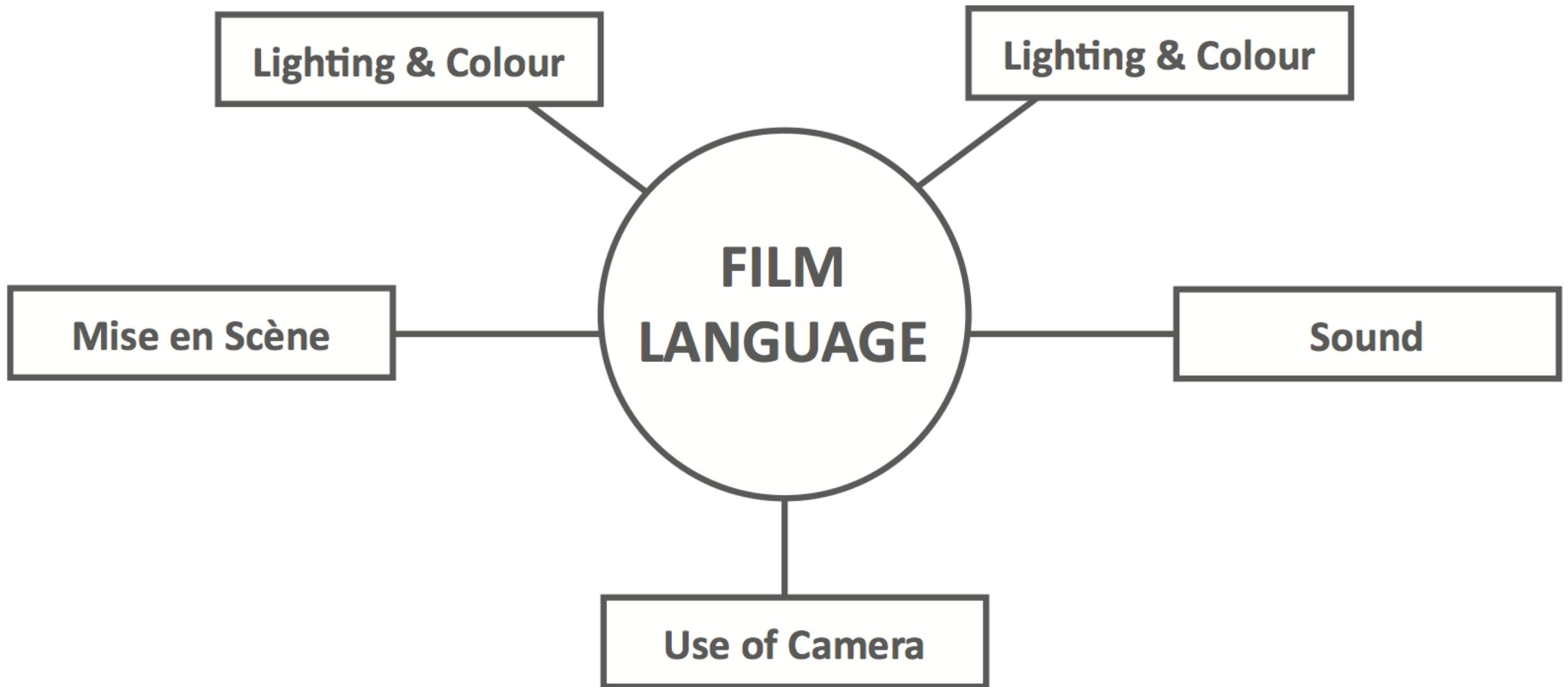


FILM LANGUAGE



- TWO WAY PROCESS

A filmed story is firstly presented by the filmmaker and then interpreted by the audience.

- an understanding of how films tell stories
- how a film creates meaning
- cultural ideas and values which help us understand what we see

- We can do this through a subtle, shared understanding of **filmmaking conventions** and **cultural codes**.
- **Filmmaking conventions** that both the filmmaker and audience understand might be that a close-up shot of something means that we are seeing something important. Certain types of clothing or settings will make us instantly recognise the type of film (genre) that we are watching. The pace of a film will reflect the genre of the film – fast action will suggest a thriller (with lots of different shots carefully edited together.)
- We might also share **cultural codes** with the filmmaker – what certain colours suggest, what a style of clothes might say about a character.

mise en scène'

- ‘mise en scène’ describes ‘putting’ something in the picture, it reinforces the idea that films are constructed – nothing appears by chance in the filmic frame.

