Basic Shot Types

**EWS: Extreme Wide Shot or CS: (cover shot)**
This shot is often used as an establishing shot. In this shot, the subject is not visible.

**VWS: Very Wide Shot**
The subject is barely visible. This shot is also an establishing shot that places the subject in her environment.

**WS: Wide Shot or LS: Long Shot**
The subject takes up the full frame. Notice the amount of foot and head room are equal. This type of shot is good for showing action. It is a "safe" shot when you are not sure how the subject will be moving.

**MS: Medium Shot**
Shows more detail. Notice that there is not much "head" room. It gives the impression of the whole subject while being able to place the subject in an environment.
ECU: Extreme Close Up (tight shot)
Shows expression and gives the viewer an intimate relationship with the subject. While it is used for effect in some cases, many television interviews use the ECU routinely.

CA: Cutaway
A Cutaway is often a shot of something related to the action but from a different perspective. It can be used to provide either an anticipated or reactionary action by the subject. It can also be used to relieve the monotony of a prolonged shot.

CI: Cut-In
Used to show some part of the subject in detail. This is different from the cutaway because the shot is directly related to the subject. In a video of a train speeding down the track, a cut-in would be a tight shot of the wheels turning. A cut-in is different from a cut-away because a cut-in is part of the subject. A cut-away goes to a related part of the scene but is not part of the subject.

Two Shot
A combination of two people, framed.

Three Shot, etc.
A combination of three or more people, framed.
**OSS: Over-the-shoulder-shot**
Looking from behind a person. Often used in interviews with the focus on the person talking.

**Noddy Shot**
This is usually a shot of an interviewer. The shot may be pre or post production where the interviewer just nods or gives a variety of reactions that can be edited in post production.

**POV: Point of View Shot**
Shows view from a subject's perspective.

**Weather Shot**
Used to place the environment – often the sky.
The Rule of Thirds

The *rule of thirds* is a concept in video and film production in which the frame is divided into nine imaginary sections:

Points of interest should occur at 1/3 or 2/3 of the way up or across the frame, rather than in the center. This rule can be broken but you should be aware of the rule and have a purpose for breaking it. In most people shots, the main line of interest is the line going through the eyes. In this shot, the eyes are placed approximately 1/3 of the way down the frame.
Crossing the Line

*Crossing the line* refers to an imaginary line which cuts through the middle of the scene with respect to the position of the camera. The result of *crossing the line* is disorientation and confusion from the viewer’s perspective.
Camera Moves

Pan:
The camera moves horizontally from left to right or right to left. The purpose of a pan is to reveal a setting, sweep across a subject side than the screen, or show the relationship between two subjects. It is important that pans be slow so the viewer does not get disoriented. Fast pans are sometimes used to create transitions between scenes. Avoid using pans to excess. Often people used to taking still pictures will overuse the pan. Consider using cover shots and zooming instead of panning.

Tilt:
The camera moves vertically from top to bottom or bottom to top. The purpose of a tilt is to reveal parts of a vertical subject, useful for showing tall objects, show the relationship between parts of a subject, or add suspense or surprise.

Zoom:
The view of a subject changes from tight to wide or wide to tight using the zoom control on the lens. The camera does not move.

Truck:
The camera physically moves from left or right. To "truck" the camera will need to be on wheels or a track. The truck is much like a pan – the difference is that a truck is often more dramatic.

Arc:
An arc is a "truck" movement that goes in an arc around the subject.

Dolly:
The camera physically moves toward or away from a subject. To "dolly", the camera needs to be on wheels or a track.

Follow Action:
The camera follows the subject as they move. This may involve panning, tilting, and zooming.

Let in / out:
The camera is stationary and the subject enters or leaves the frame.

Let in and Follow:
The subject enters the camera frame and then the camera follows the moving subject.

Rules

Rule 1: When videotaping people, the most important rule is to always compose your shot so the subject is cut off in-between joints. Don't cut your subject at the knee, neck, elbow or waist.

Rule 2: Avoid "jump cuts". A jump cut occurs when a long scene is edited with the middle removed, leaving the beginning and the end. To avoid this, always shoot one scene from one angle and then move the camera or change the angle for the next shot.
Rule 3: Give the subject "directional" room. If the subject is moving from right to left, give the subject lead room to the left of the frame so the viewer can anticipate the action. In the picture below, notice the walkers are framed toward the right third of the picture. The camera provides lead room so the viewer can see where they are headed.

