



# Film Language and Elements of Style

*By means of the camera's viewfinder, the outside world goes through a process of selection and organization. . . . Like the microscope, the frame is an analyzing tool.*

—Néstor Almendros, cinematographer



## Scope & Sequence

This chapter is about reading. While books and newspapers are familiar texts to most teachers and children, “reading” a film is less familiar, despite the fact that moving images have become the most widely used media for communicating ideas in the 21st century. In this chapter, students focus on the selection and arrangement of details within a single movie still. Subsequent activities introduce students to different camera distances and angles. After they are comfortable reading a single still frame, they begin to read frames in motion—or shots. They distinguish between high-key and low-key lighting and discuss the meaning suggested by the use of lighting in the shots. Next, they identify different types of movement within multiple frames. Students will also distinguish two different cinematic points of view—objective and subjective.

By the end of the chapter, they will have knowledge of how filmmakers not only frame images and create transitions between scenes, but also how they combine images with sound in a particular sequence so as to convey meaning and influence an audience. This knowledge will help students better appreciate movies they see for entertainment, and prepare them to become critical viewers of the moving images they see when outside the classroom.

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## Film Study Standards

- 1.0 **Film Language.** Students learn to read and interpret visual text by developing a film vocabulary, identifying editing techniques, and analyzing film elements within selected scenes.
- 3.0 **Production and Creative Expression.** Students understand that a film is an expression of a director’s personal vision produced through a collaborative process. Students understand and distinguish the various filmmaking roles that contribute to the final work of art.
- 5.0 **Cross-Curricular Connections.** Students first tap their knowledge of other disciplines to study a film. They then apply what they have learned about film to other disciplines, making connections between film and literature/language arts, film and history/social studies, film and other arts, and film and sciences.

### Teacher Overview

Film has a specific format—the rectangular size and shape of the screen. The boundaries of the screen determine the composition of each frame. A frame is a single photograph on a strip of film, but it is much more. The frame forces the director and cinematographer to work within a confined area. They must make decisions—what to include, what to exclude, and where to place one object or person in relation to another. This arrangement of objects and people within the frame is intentional and suggests meaning.

The first activity in this lesson introduces students to the frame as a format for composition and to the use of lines, in particular, in directing the eye to key details within the frame. In the second activity, camera distances and angles are explored as among the filmmaker’s communication tools. The use of these tools determines how the audience will interpret the visual text. This activity, therefore, introduces students to seven different types of shots, each dependent on the position of the camera in relation to the subject within the frame.

### Learning Outcomes

Students will

- define what composition is;
- define what a frame is;
- understand that lines are formed to create an element of composition, often directing the viewer’s eye to the point of emphasis in the frame;
- define what a shot is;
- identify four types of shots based on camera distance—long shot, medium shot, close-up, and extreme close-up;
- identify three types of shots based on camera angle—high-angle shot, low-angle shot, eye-level shot.

### Key Terms

(Note: Most terms are defined within the activity text that follows. You may also refer to the glossary.)

*still, composition, frame, point of emphasis, cut, shot, long shot, establishing shot, medium shot, close-up, extreme close-up, high-angle shot, low-angle shot, eye-level shot*

### Materials

#### Activity

**Activity A**  
Composition and Point of Emphasis

**Activity B**  
Camera Distances and Angles


#### Print

 Visual-Thinking Activity 3-1: Analyzing Composition


 Graphic Organizer 3-1: Camera-to-Subject Distances


 Graphic Organizer 3-2: Camera-to-Subject Angles


 Visual-Thinking Activity 3-2: Shots and Significance

 Screening Sheet 3-1, *Enrichment: Communicating Without Words*

#### DVD


 Still 3-1: Smith Enters the Senate


 Still 3-2: The Senate Is in Session

 Still 3-3: Inside the Lincoln Memorial

 Still 3-4: The Senate Gallery

 Still 3-5: The Camera’s Position

 Stills 3-6, A–E: Shots and Significance

 Film Clip 3-1, *Enrichment: Communicating Without Words*

# Activity A Composition and Point of Emphasis

## Concept

The composition, or arrangement of elements, of a single frame of film communicates meaning. Lines can be formed to create an element of composition, often directing the viewer's eye to the point of emphasis in the frame.

## Engage

Display  **Still 3-1: Smith Enters the Senate.** Discuss the composition of the frame by asking the following questions.




### Guided Discussion

1. What did you notice first in this photograph? *Answers will vary. Some students may indicate that they noticed Jefferson Smith and the Senate page first, located on the left in the photograph. Others may suggest that they noticed the group of three men below right of center who are looking at someone, and that is what drew their attention to Smith.*
2. Identify the other people and objects in the room. *There are 30 men besides Smith pictured in this single photograph, many of them presumably senators. Some read or hold papers. There are also desks, chairs, a few hats, and a briefcase.*
3. What do you notice about the relationship of these men to one another? *Again, answers will vary. Some students may point out that some men are talking together while others are alone, such as the gentleman sitting at his desk reading. In the midst of this group of men is Jefferson Smith. While some men are looking at him, the only person interacting with him is the boy.*

Explain that this photograph is a *still*, or a single frame, shot in production for the film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Many thousands of single frames make up a movie, and the composition, or arrangement of elements, within the frames is never accidental; it always suggests meaning. Images, like printed text, can be “read.” Learning to read images involves not only identifying elements of composition within the frame but also making sense of those elements.

