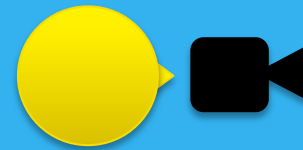


FILM-MAKING FOUNDATIONS

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SHOOT YOUR STORIES



BY DAVID MOLLOY

CAMERA BASICS: USING A DSLR

At Shopfront, we use Canon DSLR cameras (that stands for ‘digital single reflex cameras’).



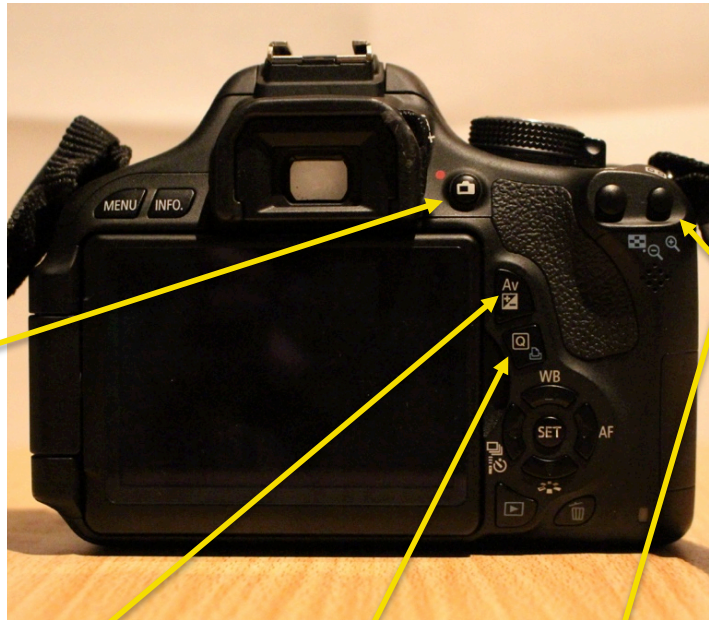
These cameras are used for both film and photography, and are considered ‘semi-professional’ cameras.

Using these cameras may seem challenging at first, but they give you a lot of control over your images, which is extremely important to a filmmaker.

Remember: you’re telling a story using **LIGHT**, **COLOUR** and **MOTION**. If you use automatic settings, you have no real control of these things!

There are FIVE manual settings to remember:
FOCUS, SHUTTER SPEED, COLOUR TEMPERATURE, APERTURE and ISO

CAMERA BASICS: BUTTONS



RECORD

AV = Aperture

Hold this and turn the top wheel to open/close the lens aperture.

Q = Quick Menu

Press this to change lots of settings, including colour temperature.

Focus Assist

This button lets you check your focus by digitally zooming in.



PHOTO
(Half press to auto-focus)

Mode Select Wheel

This should be set to either M (manual) or the video cam.

Hotshoe

You can attach a shotgun mic here; don't forget to plug it in on the left!

ISO = Light Sensitivity

Press this and turn the top wheel to change the light sensitivity.

Top Wheel

If you're not holding another button, this controls shutter speed.

CAMERA BASICS: FOCUS

This is the single most important aspect of shooting, because it's the only thing that can't be fixed by an editor!



Make sure the most important element in your shot is sharply focused!

Make sure this switch is set to MF (manual focus), not AF (auto focus).

The front ring on the lens is the FOCUS RING – use this to focus your shot!

The second, larger ring is the ZOOM RING for zooming in/out.

This lens has a STABILISER – it's a handy thing to leave on!



Remember: unfocused videos look terrible and are almost impossible to fix!

Make sure your focus is right BEFORE you start shooting.

SHUTTER SPEED is simple: unless you're shooting slow motion, your camera will shoot at a frame-rate of 25 frames per second (fps). You should always keep your shutter speed at TWICE your frame-rate – so most of the time, keep it at 50. If you don't do this, any motion in the shot will look weird thanks to the rolling shutter effect (look it up!).

CAMERA BASICS: COLOUR TEMPERATURE

In your camera settings, this is also referred to as WHITE BALANCE (WB).