- We understand how the device of mise en scène creates this world and makes meaning through these areas of the creative filmmaking process:
 - Settings and props
 - Costume, hair and make-up

- When we analyse a sequence in terms of mise en scène, we need to look at how all the different elements and techniques work together to:

Bullet Boy

- This is a very short sequence. You should write down what you see in each individual shot. **Questions:**
 1. Once you have done this, think about the effect of what you are shown. How do the movements and the look of the actor create an atmosphere? What do you think the atmosphere is of the scene?
 2. How is the actor shown to us in each shot? In close-up? Mid shot? Why do you think the camera moves from the actor's face to his hands cleaning the gun of fingerprints?
 3. How do these shots relate to each other? What are the different expressions on the actor's face? How do they change and at what point in the action? What emotion does the actor show in the scene?

MISE EN SCÈNE - COSTUME - CLIP 5

The Duchess

- This extract shows the Duchess' entrance at a ball. During the course of the ball, she meets Lady 'Bess' Foster who will become her husband's mistress.

- **Questions:**

1. Towards the beginning of the scene, we are shown a view of the people attending the ball. Describe the way in which they are dressed. What are the predominant colours of their costumes?
2. In this shot, pay particular attention to the women's dresses, their hairstyles and their jewellery.
3. As the Duchess appears, how is she instantly recognised as what we would nowadays call a 'fashion icon'? List the ways in which her costume, hair style, jewellery and make up are different to those of the women we have seen in the crowd.
4. How does the Duchess' costume help her to stand out in the dance scene?
5. Lady Bess Foster enters into the scene. How does her dress make us realise she is a key character?
6. As Bess and the Duchess talk to each other, how does what they are wearing help us to make decisions as to their characters?

MISE EN SCÈNE - SETTINGS - CLIP 2

The Duchess

- This extract shows the journey of the newly-wedded Duke and Duchess of Devonshire from their secret wedding ceremony, through the streets of London to Devonshire House. The scene ends in the 'wedding' bedroom.

- Questions:

The scene that you have just watched takes place in a number of locations:

a) The streets of London

b) The courtyard of Devonshire House

c) The hallway of Devonshire House

d) The bedroom where the Duchess awaits the arrival of her new husband

1. Why do you think that the sequence begins with a shot through an archway?

2. As the Duke and Duchess drive through the streets of London, what images of the streets are we shown? What do we see in the streets?

3. Why do you think we are shown so many shots of marketplaces?

4. How does the courtyard of Devonshire House contrast with what we have previously seen?

5. There are two more shots of archways in the scene – firstly as they enter the courtyard in their carriage and secondly as they enter the house. Why do you think that these two ‘archways’ were chosen?

- **6.** As they enter the hallway, what feelings and ideas are suggested by the look of the room, in the eyes of the Duchess and in the eyes of the audience?
- 7.** As the Duchess goes up the staircase what impression is given by the arrangement in the frame of the footmen standing in the hallway?
- 8.** How does the look of the bedroom contrast with what we have seen of the rest of Devonshire House?

If this scene shows the journey from wedding ceremony to wedding night, how do the various settings that you see build up a sense of moving from the public to the private?

MISE EN SCÈNE - SETTINGS - CLIP 3

The Last King of Scotland

- This extract shows the journey of Doctor Nicholas Garrigan from the medical mission in Uganda where he is working in Kampala, the capital of Uganda and home to the dictator, Idi Amin.

Question:

Why do you think that the first shot is of a mosquito on Nicholas' arm?

Activity 1:

Describe the mission station where the journey begins. What impressions do you have about the mission?

Activity 2:

As Nicholas drives to Kampala, what other locations are we shown as he looks out of the window of the car? How does each location that he sees build up to his arrival in the capital?

Activity 3:

How does the capital at the end of his journey contrast with the mission where he started his journey?

