# Film 101 Survey

1. Approximately how many movies do you watch a month (on DVD or Cable or in a theater)?
2. What are your favorite types of movie? Explain.
3. What are your least favorite types of movie? Explain.
4. Rank the top five best films ever made, in your opinion.
5. What kind of movies do your parents or guardians like to watch? How often do you watch movies with them?
6. What are the differences between watching a movie at home and watching in a theater?
7. What kind of movies do you watch in school?
8. What are you normally asked by the teacher to do while or after watching a movie in school?

# Working with Film Terminology Part 1

**Materials**  8 × 11 Construction paper

* + 11 × 22 Construction paper

 Magazines and glue sticks

**Purpose**  To give students the language and confidence to talk about film

* + To introduce students to film terminology in context
  + To identify and create a product that conveys an understanding of film concepts

## Steps

1. Students will be exposed to a wide array of film terms that will enable them to analyze film. In an effort to understand how a camera works, they will manipulate a paper camera to gain a kinesthetic context of the film terms.
2. Instruct students to roll a sheet of construction paper into a tube and hold it up to their eye like a telescope. After students have completed this task, expose students to the film terminology and ask them to manipulate the paper camera as if it were a real camera. For example, ask a volunteer to stand in front of the class to be the subject of students’ frame.
   * To get a long shot, students will have to unroll the pages to create a large lens in order to get a shot of

the student’s full body. Ask them what this shot enables the viewer to see.

* + Next, ask students to decrease the size of the lens on the paper camera to get a medium shot (from the waist up). Ask students to consider why a director might choose to use this shot. Further, what does this shot unveil to the viewer?
  + Next, ask students to decrease the size of the lens of the camera to get a close up shot (capturing only the face). Ask students to consider why a director might use this shot.
  + Finally, ask students to roll their paper camera tighter in an effort to zoom into an extreme close up (focusing on one specific aspect, for example, an eye or ear). Again, ask students why a director might choose this shot.
  + The paper camera can be adjusted to resemble many different shots, angles, and camera movements. For example, a pan may be demonstrated by turning your head from left to right, and a low angle may be demonstrated by sitting on the floor and “filming” a clock up on the wall.
  + There are many other movements that you could direct students to do to give them a conceptual understanding of how to apply these film terms. As you expose students to many of these terms, ask them why these shots, angles, and movements might be used. Engage students in a discussion about the similarities between an author’s purpose and a director’s choices.

# Working with Film Terminology Part 1 (continued)

1. After students have had an opportunity to practice the film terms, direct them to the film terminology student page and lead them through a discussion about the different terms. Provide students with a brief explanation of why and how directors use many of these shots, angles, and camera movements. Enable students to **mark the text** and take notes in the margin as you expose them to the film terminology.
2. Next, ask students to search through old magazines on a scavenger hunt to find examples that demonstrate their understanding of different shots and/or lighting. Students should create a collage of pictures that are sectioned off and clearly labeled for the viewer. If students have access to real video cameras, they can create a film terminology video presentation that identifies and displays an array of film terms in application.

**Film Terminology**

# Shots and Framing

**Shot:** a single piece of film uninterrupted by cuts.

**Establishing Shot:** often a long shot or a series of shots that sets the scene. It is used to establish setting and to show transitions between locations.

**Long Shot (LS):** a shot from some distance. If filming a person, the full body is shown. It may show the isolation or vulnerability of the character (also called a Full Shot).

**Medium Shot (MS):** the most common shot. The camera seems to be a medium distance from the object being filmed. A medium shot shows the person from the waist up. The effect is to ground the story.

**Close Up (CU):** the image being shot takes up at least 80 percent of the frame.

**Extreme Close Up:** the image being shot is a part of a whole, such as an eye or a hand.

**Two Shot:** a scene between two people shot exclusively from an angle that includes both characters more or less equally. It is used in love scenes where interaction between the two characters is important.

# Camera Angles

**Eye Level:** a shot taken from a normal height; that is, the character’s eye level. Ninety to ninety- five percent of the shots seen are eye level, because it is the most natural angle.

**High Angle:** the camera is above the subject. This usually has the effect of making the subject look smaller than normal, giving him or her the appearance of being weak, powerless, and trapped.

**Low Angle:** the camera films subject from below. This usually has the effect of making the subject look larger than normal, and therefore strong, powerful, and threatening.

# Camera Movements

**Pan:** a stationary camera moves from side to side on a horizontal axis.

**Tilt:** a stationary camera moves up or down along a vertical axis

**Zoom:** a stationary camera where the lens moves to make an object seem to move closer to or further away from the camera. With this technique, moving into a character is often a personal or revealing movement, while moving away distances or separates the audience from the character.

**Dolly/Tracking:** the camera is on a track that allows it to move with the action. The term also refers to any camera mounted on a car, truck, or helicopter.