WARM



COOL

Comfortable, happy, familiar, hot, romantic,
passionate, angry, violent, etc.

Sad, detached, frightening, mundane, boring,
chilly, mysterious, unfeeling, etc.

Warm and cool temperatures can be both positive and negative. Remember: you want to make your audience feel something!

It's important to make sure that people's skin tones look relatively normal; play with the different white balance options (i.e. Sunlight for outside, Tungsten for inside) to see what works best. And don't use the auto function!



CAMERA BASICS: APERTURE



Think of the camera lens like your eye – it lets more light in when you open it, and less when you squint.
We measure how open the aperture is using a number referred to as **F-STOP**
(though the button we use on the camera says **AV**).



F-stop numbers work in reverse:

The **LOWER** the F-stop, the **MORE LIGHT** enters the camera.
The **HIGHER** the F-stop, the **LESS LIGHT** enters the camera.

Changing the aperture changes your **DEPTH OF FIELD**,
which dictates how much you can get in focus in your shot.

Remember the clown from p4? That shot had a very small depth of field, so she was the only thing in focus.

f/1.4	f/2.8	f/5.6	f/11	f/22
Very Large Aperture	Large Aperture	Medium Aperture	Small Aperture	Very Small Aperture
Very Small Depth of Field	Small Depth of Field	Medium Depth of Field	Large Depth of Field	Very Large Depth of Field
Almost Nothing In Focus	Little In Focus	Some In Focus	Much In Focus	Almost All In Focus
Brightest	Bright	Medium	Dark	Darkest



Remember: you can achieve **LENS FLARES** by using a high F-stop and getting the camera's angle to the light source (normally the sun) *just right*.

If your important focal point (maybe someone's face) is now too dark, you can compensate by increasing your ISO or using an external light.



CAMERA BASICS: LIGHT SENSITIVITY (ISO)

In the days of shooting on film, you had to buy specific filmstock with a set level of light sensitivity. Now that we're shooting on digital, we can change the sensitivity of the camera's image sensor whenever we want! Use the ISO button to change it, but don't use too much or your image will be grainy.



ISO 100

Good for bright, sunny outdoor shots; anywhere there's plenty of light.



ISO 400

All-purpose, good for indoor shots in bright rooms or on cloudy days.



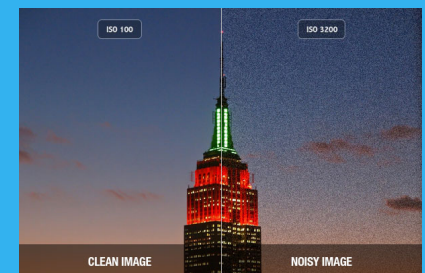
ISO 800

More sensitive: better for indoor shots, especially with less available light.

The only hard and fast rule is that higher ISO means more noise, i.e. graininess.

If you turn your ISO up too high, your image will lose a lot of clarity and quality, so be careful! It's always better to add light to your shot using external lights and reflectors – when you do this, you have more control over the shape of the light.

As a general rule, try not to have an ISO higher than 1600, and you shouldn't suffer from too much grain. Remember: you can always compensate for a low ISO by lowering the F-stop (**APERTURE, AV**) to let more light into the camera.



