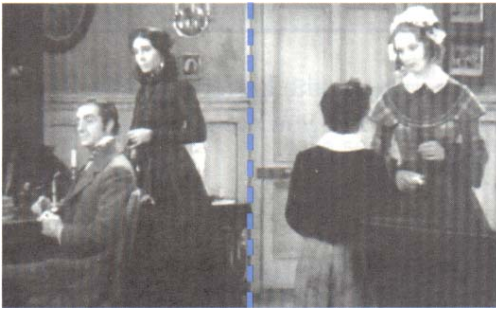


FILM CONVENTIONS

- FRAME

It is the English for **fotogramma**. It is the rectangular image projected on the screen, any single unit of the film: twenty-four of these pass through the camera and the projector in one second of shooting and viewing.

Here are the most common conventions for organising the **composition in a frame** in films.



The two halves of the frames are equally occupied; often the character/s shown in the first half of the frame is/are in the foreground while those in the other half are in the background.



Some characters are grouped in the foreground of the frame while others are in the background.



The picture is organised according to a triangular structure.



The picture is organised along a diagonal line.

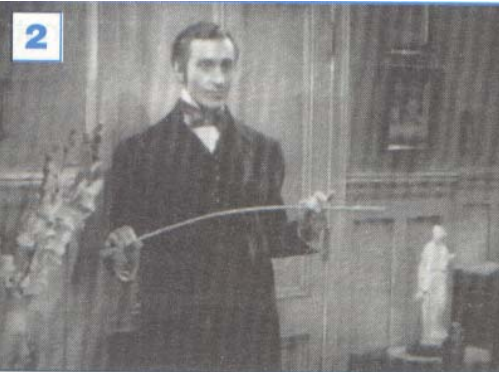
- **SHOT**

It is the English for **inquadratura**. It is what is filmed between the moment when a camera starts action and when it stops.

The main types of **shots** used in films are:



Long shot (Campo lungo). It is a shot that shows a whole figure in relation to immediate surroundings.



Medium long shot (Piano Americano). It is a shot in which the lower part of the legs of the subjects are cut off.



Medium shot (Campo medio). It is a shot in which the lower line of the frame cuts off the lower part of the body of the subject.



Close-up (Primo piano). It is a shot which shows only the head and the shoulder of the subject.



Extreme close-up (Primissimo piano). It is a shot in which only a detail or part of the head of the subject is shown.



Detail (Dettaglio). It is a shot which shows part of the human body or an object.



Normal-angle shot (Inquadratura ad angolo normale). It is a shot taken with the camera at the same level as its subject.



High-angle shot (Inquadratura dall'alto). It is a shot taken with a camera in a high position, looking down on figures and objects.



Low-angle shot (Inquadratura dal basso). It is a shot taken with the camera in a low position, looking up at figures and objects.

Establishing shot (Inquadratura totale) = A shot taken at a distance from the subject, showing the general setting as well as the subject in the frame.

Shot-countershot (campo-controcampo): it is a technique which shows separate shots of the two speakers one after the other so that the film maker can focus on each character's reactions and expressions.

Two-shot (inquadratura a due): it is a shot in which the two characters are shown speaking together in the same frame.

Three-shot (inquadratura a tre): it is a shot showing three characters in the frame.

- **CAMERA'S MOVEMENTS**

No matter what appears in the picture, movement catches the attention of the viewer before everything else. There are basically three different techniques to show movement:

- The camera is **fixed** and shoots the subjects in movement;
- The subject is stationary while the camera moves on its axis and leads the viewers' eyes to the centre of attention; this is called a **pan shot (panoramica)**;
- The camera moves with a character or towards a character or away from a character; this is called a **tracking shot (carrellata)**.

Sometimes several shots in the sequence are shaky and often show slightly blurred pictures. This happens because the camera is **hand-held** or it is moving fast over uneven ground and all the shocks of the movement are transmitted to the picture. The film director chooses this shooting technique for particular purposes.

Sometimes the camera takes up the position of a character so that the viewers look at the action through the characters' eyes or from over his/her shoulder. This device is called **subjective point of view (soggettiva)** and it is used to make the audience share the character's experience and/or feelings.

- **CUT (stacco)**

It is the break in a film which marks when one shot ends and the next begins; a normal cut suggests a clear connection between two adjoining shots in order to ensure the continuity of the story.

A **jump cut (Montaggio discontinuo)** shows a sudden change in time and place. Its function is to eliminate unnecessary periods of time and make the story progress faster.

Montage: the technique of editing and putting shots together in order to carry the film forward in time and place.

Cross-cutting: it shows an alternation of moments, the scenes are superimposed on others.

- IMAGES AND SPEECHES

The interaction of images and speeches on the screen can produce one of the following effects:

- Images are **parallel** with the speech when they express the same content as the speech;
- Images are a **counterpoint** to the speech when they express a content which is in contrast with the speech;
- Images are **symbolic** when they represent an idea which is suggested by the speech;
- Images are **neutral** when there is no apparent connection with the content of the speech.

- SEQUENCE

It is a group of shots which have some thematic connection.

There are two main ways of **building up a sequence**:

- The first way moves from the general to the particular; it starts from an establishing shot and continues with medium shots or close-ups of character/s or object/s.
- The second way moves from the particular to the general; it starts from a close-up shot of a character or an object and subsequently changes to medium and long shots.

- SOUNDS AND VOICES

Soundtrack (colonna sonora): it is all the speech and sounds that can be heard in a film; it is the background music of a film.

Voice-over (voce fuori campo): the voice of an unseen person that gives information about what is being shown on the screen.

- SPECTATORS' EYES

They are attracted by:

- Characters speaking while others remain silent;
- Characters moving while others remain motionless;
- Brighter or lighter colours than others in the same frame;
- What is in the foreground of the frame;
- The direction of the characters' eyeline;
- The top corner of a triangular structure (or the bottom corner if the triangle is upside down);
- The upper or lower end of a diagonal line.

Eyeline: An imaginary line which joins the gaze of the characters in a frame.

Zoom: The technique of changing the camera focus so that distant objects seem to come closer to the viewer (**zoom in, zummata in avanti**) or to move away from the viewer (**zoom out, zummata indietro**).

Lights are rarely used realistically; they are rather used to provide a clue as to the meaning of the shot. The way the setting and characters are illuminated helps to create the atmosphere of a sequence.

Dissolve (dissolvenza): An image that mixes with and gradually dissolves into another.