CINEMATOGRAPHY

- So the two key elements to cinematography are the **framing of a shot** (what is included in the cinematic space, what we see on screen) and the **movement of the camera**.

CINEMATOGRAPHY - CLIP 19

Chicken Run

- The sequence begins with Ginger locked up in solitary confinement. Whilst she is carefully lit, she is surrounded by darkness.
- The hatch opens and we see a boot appear in the daylight. As you watch the rest of the sequence, try to spot other moments where light and dark, shadow and light are used to create a mood or idea.

- Many of the shots in this sequence show us the sky. You should note the ways in which the colour of the sky changes throughout the sequence. How do these colour changes reflect the changing mood of the sequence?
- As Mrs. Tweedie enters the 'camp', she is shown from a variety of different camera angles. What idea is given of her character from the way that she is presented to us? What is the effect of each camera angle?
- Edwina is taken off to the slaughterhouse. Describe the ways in which the cinematographer has lit this sequence. How is a sense of threat built up?
- As the scene progresses we see a number of close-up shots of Ginger. What key information are we given when we see Ginger in close-ups?

CINEMATOGRAPHY - CLIP 20

Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

- Wallace and Gromit have been asked to deal with an outbreak of vegetable eating rabbits. Having captured the offenders, Wallace comes up with a clever solution to end the rabbits' continual plundering of vegetables – brainwashing.

- As always, Gromit is skeptical about Wallace's plan. How does the use of close-ups in the sequence help establish this idea?
- Wallace's technological inventions are always crucial to any Wallace and Gromit story. How does the cinematographer focus our attention on Wallace's machines?
- In what ways does the lighting of the scene create a rather Gothic feeling – a little like 'Frankenstein' or an old-fashioned horror story?
- At the end of the sequence, how does the framing of the three characters (Wallace, Gromit and Hutch) lead up to Hutch's final 'shake' and how does this relate to the sequence overall?
- Identify two or three unusual camera angles and camera movements within the sequence. Why do you think that the angles or movements were chosen? What impact do they have on the viewer?

EDITING

BUILDING BLOCKS

The editor starts by looking at the various individual **shots** available to create a particular **scene**.

The editor adds one scene to another to form a **sequence**, which is a self-contained group of sequential scenes grouped around a specific set of sections of the narrative. Editing all of the sequences together will finally give us a finished film.