BASIC SHOT FORMAT: 3 FRAME STORYTELLING

WIDE: CONTEXT



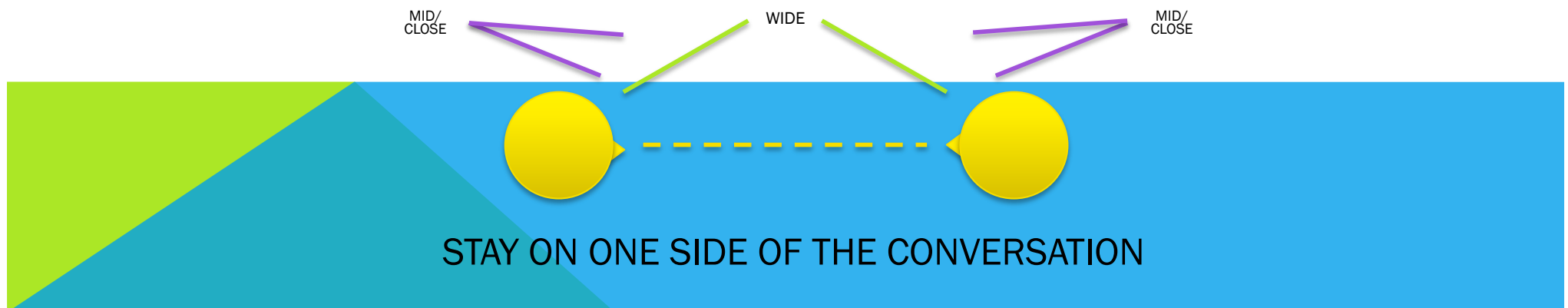
MID: RELATIONSHIPS



CLOSE: FACES/DETAILS



DON'T FORGET: NEVER CROSS THE LINE!!!



DIRTY VS CLEAN: SHOOTING DIALOGUE

CLEAN

Gives scene context (location), easy to edit, places focus on individual.



DIRTY

Gives scene context (intimacy), shows body language of second person.x



Just like in the theatre, spacial awareness is vital in film. The distance between your characters speaks to how they feel about each other; the way they sit or stand is changed by the presence of the other person.

In film-making, there's rarely only one "right" way to do things!

Remember that you decide how to tell this story: be decisive when planning your shots.

What do they say about your characters, your setting, every word of dialogue?

In a scene like this, what do you think is more important: the person saying the words, or the person hearing them?
It's different for every scene!

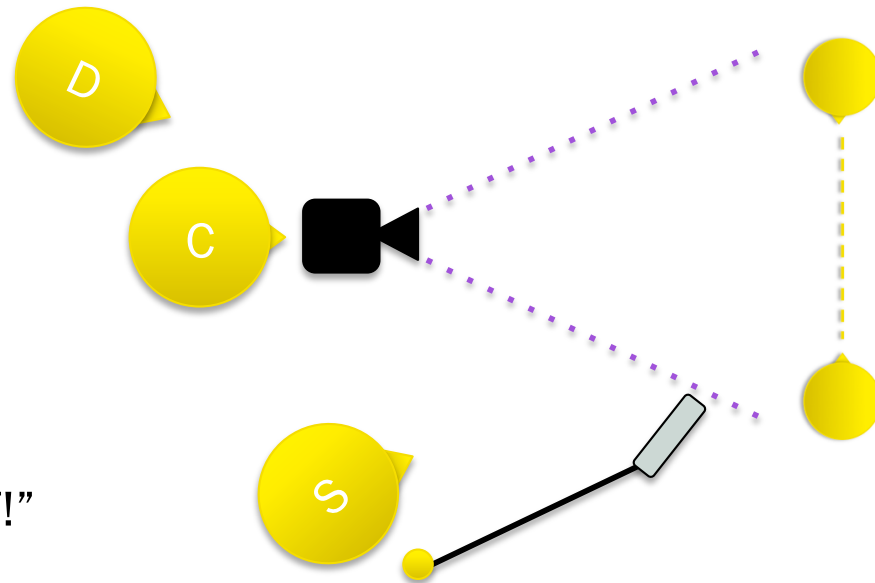
ON-SET PROTOCOL: HOW TO RUN A FILM SET

Director: “QUIET ON SET!”
“ROLL CAMERA”

Camera: (starts recording)
“CAMERA ROLLING”

Sound: (starts recording)
“SOUND SPEED”

Director: “ACTION!”
(after scene ends) “CUT!”



Remember: only stop recording/performing once the director says “CUT!”

If you're recording sound externally (with a mic that isn't attached to the camera), get someone to say the scene and shot numbers, then clap in front of the camera for sync. (This happens after the sound recorder says “SOUND SPEED” and before “ACTION!”)