. Use a zoom only if it is motivated., such as to direct the audience to a particular detail. Would a cut work just as well? A zoom pullback might be used if you wanted to surprise the audience as to the location.

### **Angles**

1. A change of camera angle adds interest to the action
2. A good camera angle calls attention to the action, not itself.
3. Eye-level shots can be mixed with high and low angle shots.

### **Shooting hints**

1. Always shoot more than you need - it is easy to cut material out later, but hard to add material that you failed to shoot.
2. Begin shooting before the action starts and stop after the action ends. Let the editor decide where to cut the action, not the cameraperson.

**Pacing** Vary your pacing so the audience does not get bored. Editing allows you to condense or expand the time of an event.

If you want the scene to go quickly:

1. Use quick cuts (shorter and shorter as the sequence ends)
2. Use close-ups
3. Use appropriate soundtrack. (Fast paced music)

If you want scene to go slowly:

1. Use few cuts
2. Use long shots
3. Use lyrical music (slow paced, relaxing)