

50 FILM TERMS

Here are some basic (but important) film terms you will definitely come across.

ACCELERATED MOTION (FAST MOTION)

Shot moving at a faster speed than reality.

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ASPECT RATIO

Height - to - width ratio of the screen image.

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BACK LIGHTING

Lighting placed behind the subject to form a silhouette.

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CAMERA ANGLE

Angle at which the camera is shooting in relation to the subject (can be a high angle or a low angle).

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CINEMA SCOPE

Widescreen processed (ratio of 1:2.35).

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CINEMA VERITE

Filming technique that emphasises the "reality", encourages filming real-life scenes without the technical element (ie. special equipment, queues from scripts, additional lighting..).

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CLOSE-UP

Shot where subject takes up the full frame.

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COMPOSITION

Arrangement of all the elements within the frame.

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CONTINUITY EDITING

Editing that allows a continuous flow of action.

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CRANE SHOT

Moving shot from a higher perspective.

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CROSS-CUTTING

Jumping back and forth between two events/locations (for the narrative).

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CUTAWAY

Shot that bridges a jump in time that breaks up the continuous flow of action.

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DAY FOR NIGHT

Simulated nighttime setting, through filters and under-exposure.

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DECELERATED MOTION (SLOW MOTION)

Shot that is slower than it is in reality.

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DEEP FOCUS

Technique where both subjects in the foreground and background are equally focused.

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DISSOLVE

When one shot gradually fades into another.

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DOLLY SHOT

Shot while the camera is in motion.

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DUTCH TILT

Intentionally tilted shot.

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ESTABLISHING SHOT

Shot showing audience the location of the scene.

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EXTREME LONG SHOT

Shot where there is intentional and obvious distance between the camera and the subject.

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EYE-LEVEL SHOT

Shot at the height of normal vision.

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FLAT LIGHTING

Lighting where the light and dark tones in the shot cannot be easily distinguished from one another.

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FORM CUT

Cut from one shot to another that has a similar element linking the two shots.

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HIGH-KEY LIGHTING

Lighting so that the brighter tones dominate the darker tones.

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IRIS

Transition from one shot to another where the fade originated from the centre circle.

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JUMP CUT

Discontinuous cut that jumps within a single action.

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MASK SHOT

Shot created by placing an object over the lens to alter the shape.

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MEDIUM CLOSE-UP

Camera that is zoomed into the subject (offers head, neck and shoulders).

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MEDIUM LONG SHOT

Shot where the subject is at a slight distance, though closer than a long shot.

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MEDIUM SHOT

Shot revealing up to the mid-point of the subject (waist or knee level and upwards).

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MISE-EN-SCENE

The arrangement of all items within the frame of the shot.

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M.O.S. (MIT OUT SOUND)

During a shoot, it is written and shown on clapperboards before the action begins to signify that sound the footage is being recorded without any sound.

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OPTICALS

Visual cues including dissolves, fades and wipes.

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PANNING SHOT

Shot in motion horizontally (from left to right or right to left).

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REACTION SHOT

A shot of a person reacting to an action.

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REAR PROJECTION

A shot where the background is a motion picture screen with another image projected as its background.

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REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT

Shot taken in the opposite position from where the previous shot was taken.

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SCORE

Music composed for a film.

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SOFT FOCUS

Technique where none of the objects/subjects in the frame appear in focus.

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STOCK SHOT

Shot taken from stock footage.

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SUBJECTIVE SHOT

Shot presenting the point-of-view of the character.

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SWISH PAN

Panning shot what moves so quickly the subjects are blurred.

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TELEPHOTO SHOT

Shot using a lens with a long focal length (ie. 85-300+ mm) so that the distance between objects in the foreground and background is compressed.

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THREE SHOT

Shot with three actors.

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TILT SHOT

Shot that is moving vertically (moving downwards or upwards).

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TRACKING SHOT

Shot where the camera is moving in line with the subject.

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TRAVELLING SHOT

Shot taken from a moving object (ie. a car...).

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TWO-SHOT

Shot with two actors.

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WIDE-ANGLE SHOT

Shot where a lens with a short focal length (ie. 28mm or less) is used to give the impression that there is more distance between the foreground and the background.

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WIDE

Transition where one shot moves into the other horizontally or vertically.

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