## Explain & Explore

- Define *composition* and *frame*. Composition is the arrangement of all the elements that contribute to the appearance of a picture. The elements work together to create meaning. Emphasize the importance of composition in telling a story visually. Scenes are made up of shots, and shots are made up of single images called frames. Composition is one of the primary means by which the filmmaker tells a story. Learning to identify elements of composition, therefore, is an important visual-literacy skill.
- Share this information with students:



*Lines formed by details in an image comprise one of the elements of composition. The human eye tends to follow lines. A painter or photographer uses lines to guide the viewer's eye around a composition, from side to side, from foreground to background, or even diagonally across the frame. The same is true in moving-image composition. The cinematographer often uses lines to control what the audience sees. Lines can also add depth to an image, suggesting three dimensions and relationships between objects or people.*
- Define *point of emphasis*. Every composition has a point of emphasis, or center of interest. But the center of interest is usually *not* in the center of the frame. Filmmakers create a point of emphasis in a variety of ways. The arrangement or placement of people and objects within the frame is one way to create a focal point. The use of lines and angles, light and shadow, color, and movement are other ways to create a point of emphasis within a movie still, or frame.
- Display again  **Still 3-1: Smith Enters the Senate.** Draw students' attention to the use of lines in the frame. A line need not be straight nor horizontal nor vertical. It can, as it does in this still, curve. Ask students to comment on the use of the curved lines formed by the arrangement of the desks. Jefferson Smith is not an experienced senator. He stands outside the curved “circle.” Point out also that the back row of desks leads right to him. Also note that the diagonal line of benches at the back of the room point right to Smith. Ask students this question: *If placing Smith outside the “circle” of desks suggests he is inexperienced, what might the use of other lines in the frame suggest?* Some students may suggest that he is the main character and that the lines indicate this. Others may suggest that he is someone about whom the others have heard (and read in the newspapers). Emphasize that no single interpretation is correct.

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- Distribute  **Visual-Thinking Activity 3-1: Analyzing Composition.** Students will use these sheets to record their observations of two movie stills displayed on the DVD.
- Display  **Still 3-2: The Senate Is in Session.** Allow time for students to study each image and then record their observations on their activity sheets. Recommended answers are below.



## Answer Key for Visual-Thinking Activity 3-1: Analyzing Composition, Part 1 – The Senate Is in Session

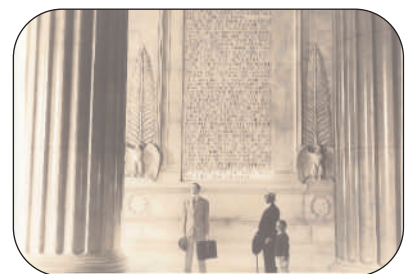
### Identifying Details

1. What do you see in this frame? List all details, including objects and props. *This image has hundreds of details—people, desks, chairs, walls, doors, stairs, railings, papers, and two different levels, the ground floor and the balcony.*
2. Lines in a film frame are not just horizontal or vertical. They can be diagonal or curved. Besides the horizontal and vertical lines in this still, what other lines are at work in this composition? *The arrangement of the desks creates curved lines that radiate outward from the center of the Senate floor. At a point on the very last curved line stands Jefferson Smith.*
3. Identify a dominant vertical line at work in this composition. How does this line direct the viewer to an important detail that might at first be overlooked, and what is that detail? *A vertical line—the balcony railing—runs from the lower right section of the frame upward. At the point where this line ends, a woman is standing, holding up a book. This person is Saunders, and she is coaching Jefferson Smith, who is on the Senate floor.*

### Analyzing Details

4. Where is Jefferson Smith positioned, and what lines indicate his location? *He is approximately at the intersecting points of the corner of the back wall and the stairway between the curved rows.*
5. What is big and what is small in this frame? Why do you think the director planned the image to look this way? *The chamber itself is huge, but everything else is small, almost indistinguishable. By pulling back with the camera to show so many things, so many people, the director may be communicating the vastness or the grandeur of the chamber and that it houses not only the politicians (on the floor) but the people whom they represent and to whom they must answer (in the balcony).*
6. Who or what is the point of emphasis in this frame? What elements of composition suggest this? Consider the size (also called *scale*) and the placement of people and objects within the frame. *Although the people are equal in size, the use of lines suggests the filmmaker wants you to notice both Saunders and Smith. Her position, standing with the book, facing him, suggests a relationship between them.*

- Display  **Still 3-3: Inside the Lincoln Memorial.** Allow time for students to study the image and record their observations. Recommended answers follow.



## Answer Key for Visual-Thinking Activity 3-1: Analyzing Composition, Part 2 – Inside the Lincoln Memorial

### Identifying Details

1. This image is from part of the Lincoln Memorial as seen from inside. What is the first thing that catches your attention, and where is it? *Answers may vary, but most students are likely to say the small figures—Jefferson Smith, the boy, and the man—in the bottom third of the frame.*
2. What other details do you see in this frame? Describe all people and objects or other details. *Three of three different generations—a child, an elderly man, and an adult (Jefferson Smith). Smith holds his hat in one hand and his briefcase in the other. The elderly gentleman also holds a hat. Carved onto the rear wall are the words from the Gettysburg Address. There are also two eagles with large feathers behind them. Two large pillars are on either side of the people, framing them.*
3. What lines do you notice in this frame? *The pillars on either side of the people, the feathers, and the edges of the Gettysburg Address all create vertical lines.*

### Analyzing Details

4. What is big and what is small in this frame? In your opinion, what might these things and/or sizes represent? *The people are small in the frame. The pillars are huge in comparison, possibly symbolizing strength or permanence. The words (or the idea represented by the words) tower behind the people.*
5. What do you think is happening in this frame? *The three people seem to be looking up at something that is out of the frame of the picture. Students who are familiar with the monument will suggest that they are looking at the carved statue of Abraham Lincoln.*
6. Who or what is the point of emphasis in this frame—the three people, the pillars, the words carved on the rear wall, or something else? Provide a reason to support your answer. *Interpretations will vary. Although the pillars and the carved address are larger, the people seem to catch the eye first. Some students may argue that the words, being larger and carved in stone, are more important than the people and will outlast them. Still others may argue that the people are not looking at the words at all, but rather looking at something outside the frame. That attention to something else (most likely the statue of Lincoln), while not noticeable immediately, could also be a point of emphasis.*

### Close

Ask students to bring to class photographs taken from newspapers or news magazines for analysis of composition and point of emphasis.