**Boom/Crane:** the camera is on a crane over the action. This is used to create overhead shots.

# Lighting

**High Key:** the scene is flooded with light, creating a bright and open-looking scene.

**Low Key:** the scene is flooded with shadows and darkness, creating suspense or suspicion.

**Bottom or Side Lighting:** direct lighting from below or the side, which often makes the subject appear dangerous or evil.

**Front or Back Lighting:** soft lighting on the actor’s face or from behind gives the appearance of

innocence or goodness, or a halo effect.

# Editing Techniques

**Cut:** most common editing technique. Two pieces of film are spliced together to “cut” to another

image.

**Fade:** can be to or from black or white. A fade can begin in darkness and gradually assume full brightness (fade-in) or the image may gradually get darker (fade-out). A fade often implies that time has passed or may signify the end of a scene.

**Dissolve:** a kind of fade in which one image is slowly replaced by another. It can create a connection between images.

**Wipe:** a new image wipes off the previous image. A wipe is more fluid than a cut and quicker than a dissolve.

**Flashback:** cut or dissolve to action that happened in the past.

**Shot-Reverse-Shot:** a shot of one subject, then another, then back to the first. It is often used for conversation or reaction shots.

**Cross Cutting:** cut into action that is happening simultaneously. This technique is also called parallel editing. It can create tension or suspense and can form a connection between scenes.

**Eye-Line Match:** cut to an object, then to a person. This technique shows what a person seems

to be looking at and can reveal a character’s thoughts.

# Sound

**Diegetic:** sound that could logically be heard by the characters in the film.

**Non-Diegetic:** sound that cannot be heard by the characters but is designed for audience reaction only. An example might be ominous music for foreshadowing.

# Storyboards

These are a series of drawings — or photographs — that a director creates before the movie is filmed to help the director to visualize what will appear later on screen. Often, lighting, dialogue, framing, and other elements of the shot will be noted as well. These individual drawings or photographs are then arranged in sequence to create a final storyboard. Later in this unit you will be asked to create your own storyboard.

# Notes About Shots

The following information is designed to assist the teacher and provide background information for the teacher before he or she presents the terminology lesson with students.

We have seen how the **point-of-view** shot works to put the spectator literally in the very place of the character and thus to secure psychological identification with that character. This is only one of the devices by which the cinema seeks to manipulate and control how the spectator feels and what he or she is thinking. Other types of shot **articulations** (what cinematic moves are called in critical discussion) do the same thing. For example, in the **shot-reverse-shot** sequence, the spectator occupies alternately the position of now one character in the dialogue, now the other character, thus switching identifications every few seconds without really knowing it. Another type of shot that has the effect of manipulating the viewer is without doubt the **close-up**. In the early years of the cinema, there were no close-ups, only long shots, so that the spectator was always held at a good distance from the characters; this distance worked against the identification processes that modern cinema seeks to encourage.

When you see a close-up, for instance, you have the sense of being in very intimate connection with the character, close indeed to him or her emotionally and thus able to register and even feel directly what he or she is going through. That sense of closeness is, of course, illusory, since in actuality you are situated in a seat some distance away from the face on the screen, not only in space but also in time. (Just think of the fact that the actor has done this performance not at the present time, before your eyes, as it may seem, but in a different place many weeks, months, or even years before the date at which you view the film. The actor or actress is thus not even “present” to you; only a shade or delegate is.) But the close-up more than anything else in cinema can elicit reactions from you by making you feel that you are up there on the screen, a part of the proceedings, and not there in your seat.

A **zoom**, which is a movement of a long focal lens — not of the camera itself — either in toward an object or out away from that object is a cinematic articulation that you probably have seen many times. It is the refocusing of your eye that you instinctively do when you instantly turn your attention from one thing to another; it registers exactly this kind of sudden turning of attention, as if your very eyes have noticed something and focused in on it, or indeed pulled back from it, and in this way, the zoom imitates the patterns of your mind and your vision. Similarly, the **pan** gets you to turn your neck, so to speak, without moving your head; via the **dolly**, you walk forward, backward, or to the side without leaving your seat, etc. These are the ways by which the camera enlists your attention and your response, and because they seem so “natural” — just the ways in which you are used to seeing in everyday life — you hardly notice that you have been captivated.

A film audience does not want to be conscious of the fact of projection, does not want not to see the screen but rather the magical unfolding of the images, does not want to have to think about the machinery or projection, for that too interferes with its total absorption in and captivation by the film’s fiction. All of these components of the cinema that are effectively obliterated during a screening — the camera, the projector, the screen and even, as we have seen, the spectator him- or herself — taken together are referred to as the **cinematic apparatus**. Cinema counts on making this apparatus unapparent. For if it were apparent, the main illusion on which cinema is based, that of looking in on a private world that unwinds magically, would be spoiled. Thus, the cinema’s means of production are concealed so that the spectator is not aware of the material machinery that constructs the filmic illusion; he or she has the false sense that the story is being told by nobody from nowhere, or even produced by the spectator.