CONTINUITY EDITING

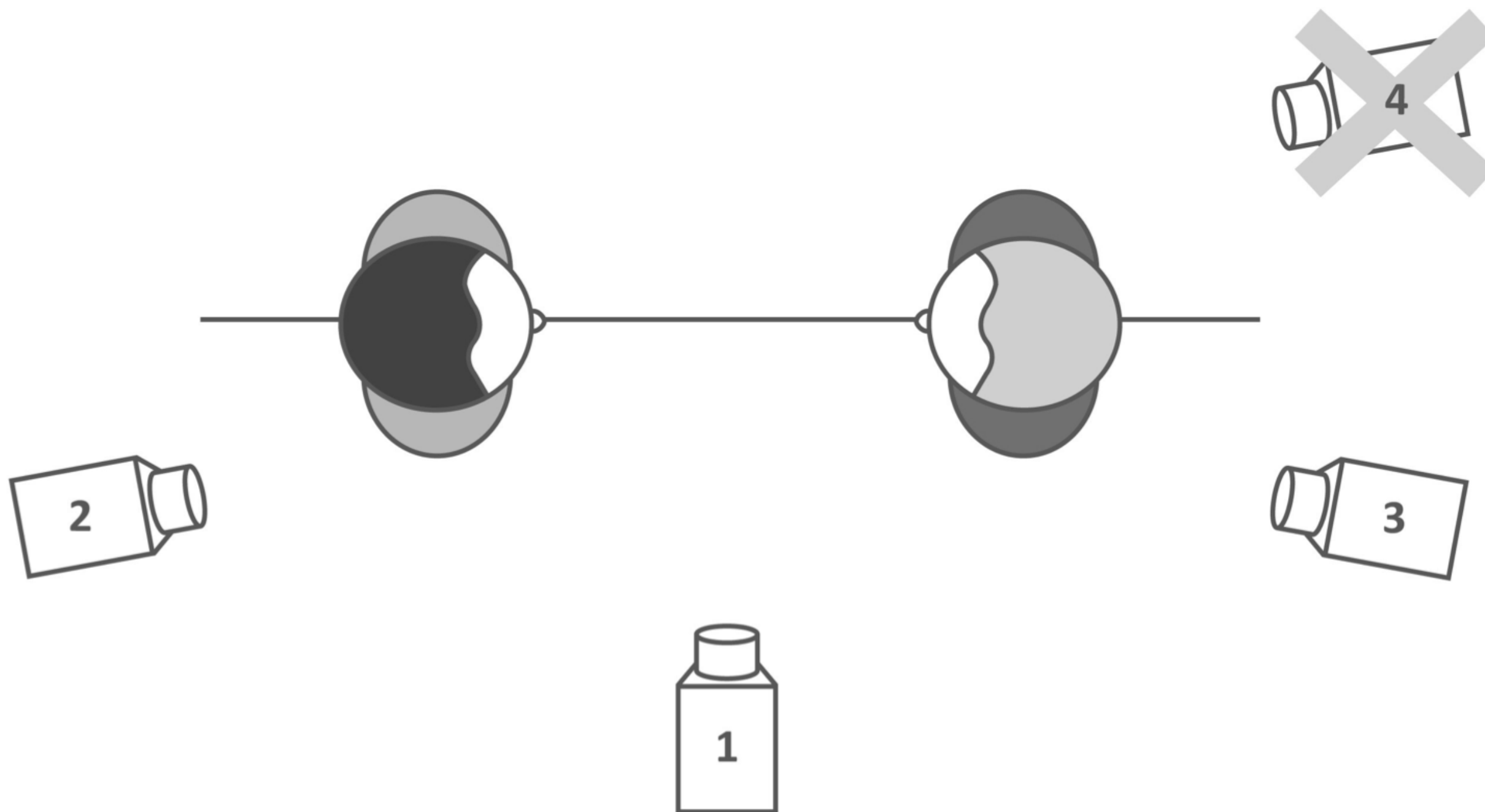
Despite all this art and craft, the audience hardly ever notices good editing. Although we know that we are watching pieces of film joined together, we are so used to **continuity editing** that we accept what is happening on screen providing that it follows the rules that we have learnt through watching other films or narratives. Most films and other moving images that we watch conform to this method of editing.

The common features of **continuity editing**, that we so often do not notice include:

Establishing shot

Shot reverse shot

180 degree rule.



Cut

When the editor is thinking about which shot to choose, they might find that the director filmed one piece of action from a number of different positions or angles. Which is the one that is right for the sequence?

In joining one shot to another, how should the editor cut?

Film editors can connect scenes in a number of ways. The most common transitions you will see include a:

straight cut

fade out

dissolve

wipe cut

jump cut

These transitions affect the pace and mood of the scene and how the sense of the film is communicated to the audience.

You can show a scene in a single shot, so why cut from one shot to another in a scene? What is the effect of this?

SPACE, TIME AND RHYTHM

When the editor works on a scene, they are thinking about three things:

- **The quality of the shot** - what does each shot contain?
- **Cinematic space** - effectively where the action takes place.
- **Cinematic Time** - the time a given sequence takes to play on the screen. In film, time can be compressed or extended.

- How to shrink time : Through a series of fast paced cuts we can see things that would take a long time in just a few minutes or seconds.
- How to expand time : The editor can expand time by adding additional details.
- Rhythm : Editing sets the rhythm or pace of a scene. This could be dictated by either the music used behind a scene or the mood that the editor is trying to create and the pace that you edit. To build up tension in a scene you might cut from one shot to another very quickly. However, in a relaxed scene the editing will progress at a much slower pace, dwelling longer on each shot.

Editing Clip 22 : Hot Fuzz

- Top London policeman, Nicholas Angel is sent to a quiet country village as punishment for being too good. But the village is not all it seems! Numerous deaths lead Angel into a final showdown with the villagers in 'God's Country'.

The sequence is from the end of the film – the final shoot out between Angel, his sidekick Danny and the villagers.