## Activity B Camera Distances and Angles

### Concept

Filmmakers use camera distances and angles to control how an audience views the characters and objects within the frame and to suggest meaning about these characters and objects.

### Engage

Display  **Still 3-4: The Senate Gallery.** Emphasize again that nothing in a movie frame is accidental. Every detail is there for a reason. Then ask students to explain why they think the director framed this image with the newspaper positioned behind and between Saunders and Diz Moore, the reporter.




Specifically, emphasize that the camera is much closer to the characters in this frame than the camera was in the frames they viewed in activity A. The camera is close enough for the audience to see not only the facial expressions of the two characters but also to see the picture and read the headline in the newspaper. Deciding where to place the camera in relation to the subject being photographed is another way filmmakers control what the audience sees and how they see it.

In discussing this frame, you may wish to include the following information:

*The frame visually links Saunders in a triangle with Smith and the humiliating press coverage. She was, in part, to blame for this front-page slander. She is smiling, suggesting she is amused rather than upset by the story. Some students may also suggest that by setting this image in the Senate balcony, the filmmaker is suggesting that Smith's appointment to the Senate is a joke that many spectators are just waiting to see unfold. Indeed, the filmmaker could have shown Saunders looking at this newspaper in a diner or at her own desk. It is more powerful here in the Senate, where Smith's reputation will be at greatest risk.*

## Explain & Explore

- Define *shot*. A shot is a segment of film. It is made up of a series of single frames set in motion.
- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-1: Camera-to-Subject Distances** to introduce students to four different types of shots. Each position changes how the audience sees the people or objects within the frame. Review the key points on the graphic organizer as suggested below.

### Distance

In film language, distance is the closeness of a subject as determined by the placement of the camera. Filmmakers use distance to establish size and settings or to direct the viewer's attention to the most important elements in the frame.

### Long Shot

The camera is far from the subject. The audience can look to the left or to the right and see any number of details in the frame. In long shots, the subject generally appears small in relation to the surroundings. A long shot is often called an *establishing shot* because it provides an overview of the time and place of the action.

### Medium Shot


The camera has moved closer to the subject, usually showing the person from the waist up.

### Close-Up


A close-up allows the cinematographer to focus the audience's attention on a specific detail. This detail fills the entire frame. Faces, hands, or individual objects are often shown in close-up. Stress that filmmakers use close-ups and extreme close-ups for a *reason* and not just to play with the zoom lens! The close-up provides what the filmmaker believes is necessary or meaningful information for the audience.

### Extreme Close-Up

In an extreme close-up, a small detail ordinarily lost in a long shot or medium shot, perhaps even in a close-up, now fills the frame and becomes an obvious point of emphasis.

- Display  **Still 3-5: The Camera's Position**. This production photograph shows the position of the camera in relation to the actors in the Senate gallery. The director, Frank Capra, is by the camera. He looks directly at Saunders, who is leaning on the gallery rail. Ask students to identify the type of shot that might result with the camera in this position. The answer is a *close-up*.



- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-2: Camera-to-Subject Angles**. In addition to distance, camera placement can also determine an angle. Angles alter the way an audience sees the subject within the frame. Review the key points which follow.

## Angle

Angle is the direction from which the camera views the subject. Filmmakers use angles to create interest but also to suggest meaning or relationships.

### High Angle




In a high-angle shot, the camera is above the subject and looks down. This can make the subject appear small, weak, or unimportant.

### Low Angle




In a low-angle shot, the camera is below the subject and looks up. This can make the subject appear large, powerful, or impressive.

### Eye Level

The camera is neither high nor low but focused on the subject at about eye level, or straight on. The subject appears in normal proportions, neither small nor large.



- Display again  **Still 3-5: The Camera's Position.** Explain that this particular close-up is an eye-level shot. The camera is mounted on a crane and moved into position to photograph Clarissa in the balcony.
- Distribute  **Visual-Thinking Activity 3-2: Shots and Significance.** Students will use this sheet while analyzing camera distances and angles for five movie stills displayed on the DVD.
- Display  **Stills 3-6, A–E: Shots and Significance** to illustrate camera distances and angles. Explain that distances and angles give filmmakers ways to draw attention to the point of emphasis in the frame. Allow students time to record their responses to each still before moving on to the next image. Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Visual-Thinking Activity 3-2: Shots and Significance

Still	Type of Shot	What is the point of emphasis? How do you know?
	<i>long shot, high angle</i>	<i>Because Smith is small in the chamber space, the high angle makes him appear even smaller. This suggests his unimportance, his inexperience. Great men have sat in this chamber, and he does not feel he is one of them.</i>
	<i>close-up, high angle</i>	<i>The shot simply shows the audience what Smith sees—the Calendar of Business—looking down, as if through his eyes.</i>
	<i>medium shot, eye level</i>	<i>Although younger, the page is in charge and knows how the Senate works. He's even holding Smith's hat. A seated Smith is the pupil, the novice.</i>





Answer Key for Visual-Thinking Activity 3-2:  
Shots and Significance (cont.)

