

Glossary of Digital Storytelling Terms

Actor: A term used for both male and female characters that play a role in a play or movie.

Action: Term called out during filming to indicate the start of the current take or shot.

Adaptation: A story based on a novel that is adapted into a movie. A script for a video based on a book, story, or play.



Audio: Dialog and sounds created during filming.

Body: The main portion of the movie or play where the action and main events take place.

Cameo: A minor role played by an actor who would ordinarily not take such a small part.

Cameraman: The person who operates the camera.



Capture: In post-production, the process in which footage of the video is downloaded onto the computer to prepare for editing.

Cast: The actors in a role of a movie or play.

Clapper: (slate, clapboard) A small board, which holds information identifying a shot.



It is filmed at the beginning of a shot to mark the scene and take number. On the top of the clapboard is a hinged stick, which is “clapped” by the person who holds it.

Clip: A trimmed video scene.

Close Up: A shot showing a detail only, such as the head or hand.

Crew: The people assigned to jobs necessary to complete the film project including the producer, scriptwriter, director, cameraman, actors, and clapper.

Cropping: The area of an image or picture that is displayed.

Cue Cards: A series of small poster like cards, unseen by the audience or camera, carrying the dialog to be spoken by the actors to keep them on track.

Cut: Term called out during filming to indicate the current take is over.

Dialog: The speaking or conversation in a movie or play. Also spelled: dialogue.

Digital: A recording technique in which sounds or images are converted into groups of electronic bits and stored on a magnetic medium. The groups of bits are read electronically, as by a laser beam, for reproduction.

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Director: A person who directs or controls a movie or play. Works with the actors and coordinates the camera shots based on the script and storyboard.



Dissolve: An editing technique where the image of one shot is gradually replaced by the image of another.

Edit: To prepare film footage for presentation by cutting, splicing, dubbing, rearranging, and reconstructing the sequence of shots in a movie. Also includes transitions, music, title, and credits.

Establishing Shot: (ES) The location of a scene, usually a Wide Shot (WS). Lets the viewers know where the action is to occur and sets the mood.

Extra: A person who appears in a movie, usually in a non-speaking role, as part of a crowd or in the background of a scene.

Extreme Close-Up: A shot in which the attention is focused on the subject or object for greater impact. Often used for showing facial expressions.

Frame: A single image in a video as part of a series or sequence. When viewed at sufficient speed, the illusion of a moving picture is created.

Framing: What is included and excluded in a shot.

Grip: A handyman on the set of a movie or play to assist with various tasks.

Handles: The amount of time (at least three seconds) that passes before action and dialog begin and end when the camera is rolling.

High Angle Shot: A shot in which the camera is up high shooting down. Characters have the appearance of looking small and insignificant.

Hook: The very beginning of a movie to create impact and get the audience's attention. Introduces characters, location, mood, and sets up the situation in a captivating manner.

Image: A reproduction or picture.

Lens: An optical device on a camera to focus an image.

Low Angel Shot: A shot in which the camera is on the ground shooting up. Characters have the appearance of looking important.

MPEG: Motion Pictures Experts Group, meaning the compression of moving images.

Medium Shot: (MS) A shot in which the camera moves in a little closer showing characters from the waist up, allowing gestures and expression to be shown.

Narrator: Person who adds spoken commentary to a movie, play, or television show.

Oscar: A small statue awarded at the annual Academy Awards Ceremony for achievements in film. The name “Oscar” was created by an Academy Awards official who stated when he first saw it, “It looks like my Uncle Oscar”.



Over-the-Shoulder Shot: A shot in which the camera is placed over the shoulder (from the back) of one character focusing on the face of another. Often used for conversations and interviews.

Pan: The action of moving the camera back and forth.

Perspective: What the character looks like from the camera angle being used in the shot.

Point-of-View Shot: A shot of what the character will look like from the camera angle and what the viewer will see.

Post-Production: Work that is performed on a movie after filming is complete. Involves editing, visual and sound effects on the computer. Also includes the movie’s premiere or release.

Premiere: The first official public viewing of a movie, marking the opening. Usually a very special event for the cast and crew.

Pre-Production: The most important stage in the filmmaking process where at least 40% of time should be designated. Includes all arrangements made before the start of filming including reading, researching, scriptwriting, revising, storyboarding, rehearsing, choosing the cast and crew, and set design.

Producer: A person in charge of financing and coordination of all activities in connection with the production of a film, play, radio, or television program. Arranges and organizes the people and equipment.

Production: Refers to the phase of movie making where the talent is directed and filming occurs.

Prop: Any item an actor touches or uses on the set of a movie or play.

Punch line: The final point of the movie that delivers a, sometimes humorous, message.

Rolling: Term called out when the camera is first turned on to begin filming. “Stop rolling” is called out when action in a shot is complete and at least three seconds have elapsed.

Scene: A section of film made up of a number of shots, which is brought together by time, setting, and characters.

Screenplay: The script from which a film is produced.

Screenwriter: A writer who either adapts an existing work for production as a movie, or creates a new screenplay.

Script: The word for word text detailing the dialog, story, and setting of a movie or play.

Script Editing: The process in which a script is revised.

Set: To place a scene in a specific location. An environment used for filming.

Setting: The time and place where the action happens.

Shot: The action that is included in a take.

Shot Selections: Camera angles used to tell the visual story on film.

Still Video: Still images extracted from video.

Storyboard: A visual tool in which a series of sketches of the shots or scenes are arranged in sequence for outlining the action in order to film. Each frame represents a different shot within the scene.

Special Effects: An artificial effect used to create an illusion in a movie. Refers to effects produced on the set, as opposed to those created while editing in post-production.

Splice: To fasten or piece together the ends of film together during post-production.

Take: A single performance of a shot or scene.

Time Code: The electronic guide added to film that provides a time reference for editing purposes. The position of each frame in a video sequence from a starting point, usually the beginning of a shot.

Trailer: An advertisement for a movie that contains scenes from the film.

Transition: An effect used in editing in post-production that emphasizes the passage of one clip to the next.

Tripod:



A three-legged support for a camera, usually adjustable in height, that holds the camera in a stable spot.

Two Shot: A shot that includes two characters communicating and interacting.

Visual Effects: Alterations to a film's images during post-production.

Voice-Over: Dialog heard on a movie's soundtrack, but the speaker is not shown.

Wide Shot: (WS) A shot in which the character or object is seen entirely and taken from a distance. Also called a Long Shot (LS) or Establishing Shot (ES).

Wrap: To finish filming, either for the day or the entire production.

Zoom: A shot in which the camera's lens is increased (zoom in) or decreased (zoom out) in order for the characters or objects to look closer or farther away.

Note: This feature is not recommended for first time filmmakers and should rarely be used.