

# Documentary Film Techniques

<b>Ambient Sound</b>	This is sound that is present, or available, in the context of the scene being filmed. It may consist of the background sounds such as traffic, birds, wind, children playing, machines working etc.
<b>Archival footage</b>	Use of direct cinema or other documentary footage or photographs from the past in order to review events that took place in the past or provide some perspective on events from the past.
<b>Bird's eye view</b>	A shot in which the camera photographs a scene from directly overhead.
<b>Captioning</b>	Captioning means placing written text on the screen to give additional information to the viewer. Captions may be used to give names of people interviewed, to give the time or location of an event, or to provide other relevant information.
<b>Cinema vérité</b>	A French film movement, means 'cinema truth'. Cinema vérité film makers believed that by following their subjects continually, by inserting themselves into their subjects' lives and by constantly and unobtrusively filming, they would be able to capture the 'real' person or event.
<b>Close-up, Close shot</b>	A detailed view of a person or object, usually without much context provided.
<b>Commentary</b>	An expression of opinion or explanation about an event or situation. In documentaries, the commentary is somewhat interchangeable with narration: the descriptive spoken account of an event.
<b>Cross cutting</b>	The alternating of shots from two sequences, often in different locales, to suggest the sequences are taking place simultaneously
<b>Dialogue</b>	Words spoken by the characters or subjects
<b>Direct cinema</b>	People filmed in uncontrolled situations, usually no added music, no use of narration, lengthy scenes to reveal glimpses of character; suggests an objective observing of reality by audience.
<b>Direct Interview</b>	We see subject talking on camera and we see and hear the interviewer asking questions in the same shot- a journalistic basis of reporting.
<b>Diegetic sound</b>	Sound whose source is visible on the screen or whose source is implied to be present by the action of the film, such as voices of characters, sounds made by objects in the story, music represented as coming from instruments in the story space.
<b>Dissolve, lap dissolve</b>	These terms refer to the slow fading out of one shot and the gradual fading in of its successor, with a superimposition of images, usually at the midpoint.
<b>Dolly shot, tracking shot, trucking shot</b>	A shot taken from a moving vehicle. Originally tracks were laid on the set to permit a smoother movement of the camera. Today even a smooth hand-held traveling shot is considered a variation of the dolly shot.
<b>Editing</b>	The joining of one shot (strip of film) with another. The shots can picture events and objects in different places at different times.
<b>Establishing shot</b>	Usually an extreme long or long shot offered at the beginning of a scene or sequence providing the viewer with the context of the subsequent closer shots.
<b>Extreme close-up</b>	A minutely detailed view of an object or a person. An extreme close-up of a subject generally includes only his/her eyes, or his/her mouth.
<b>Extreme long shot</b>	A panoramic view of an exterior location, photographed from a great distance, often as far as a quarter-mile away.
<b>Eye-level shot</b>	The placement of the camera approximately 5 to 6 feet from the ground corresponding to the height of an observer on the scene.
<b>Fish-eye lens</b>	An extreme wide angle lens, which distorts the image so radically that the edges seem wrapped into a sphere.
<b>Flash-editing, flash-cutting</b>	Editing sequences so that the durations of the shots are very brief.
<b>Graphics</b>	Images designed to convey an idea visually. They may be simple, such as lists of names, graphs, maps or written documents, or they may be very complex, such as computer generated images of a difficult scientific concept such as gravity.
<b>Handheld Camera</b>	Rather than using a tripod, dolly or crane the camera operator had far more flexibility and mobility. Images produced handheld weren't stable before the development of the steadicam. This created a certain look and feel usually associated with <i>cinema verite</i> and Direct Cinema both of which sought to follow events as they happened.



<b>High angle shot</b>	A shot in which the subject is photographed from above; the camera is high angled DOWN onto the subject, often suggesting their vulnerability or lack of power.
<b>Indirect Interview</b>	<b>We see the subject talking on camera, but we don't see or hear the interviewer asking questions in the same shot. This gives the impression of the character speaking directly to the viewer.</b>
<b>Lighting</b>	lighting is used to create atmosphere and establish information about characters and events. Think about whether the lighting is naturalistic or not. Lighting can be dim or soft or harsh or coloured with the use of filters. High-key and low-key lighting are terms for describing the quality of illumination and the intensity of lighting in the frame. High key lighting has bright intense illumination.
<b>Long shot</b>	Includes an amount of picture within the frame which roughly corresponds to the audience's view of the area within the proscenium arch of the legitimate theater.
<b>Low angle shot</b>	A shot in which the subject is photographed from below. The camera is below the subject and often gives them a sense of power or authority.
<b>Medium shot</b>	A relatively close shot, revealing a moderate amount of detail. A medium shot of a figure generally includes the body from the knees or waist up.
<b>Mise-en-scène</b>	The arrangement of volumes and movements within a given space. In the cinema, the space is defined by the frame; in the legitimate theater, usually by the proscenium arch.
<b>Montage</b>	A series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information. Creates a sense of growth and time passing quickly.
<b>Music and Sound FX</b>	Music is often used to create mood or atmosphere. It might also tell a story which is relevant to the topic or have some symbolic meaning. Sound FX are added in post-production to enhance the effect of a particular scene.
<b>Non- diegetic sound</b>	Sound is represented as coming from a source outside story space, such as narrator's commentary, sound effects added for dramatic effect, mood music etc.
<b>Parallel Editing</b>	Where two characters or parts of a scene are compared by establishing two tracks of shots which are played off against each other in <b>alternating</b> fashion.
<b>Over-the-shoulder shot</b>	A medium shot, useful in dialogue scenes, in which one actor is photographed head-on from over the shoulder of another actor.
<b>Point-of-view shot</b>	Any shot which is taken from the vantage point of a character in the film. Also known as the first person camera.
<b>Re-enactment</b>	When real events cannot be filmed as they happen, film-makers will sometimes re-create the event. This allows a visual understanding to be gained by the viewer and adds to the entertainment factor.
<b>Setting</b>	The time and place where a film is located. The film <b>set</b> refers to the place or location used for a specific shot or scene.
<b>Side by side frame</b>	When two or more images are placed side by side. This may show a change or shift in time, compare two different or similar things etc.
<b>Sound effects</b>	Artificially produced sounds. These can be used to enhance mood or atmosphere, to create particular associations of character, object or place, or to convey meaning.
<b>Soundtrack</b>	All the music, sound effects and dialogue that you hear when you watch the film. Soundtrack refers to: dialogue, silence, voices (volume, pitch, pace), sound cues (how sound can take you over the cut into the next scene), sound effects, music, diegetic and non-diegetic sound.
<b>Voice over narration</b>	We may hear a character speaking about some issue/ problem/ conflict and we may or may not see that person engaged in some action on the screen at the same time. This gives the impression of audience overhearing the character reveal thoughts and feelings.  Alternatively, we may also hear the voiceover of a narrator who is commenting on action- a more objective voice than the above eg.
<b>Zoom shot</b>	A shot taken with the aid of a zoom lens. The lens changes focal length during the shot so that a dolly or crane shot is suggested.