Still	Type of Shot	What is the point of emphasis? How do you know?
<p><b>D</b></p> 	<p>extreme close-up, eye level</p>	<p>Although the pin is important as a symbol of the boys' club, the emphasis is on the act of pinning it on the boy's lapel.</p>
<p><b>E</b></p> 	<p>medium shot, low angle</p>	<p>The camera looks up at Paine. He "has the floor" and so has power, respect. He dominates the frame and so is the point of emphasis. The people in the balcony behind him are small, almost indistinguishable.</p>


Think More About It

1. Why does a filmmaker shoot scenes from different camera distances and angles? Why not keep a fixed distance and angle on the subject throughout the entire movie? *Answers will vary, and while some students may say "for variety," they should focus on the main idea that camera distances and angles control what the audience sees and how, and thereby create meaning.*
2. Why might a director decide to show a close-up of a character or an object? *To direct the audience's attention to an important detail*

Enrichment

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-1, Enrichment: Communicating Without Words.** Explain that in this screening activity, they will apply what they have learned about different camera distances and angles to interpreting a scene.
- View  **Film Clip 3-1, Enrichment: Communicating Without Words.** Allow time for students to record their observations on the Screening Sheet, then discuss. Recommended answers are below. Note: Some teachers may wish to screen this segment a second time, stopping the DVD on each shot indicated on the chart below to allow students time to study each frame and respond.

Screening Sheet 3-1, *Enrichment: Communicating Without Words*

Shot	Emphasis and/or Thoughts What is the character thinking and/or feeling in this shot?	Explanation What details in the frame suggest these emotions or thoughts?
 <p>Medium shot of Smith reading the telegrams</p>	<p>Curiosity, disbelief, bewilderment, confusion, exhaustion</p>	<p>He staggers from one basket to the other, as if thinking they can't all be against him. His forehead is furrowed as he reads. He grabs another fistful of telegrams, then looks up as if for an answer from someone. He opens his mouth as if to speak but says nothing. His sweat and disheveled hair also convey his exhaustion.</p>

Screening Sheet 3-1, *Enrichment: Communicating Without Words (cont.)*

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Shot	Emphasis and/or Thoughts What is the character thinking and/or feeling in this shot?	Explanation What details in the frame suggest these emotions or thoughts?
 <p data-bbox="266 506 505 558">Medium shot of senators at their desks</p>	<p data-bbox="589 310 889 533"><i>Curious, attentive to what is happening, perhaps skeptical. Some may be wondering what the telegrams say specifically; more likely they are watching Smith's reaction and thinking, What will he do now?</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 310 1398 474"><i>They are sitting very still and looking at Smith, whereas in earlier scenes some were turned away from him and engaged in other activities, such as reading newspapers.</i></p>
 <p data-bbox="266 777 505 829">Close-up of Clarissa Saunders's face</p>	<p data-bbox="589 594 943 720"><i>Fearful, worried, hurt, regretful. Some students may say she feels sorry for Smith; others may suggest she can't bear to see him hurt.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 594 1414 688"><i>She is grimacing. Her brow is furrowed, then she half looks away, as though she can't watch anymore.</i></p>
 <p data-bbox="266 1056 505 1129">Close-up of Smith looking at Senate balcony, then slumping over</p>	<p data-bbox="589 852 967 947"><i>Crestfallen, disheartened, distraught, perhaps wondering whether he should give up the fight.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 852 1414 1136"><i>He appears about to cry. He looks up as if for help or an answer. Emphasize that this shot communicates a different emotion from the medium shot of Smith reading the telegrams that began the sequence. He has read the letters, and distress has replaced disbelief, as evidenced by how he drops his head as if defeated.</i></p>
 <p data-bbox="266 1369 505 1421">Medium shot of Senate pages</p>	<p data-bbox="589 1186 964 1249"><i>Sad, disillusioned, worried. They may be feeling sorry for Smith.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 1186 1430 1407"><i>The boy in the center of the frame presses his lips together as if trying to control his emotions. His eyes are welling. One boy has his chin in his hand. The pages are not laughing or smirking at Smith's downfall. Instead, they are serious and watching him closely.</i></p>
 <p data-bbox="266 1638 505 1690">Second close-up of vice president</p>	<p data-bbox="589 1451 922 1604"><i>Concern, then encouragement. He may be thinking that despite what the telegrams say, Smith has won the day by making his point that he is an honorable man.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 1451 1422 1514"><i>The vice president is directly communicating with Smith when he smiles at him.</i></p>
 <p data-bbox="266 1902 505 1955">Close-up of Smith smiling at the vice president</p>	<p data-bbox="589 1715 980 1871"><i>A change of emotion, a little relief. He might be thinking that he gave it his best shot or that at least someone—the vice president—believes him despite what the telegrams may say.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1019 1715 1419 1871"><i>He smiles. The smile soon fades, but while Smith is exhausted and distressed, he seems to take heart. He blinks and looks down, as if thinking about whether he still has some fight left in him.</i></p>

Screening Sheet 3-1, *Enrichment: Communicating Without Words (cont.)*

**Think More About It**

1. Why is dialogue not necessary for you to understand what the characters are thinking? *The camera controls what the viewer sees and how -- at times using a long shot to show the reaction of many and then a medium or close-up to show the reactions and gestures of single characters.*
2. How would this scene be different if the director and the film editor did not use close-ups or medium shots, but rather did the entire scene in long shots? *The audience would not be able to see facial expressions well and therefore would not completely understand what the character might be feeling or thinking. Also, by bringing the camera so close to a character, the audience becomes more involved in the action and is more likely to feel a connection to the character.*

**Close**

Share this information with students:

*A single camera captures a single image. Shooting a film, however, involves more than placing actors on a stage and recording their performances. When filming a movie, the director generally uses multiple cameras to capture the same action from different distances and angles. The film editor selects the best shots from one or more of the cameras. The decision about which footage from which camera to use depends in part on the quality of the camerawork and lighting, the quality of the acting performances, and the overall meaning of the shots.*

Tell students that they will learn more about film editing in lesson 3 of this chapter.



**Eyeballs and Camera Lenses**

Learn more about the similarities between the human eye and a camera by going to The Story of Movies Web site, [www.storyofmovies.org](http://www.storyofmovies.org), and explore a science activity on some basic principles of optics.

