

Examining Film

Camera Angles

The degree to which you zoom in and zoom out on the subject is only one set of effects that the camera can create. In this lesson we will consider the different angles that a camera can be placed at and the various effects that these can create.

Lesson Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify and name the different camera angles
- Comment on the effects that these camera angles create

Curriculum Links

LO 2: Reading and Viewing

explore and explain key features of texts and how they contribute to meaning in visual, audio and multi-media texts:

- recognise the use of visual, audio and audio-visual techniques such as the use of colour, dialogue, music, sound, lighting, editing, framing, styles of shot, camera techniques, foregrounding and backgrounding

Lesson notes

Camera angles:

- eye-level or neutral angle
- high angle shots
- low angle shots

Eye-level or neutral camera angle

- In an eye-level or neutral shot, the camera is placed at the same level as the subject.
- This is the most common camera angle that directors use. Because this is how we normally look at people the effect is neutral – there is nothing really special, interesting or unusual about this shot.

High-angle

- In a high-angle shot the camera looks down on the subject - the camera is placed high up with the cinematographer filming down.
- Apart from helping to set the scene, a high-angle shot makes the people on the street seem less significant or a subject that is shot from above appear small or vulnerable.

Low-angle

- To film a low-angle shot, the camera is placed low down with the cameraman filming upwards, looking up at the subject.
- A low-angle shot can make an adult look large and dominant. Often the “bad guy” is shown from the low angle position to make him look even bigger and scarier than he really is!

Bird’s eye view shot

- This is an extreme version of a high-angle shot. What the camera films is the same as a bird would see if it were flying overhead.
- A city or car-chase can be filmed from above to show what is happening below from an interesting perspective.

A worm’s eye view shot

- This is an extreme shot taken from an extremely low angle looking upward. The camera is placed as low down as possible and the action is filmed from below.
- Worm’s eye view shots exaggerate the effect created by a low angle shot, so buildings shot from a worm’s eye view would look very impressive and dramatic.

TASK

Cut out photographs from old magazines to illustrate each of the types of camera angles discussed in this lesson. Alternatively, you can draw a sketch that illustrates a possible use for each of these camera angles.