'Hot Fuzz' is a comedic take not only on action films but also on British village detective television series. The sequence that you will be looking at contains visual elements of films such as 'Pulp Fiction', 'The Wild Bunch', 'Supercop', 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' and various Spaghetti Westerns.

This long sequence can be broken into a number of key scenes:

1. The confrontation outside the village
2. In the police station
3. Angel's arrival in the village – the scene with the school children
4. The Introduction of the 'villains' – the villagers
5. Angel's final arrival
6. Another sequence introducing the villagers
7. Angel dismounts and walks into the village
8. Final introduction of the villagers

Activity 1:

Choose any one of the scenes outlined above. Describe the way in which the various shots have been edited together. What is the pace of the editing? Is it a collection of a variety of short shots or are there longer shots that 'pause' the action? What do the different shots focus on?

Activity 2:

In the police station sequence one could say that it is divided into two halves of different editing pacing. How do these two halves balance the development of the sequence?

- Activity 3

There are three sections that focus on the villagers. How is each one different in terms of the type of shots selected and the way in which they are edited together?

Activity 4:

Given the action shown in this sequence, how are we, as viewers of the sequence, given moments where we can pause before the action begins again?

Activity 5:

Choose five moments in the sequence that you think are typical of the ways in which action films are edited.

Editing Clip 23 : Slumdog Millionaire

- This sequence begins with an attack on a Muslim quarter of Mumbai. The mother of the two central characters – Jamal and Salim – is killed in the attack. The two boys rescue Latika from the massacre. In the aftermath, they take shelter in a container.
- This action is intercut with scenes of the older Jamal being questioned in a police station and also appearing in ‘Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?’.

Questions:

How does the editor create a sense of the chaos that is occurring in the riot?

Given the overall pace of the riot scenes, can you identify the moments where the edit or allows us to pause before the fast paced action begins again? What is significant about these moments?

What ideas/emotions are suggested by the editing between the final image of the mother lying dead in the pool and Jamal's questioning in the police station? As we see people pass across our view of the pool, how does this give us a visual link to the next section of the sequence? How does the editor cut shots together to get us from the riot to Jamal giving the correct answers on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?'?

In what ways does the film reproduce the visual representation of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?'? And at the same time, how does the editing of these sequences show us the relationship of Jamal and the host?

DIRECTING

STORYTELLING

As you have seen, creating a filmic world and telling a story on film is a richly complex audio-visual process. But the way that this story is told is also a critical part of creating that film. When we watch a film we, as the audience, get caught up in the story that it is being told. For ninety minutes or more we follow characters and events that lead to a final conclusion. Just as the world of the film is constructed then so is the story that it tells.

We know that, in basic terms, a **story** will have a beginning, middle and an end. But sometimes we also talk about **plot**. So what is the difference between these two words?

Novelist E.M.Forster had these suggestions:

A story is a series of events recorded in their chronological order.

A plot is a series of events deliberately arranged so as to reveal their dramatic, thematic, and emotional significance.

Directing Clip 25 : The Bourne Ultimatum

Activity:

- Having viewed the extract, explain how the director intertwines the conflicts within the sequence.
- How does the editing drive along the different conflict?
- Describe the way in which the sequence is shot and how this helps build up the tension.
- The action cuts between the CIA control room and the events in Waterloo Station.

Given that we see all of the events taking place (including the arrival of the assassin) how does this place us in relation not only to the action but also in relation to the various characters? How does our knowing and seeing everything add to the tension?

Directing Clip 27 : The Scouting Book for Boys

In watching this scene think about the following:

1. Why are David's parents mainly shown out of focus?
2. When David's mother moves to the front of the frame and moves into focus, what is strange about the way she is shown?
3. From your answers to the first two questions, how would you describe David's relationship with his parents?
4. How does the soundtrack contribute to the mood of the scene?
5. Describe the emotions portrayed by the actor (Thomas Turgoose) in the scene.
6. Most of the dialogue in the scene takes place behind the 'action'. What is being discussed?
7. How is the dialogue different when the mother comes into focus?
8. What is the effect of focusing the camera solely on David?

SOUND