## Teacher Overview

In lesson 1, students learned about the composition of a single frame of film, with emphasis on the use of lines, camera distances, and camera angles. In lesson 2, they learn two additional elements of composition—light and movement. Both light and movement create meaning and can trigger audience responses. Activity A focuses on the cinematographer’s use of light to draw attention to key, or principal, areas within the frame. The careful control of light can produce shadows and illumination that conceal or highlight details, create moods, and suggest realism.

Activity B introduces the concept of movement as a compositional element. Movement—either of the camera or of the subject within the frame—is also carefully planned and can suggest meaning. For example, movement of a subject from the light into shadow might suggest a character’s shift into a troubled state of mind, or a frightening situation. Movement of the camera can bring an audience closer to a subject, creating emphasis or emotional intimacy, or pull them farther away from the subject, creating emotional distance. Movement can also create moods, such as suspense, excitement, or humor. An enrichment screening activity challenges students to apply what they have learned about composition, light, and movement to reading a short scene.

The final activity in this lesson introduces students to the use of color as a way to communicate to the audience. Students will view stills from early color films, identifying basic elements of color, and then screen film segments from *Gone with the Wind*. An enrichment activity with strong science links explains an important technological achievement in color film-making, the Technicolor process.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will









- distinguish between high-key and low-key lighting;
- explain how light and shadow can suggest meaning and contribute to the mood of a scene;
- distinguish between a frame and a shot;
- distinguish between two different types of camera movements—fixed and mobile;
- define and explain the difference between three elements of color—hue, saturation, and value.

## Key Terms

(Note: Most terms are defined within the activity text that follows. You may also refer to the glossary.)

*light intensity, key lighting, high-key lighting, low-key lighting, fixed camera, pan, tilt, zoom, mobile camera, dolly, track, crane, Technicolor, hue, saturation, value*

## Lesson 2 Materials

Activity	Print	DVD
<p><b>Activity A</b> Light and Shadow</p>	<p> Graphic Organizer 3-3: What Is Light Intensity?</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-2: Light and Shadow</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-2: Light and Shadow</p>
<p><b>Activity B</b> What’s in Motion, and Why?</p>	<p> Graphic Organizer 3-4: Camera Movements</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-3: Identifying Camera Movements</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-4, <i>Enrichment</i>: The Confrontation</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-3: Identifying Camera Movements</p> <p> Film Clip 3-4, <i>Enrichment</i>: The Confrontation</p>

Materials (cont.)

Activity

**Activity C**  
The Significance  
of Color

Print



Graphic Organizer 3-5: Three Elements  
of Color



Screening Sheet 3-5: Color in Motion



Reading Activity 3-3, *Enrichment*:  
The Tech in Technicolor



Screening Sheet 3-6, *Enrichment*:  
The Use of Technicolor in *The River*

DVD



Still 3-7: A Horse of a  
Different Color



Still 3-8: The Color Wheel



Still 3-9: Robin Hood and  
the Sheriff of Nottingham



Still 3-10: Robin Hood  
Takes Aim



Still 3-11: The Widow  
Scarlett O'Hara



Still 3-12: After the Battle



Film Clip 3-5: Color in Motion



Film Clip 3-6, *Enrichment*:  
The Use of Technicolor in  
*The River*

Activity A Light and Shadow


Concept

Light draws attention to key, or principal, areas within a frame. Where and when to use light and shadow are conscious decisions made by the director and cinematographer to control what the audience sees.

Engage

Ask students whether there is a connection between light and a person's state of mind or mood. Ask them why a classroom is brightly lit but a restaurant may choose to use softer lights, even candlelight. Extend the discussion to natural lighting in nature. Do bright, sunny days cheer them up? Do dark, cloudy skies make them gloomy?

Explain & Explore

- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-3: What Is Light Intensity?** Explain that *key* means principal or primary, so *key lighting* is the predominant lighting. Tell students that light and shadows within a frame are never accidental, but are the result of purposeful decisions by the director and cinematographer to communicate to the audience. How does light intensity communicate? Simply, the use of light affects *what* we see—or do not see—and *how* we see it. That in turn determines what we think and feel about the characters or the situations on the screen. Review the key concepts on the graphic organizer as suggested below.

**Light Intensity**



Light intensity determines how much light the cinematographer allows in a frame or shot.

### High-Key Lighting

High key is bright light, and therefore the audience can see more detail. Brightness often suggests cheerfulness, openness, optimism, or confidence.

### Low-Key Lighting

Low key is less light, and therefore the audience sees less detail. The shadows and contrast of light and dark areas create a mysterious or secretive mood or atmosphere. Shadows can also suggest sadness, despair, suspense, or uncertainty.

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-2: Light and Shadow**. Review the directions on the sheet and draw students' attention to the Word Builder terms. Explain that they will view four different film segments. They should record their observations in columns two and three while viewing the segments, and then complete column four after viewing.
- View  **Film Clip 3-2: Light and Shadow**. Stop the DVD after each segment to allow time for students to record their observations. Discuss their responses. Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-2: Light and Shadow

Film Segment	Light Intensity Is high-key light or low-key light used?	What do you see? What is in light? What is in shadow?	What meaning does this lighting suggest?
A— Senate Corridor, Daytime	high-key light	Smith is walking fast, energetically. People move through the hall. The glass window at the hall's end is bright, as is the hall itself. Polish on the floor shines. Smith's face is plainly visible. Shadows are faint, suggesting sunlight from windows and ordinary building lights.	Smith is happy to be working on a project he values. This is the most confident we've seen him since he arrived in the capital.
B— Senate Corridor, Nighttime	low-key light	Saunders and Diz Moore are in the same corridor as above. Their dark shadows are on the wall. Her back is to us, and the corridor is empty. The glass window at the hall's end is dark, as are all the doorways. Very little detail can be seen in Diz's face. They move slowly toward the dark.	Saunders is crying. The darkness all around them echoes the sadness that Saunders feels.
C— The Lincoln Memorial, Smith's First Visit	high-key light	Smith is in bright sunshine as this scene opens. When he steps inside, bright light casts a sort of path, but shadows suggest the interior of the monument. The statue of Lincoln is washed in light. Details are revealed, including words of the Gettysburg Address.	The mood is not so much cheerful as it is inspiring, respectful, admiring. The light not only communicates daylight but also allows the audience to see what Smith sees.

Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-2: Light and Shadow (*cont.*)

Film Segment	Light Intensity Is high-key light or low-key light used?	What do you see? What is in light? What is in shadow?	What meaning does this lighting suggest?
D— The Lincoln Memorial, Smith's Next Visit	<i>low-key light</i>	<i>Light reveals key words in the Gettysburg Address. Smith is in a dark suit, and the background is black. Lincoln's statue has more contrast, more black behind it and shadows on parts of the face. As Smith picks up his bags, he is in darkness. The audience can't see his face. The long shadows of the pillars almost hide him.</i>	<i>Smith is not angry. He is forlorn, depressed. He feels as if he is a failure. Lincoln looks down upon him as if the democratic ideals he embodies have let Smith down.</i>

**Close**

Ask students to make a connection between the information they learned in this activity about lighting, and television news broadcasts. How can they apply what they have learned about high-key and low-key lighting to the way television networks present news stories? *The point here is not to identify specific news broadcasts that use high- or low-key lighting, so much as it is to encourage students to pay attention to lighting as a way of shading meaning in moving images other than film.*

Activity B What's in Motion, and Why?

**Concept**

Movement creates the illusion of three dimensions, introduces information to the audience, and often draws attention to important details within a frame. Movement can also bring the audience close to the action and increase its involvement with the characters and the situation.


**Engage**

Ask students this question: *What moves in movies?* One obvious answer is *the film itself*. The strip of film moves through the projector. Guide discussion further to the images on the screen. What moves on the screen? The subjects within the frame may walk, talk, turn around, heave a sigh of relief, twist open a jar, slam a door, etc. The ways a subject can move on-screen are endless. However, in terms of filmmaking, there are two basic types of movement: At times, the camera moves while the subject moves or remains still. In other shots, the camera is still while the subject is in motion.

Extend the discussion by asking *What would happen if nothing moved on the screen—neither the subject nor the camera—for many minutes during a film?* While stillness can be an interesting visual effect in a movie, stillness for too long a period would soon become distracting or boring.

## Explain & Explore

- Share this information with students:
 



*A characteristic of film is a continuously moving image, and so the director and cinematographer usually design movement into each shot. Movement is not random or unplanned. Movement can communicate the passage of time, a change of location, or a struggle between characters. The placement of the camera and its movement can also bring the audience closer to the action and increase the audience's involvement with the characters. For example, a camera that follows a character as he or she walks down the street helps create the impression that the audience is likewise moving down the street with the character.*
- Review the definition of *shot*. A shot is a segment of film. It is made up of a series of single frames set in motion.
- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-4: Camera Movements**. Explain that there are two basic methods of capturing movement on film:
  1. Filming the subject as it moves within the frame while the camera remains on a stationary base
  2. Moving the camera itself to follow the subject
- Review key points on the graphic organizer as recommended below.

### Fixed Camera

The camera is mounted on a stationary platform. The camera itself, however, can move in three ways: It can *pan*, meaning it moves from side to side; *tilt*, meaning it moves up and down; or *zoom*, meaning it moves forward or backward.

### Mobile Camera

The camera is mounted on a platform that can move around the set or on a track. A number of devices enable the camera to move forward, backward, to circle, or to sweep. A *dolly* is a type of platform with wheels. It allows the camera to move throughout the set. A *track* allows the camera to move along with the subject at various speeds. The film crew actually lays rails to allow the camera to roll smoothly. The camera operator may ride on the platform with the camera, or the crew may operate the camera by means of remote control. A *crane* shot is one in which the camera is mounted on a boom or a mechanical arm so it can move through the air. This mechanical crane is often used for getting an overhead or high-angle shot of a large crowd or area.

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-3: Identifying Camera Movements**. Review the directions and the Word Builder terms.
- View  **Film Clip 3-3: Identifying Camera Movements**. Stop the DVD after each segment to allow time for students to complete the chart. Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-3: Identifying Camera Movements



Film Segment	Movement Describe the position and movement of the camera.	Fixed Camera or Mobile Camera?
A— Entering the Senate	<i>The camera is behind Smith and follows him up to the door of the Senate Chamber. Both the subject and the camera move.</i>	<i>Mobile camera. The audience follows just behind Smith to the doorway, where the camera shows us a part of the Senate Chamber, as if we are looking at it through Smith's eyes.</i>



Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-3:  
Identifying Camera Movements (*cont.*)

Film Segment	Movement Describe the position and movement of the camera.	Fixed Camera or Mobile Camera?
B— “The Senate Will Come to Order”	<i>The camera is in the gallery, and it slowly pans, or moves from right to left, to show the entire chamber.</i>	<i>The camera base is fixed, but the camera itself pans. The people within the chamber are seated and do not move from their seats.</i>
C— Taking the Oath of Office	<i>The camera is again behind Smith. Movement of the subjects is minimal. This “stillness” suggests the seriousness of the oath Smith takes.</i>	<i>Fixed camera. The subjects move slightly within the frame.</i>

Enrichment

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-4, Enrichment: The Confrontation.** Explain that in this screening activity, students will apply what they have learned about reading a shot. Give them the opportunity to view the film clip twice. Remind students that a shot is a series of frames *in motion*. Therefore, they should pay attention not only to the arrangement of people and objects within the frames but also to the *movement* of people within the frames. Multiple things will happen at once, and students must observe carefully. This screening activity is excellent practice for the final screening activity in the chapter as well as for the screening activity that will be part of the chapter test.
- View  **Film Clip 3-4, Enrichment: The Confrontation.** Allow time for students to write down their observations on the chart. Then discuss the questions. Recommended answers follow.

Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-4, *Enrichment: The Confrontation*

Objects Look all around the room.	People Consider the placement of people within the frame.	Movement Who moves and when?
<i>The scene opens with a long shot of Senator Paine’s office. We see the desk, chairs, book-cases with many volumes, numerous photographs on the walls, telephones, a photograph of his daughter Susan on the desk. Behind Paine are books, associating him with knowledge.</i>	<i>Only two people are in this shot. But the arrangement of them within the frame and relative to one another reveals much about their changing relationship.</i>  <i>As the scene opens, both men stand on opposite sides of the senator’s desk, suggesting they are equal.</i>	<i>Smith enters and walks across to the senator’s desk. As the scene progresses, Senator Paine moves to the front of the desk and sits on it. Smith, however, refuses to sit. While Paine explains himself, he moves slightly, emphasizing with his hands. Smith, however, is mostly unmoving.</i>

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-4, Enrichment: The Confrontation (*cont.*)

**Objects**  
Look all around the room.

**People**  
Consider the placement of people within the frame.

**Movement**  
Who moves and when?

*Behind Paine is also a photograph of Jim Taylor, associating him with graft and corruption.*

*When Paine moves to the front of the desk and sits, this shifts the balance. They are no longer equal. Smith is taller.*

### Think More About It

1. When does Senator Paine move from behind the desk, and why does he do so? *He moves there after Smith tells him he called Jim Taylor a liar. The movement suggests Paine's surprise and real concern that perhaps Smith is learning too much about matters that Paine prefers to keep secret. Some students may suggest his movement from behind the desk to the front signals his aggression, or that he intends to take action to stop Smith from learning more about Taylor and his relationship with Paine. Others may suggest that he is attempting to hide the real truth by pretending to be close to Jeff.*
2. In your opinion, why did the director have Smith refuse to sit? *Students must infer from Smith's dialogue, tone of voice, and posture that he is anxious, upset, unwilling to be calmed down until he gets the truth.*

## Close

Encourage students to compare Senator Paine's office with Senator Smith's office. In addition to the clips they viewed during this activity, they can search for details in other parts of the film. For example, in chapter 13 of the DVD (in a shot not shown in this screening activity), they will be able to see the Capitol dome through Smith's office window.

Observant students will note that Senator Paine's office is lined with books, perhaps reflecting his knowledge and experience. We don't see bookshelves and volumes of books in Senator Smith's office. Some students may also note that pictures of famous people line Senator Paine's office, including one of Jim Taylor. Clearly, Senator Paine is influenced by Taylor. On the other hand, the most striking image in Senator Smith's office—that is, of what the filmmaker shows us—is the view of the Capitol dome through the window. One way to interpret this is that Senator Smith is not influenced by individual people, but rather by democratic ideals. An interesting note to add here is that Senate offices are not located on streets that would allow such a direct view of the Capitol dome. So this was clearly a purposeful invention of the filmmaker.

## Activity C The Significance of Color

### Concept

Color is one of the tools a filmmaker uses to express moods, convey ideas, and tell a story.

### Engage

Display  **Still 3-7: A Horse of a Different Color.** This image is from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, directed by Victor Fleming), a film released in theaters the same year as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. It was among the first films to use the Technicolor process, bringing color to the screen. In this image, Dorothy and her friends have arrived in the Emerald City, where the great wizard lives.



First, ask students to identify the different “hues” or colors in this movie still. What color are

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the garments that the coachman wears? His hat and suit, for example, are more emerald than forest green. Is the horse pink, purple, or violet?



Next, ask students to comment on the choice of the colors. Why did the filmmakers dress the coachman this way? Why did the filmmakers decide to color the horse this unusual color? Is the use of color simply decorative and entertaining, or does it serve another purpose?

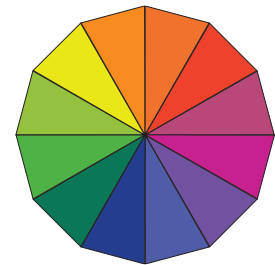
Conclude the warm-up activity by sharing with students this information about the making of *The Wizard of Oz*:

*The Wizard of Oz was not a full-length color film. It opened and closed in sepia. Sepia is a color that tints black-and-white film brown. As a result, the opening and closing scenes that appear in sepia are dull in comparison to the bright, vivid colors of Oz—the yellow brick road (in the real world, bricks are generally clay-colored or red), Dorothy’s sparkling ruby slippers, and the Emerald City, where the wizard resides. The sepia scenes represent reality, Dorothy’s home on a Kansas farm. The color scenes represent fantasy, Dorothy’s adventures in the dreamland of Oz.*

*The use of color in this film was an innovation but served a purpose beyond mere entertainment and an attempt to surprise the audience. Color was integral to the story’s settings and helped to create both the somber mood of the opening scenes before the tornado, as well as the whimsical and, at times, dark and menacing atmospheres of Dorothy’s experiences in Oz.*

## Explain & Explore

- Display  **Still 3-8: The Color Wheel.** By middle school, most students should know the difference between primary and secondary colors. Likewise, those who have taken art classes have no doubt seen or studied a “color wheel.” Ask students where they might have seen this wheel or similar ones before and what the wheel represents.
- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-5: Three Elements of Color.** The graphic introduces basic principles of color theory. Review each key term as recommended below.