In this picture, the boy is framed in the right third of the picture but is headed to the right. It sometimes gives the impression that the subject is bumping into the side of the frame.
Camera Techniques

Camera Angles

Low Angle:
This shot shows a view looking up at the subject. The camera is placed on the ground or floor and tilted up. A low angle shot or worm's eye view can be used to make a subject look bigger than it is. For instance, using a model shot at a low angle will cause the model to look much bigger. A low angle is used to also make people look bigger than they are. Many of the scenes from the movie Citizen Kane were shot at low angle to make Orson Welles look bigger than life.

High Angle:
The camera is placed above the subject and tilted to look down on the subject. This type of shot is sometimes called a bird's eye view. It can be used to create a sense of smallness in the subject to show that the audience has a sense of looking over the subjects from a superior position.
TimeCoding

The most important job a camera operator has in making sure the footage is properly shot for use by an editor is to avoid any break in the timecode. On a DV tape, timecode is laid down as the tape records—it does not exist on the tape before shooting. On a tape that has been properly shot, the timecode should begin at 00:00:00:00 and progress until the end of the tape.

If a one hour tape is shot all the way to the end, the final timecode should read about 01:05:00:00, meaning that one hour and five minutes of total footage has been shot (the average DV tape runs a little more than one hour). There should be no breaks at all if the tape is played from beginning to end. This is important because as the editor logs and captures the tape, the timecode needs to run straight without interruption or the process of batch capturing will not work smoothly.

Broken timecodes can occur when the seamless process of recording and pausing is interrupted. If the camera stops recording and is switched from Camera mode to VTR mode, the tape can be rewound or fast-forwarded. If the tape is fast-forwarded past the point where any image has been recorded and thus past the point where any timecode has been laid down, the tape will "break" the timecode. When it begins to record again, the timecode will default to 00:00:00:00 and progress from there.

To make sure that this does not occur, when you are preparing to record a shot, always check that there is readable timecode on the spot in the tape. If no timecode is available, rewind the tape until the camera can detect timecode on the tape. Some cameras provide an End Search button, which will automatically fast-forward to the end of the timecode.

Prerolling

Run the tape 15 to 30 seconds before shooting. This is called prerolling. Prerolling makes sure that the tape stock being recorded on is top quality. Often, the stock at the very beginning and end of the tape is weaker because it has been handled to attach to the reels inside the tape. Remember that the preroll will include timecode unless you fast forward the tape instead of recording.

Padding

Leave padding at the beginning and end of every shot. When the director calls "cut" or an interview is over, don't immediately cut the camera off. Also make sure the director waits a moment before calling "cut", so you have room to really work with a scene. It is very helpful to have at least a few seconds of padding to work with. Otherwise, heads and tails of scenes can get chopped off. Also, you can sometimes get good usable footage that the editor can use as a cut-away if you let the camera run a little after the scene is over.

A-Roll and B-Roll

After you've shot the main scene, shoot details, close-ups, and other shots that could be used as cut-aways or B-Roll. (The main action of your scene is called the A-roll, and the other shots that can be cut into the A-Roll to make it more interesting or make it flow better are called B-Roll.) Often, an editor just needs a quick shot of something to make a transition or to smooth over the change between two angles that don't
cut together well. If you provide an assortment of cut-away or cut-in shots, such as close-ups of hands, shot of the environment, or interesting abstract detail shots, the editor will have more options when trying to construct scenes.

Recording and using Sound Tone

An editor often needs a piece of "silence" to blend two shots together or to fill in gaps in the audio created by piecing shots together. This "silence" is not completely silent, but is the atmospheric noise that is made up of the hums and murmurs when no intentional direct sound is being made. After you've shot in any location, whether it's a room with an air conditioner you can't turn off or park with the wind rustling through the leaves, you should record at least one minute of this atmospheric audio. This is called sound tone or room tone, and will be used by the editor to keep the background noise in any given scene as consistent as possible. You should even record the sound tone in the camera log, so that it can be captured along with the rest of the clips. When you begin recording sound tone, have someone talk into the microphone, stating the beginning of the tone, the length of tone, and the location.