### Hue

Hue is the name of the color. *Example:* red, yellow, violet, etc. The colors on a 12-part color wheel can be categorized into three types: *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary*.

*Primary* colors are red, yellow, and blue. Primary colors are not created from any other combination of colors.

*Secondary* colors are those created by combining primary colors. Red + yellow = orange; yellow + blue = green; blue + red = purple.

*Tertiary* colors are those created by combining primary colors with secondary colors.

*Example:* Yellow orange, red orange, red purple, blue purple, blue green and yellow green.

Emphasize that hues can also be categorized as either warm or cool. *Warm colors* are made with yellow, red, or orange. *Cool colors* are those made with blue or green. Warm colors appear next to one another on one side of the color wheel; cool colors appear next to one another on the opposite side of the wheel.

### Saturation


Saturation refers to the strength of the color. A fully saturated color is pure; it has no other color added to it. “Desaturation” is determined by the amount of gray or a complementary color (opposite on the color wheel) which is added to the original color. *Example:* bright red v. dull red. Bright red has little gray or complement in it, so it is more saturated. Dull red has more gray or complement in it, so it is less saturated. Saturated colors are bold and often associated with strong emotions. An image without any color at all is considered completely desaturated.

### Value


Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. Some colors, such as blue, have a darker value than others, such as yellow. Often, value is determined by the amount of white or black added to the original hue. The more black a color has, the darker its value. A color to which black has been added is called a *shade*. The more white a color has, the lighter its value. A color to which white has been added is called a *tint*. *Example:* Adding black to blue creates a darker shade of blue, such as navy. Adding blue to white

creates a lighter tint of blue, such as periwinkle. Shades and tints can add hundreds of variations to the original 12 hues on the color wheel.


- Ensure that students understand the difference between saturation and value. Saturation is how concentrated a color is. It has nothing to do with darkness or lightness, that is, the amount of shading or tinting. Note that students will have the opportunity to study in more detail the technology of the Technicolor process in the Enrichment activity at the end of this lesson.

- Display  **Still 3-9: Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham** to illustrate saturation and hue. This image is from another early Technicolor film, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, directed by Michael Curtiz and William Keighley in 1938. Draw students' attention to the vibrant colors of the costumes—the blue satin on the sheriff's cape, for example. Ask students to identify at least six other colors that are evident in the image. Emphasize that the colors are strong and distinct. One can easily distinguish the purple pattern on the green tunic, the gold pattern on the pink tunic, and even the different browns in the man's costume on the right (the belt and the hat are different shades of brown than his hood and the tights).




- Display  **Still 3-10: Robin Hood Takes Aim** to illustrate value. Ask students to point out the darkest shade in the image (the ceiling in the background). Next, ask them which shade is lighter—the stone railing in front of Robin or the stone arch over the window (the window is indicated by the blue). The railing is brighter, and as a result, we can distinguish more detail, such as the pitting and seams in the stone. Finally, ask students to identify the brightest object in the image. Some may indicate Robin's face and arms, and others may say the quills of the arrows. Some very observant students may comment on the stitching in the leather bag that holds the arrows.



- Display  **Still 3-11: The Widow Scarlett O'Hara**. Ask students to comment on the use of color in this image, which comes from another early film made in Technicolor in the 1930s, *Gone with the Wind* (1939, directed by Victor Fleming). Draw particular attention to the various hues (yellow, green, red, blue) and the high saturation of the colors, including the almost jet black gown worn by Scarlett O'Hara.



- Emphasize that these differences in colors are an important element in storytelling. In particular, share these two key points about the use of color in motion pictures:
  1. *Colors attract attention.* Scarlett is dressed in black because her husband has died in the Civil War and she is in mourning. Her black dress, however, is a dramatic contrast to the colorful ball gowns the other women wear. This contrast draws the audience's attention to Scarlett.
  2. *Colors can convey atmosphere or create an impression.* The colorful ball gowns create a cheerful, festive atmosphere. The flags in the background add to the pageantry of the event. At this point in the movie, the Confederate Army has been victorious in pushing the Union Army north, out of the state of Virginia. One interpretation of the use of color in this frame is that it mirrors the optimistic mood of the characters.

- Display and discuss  **Still 3-12: After the Battle**. In this scene from *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlett walks among dead and wounded soldiers in a railroad yard after a bloody battle. The use of color in this image creates a much different atmosphere or mood than that of the previous image of the grand ball. Scarlett's dress is almost the same color as the ground—a brownish red, the color of clay or dried blood. In this image, Scarlett is barely distinguishable from her surroundings. One interpretation might be that she appears small and unimportant given the magnitude of the suffering caused by war.



- Share this information with students.



*A film is not a painting or a photograph. Those images are still. The images in a film, however, move. Both color and movement can draw attention to important details and bring the audience closer to the action. Color in motion can increase the audience's involvement with the characters and the situation.*

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- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-5: Color in Motion.** Now that students have studied the two movie stills from *Gone with the Wind* and analyzed the use of color in the compositions, they will view those images in motion. The goal of this screening activity is to emphasize how color in motion helps create mood or atmosphere and helps tell a story.
- View  **Film Clip 3-5: Color in Motion.** Allow time for students to complete the chart for each segment on the Screening Sheet before moving on to the next. Then review their responses. Recommended answers are below. Students may have one or more of the responses listed.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-5: Color in Motion

### Part 1—The Grand Ball

1. Describe the colors that are in motion in this scene. *The colors in motion are those of the dancers, in particular the colorful hoop skirts of the women's costumes. At times the dancers come very close to the camera and (as some students may comment) the colors seem to blur across the screen and obscure Scarlett and Rhett, who are dressed in black.*
2. In your opinion, what effect does this movement of color create? *Answers will vary. Some students may suggest that this swirling of color helps to create a festive or merry mood.*

### Part 2—The Rail Yard

3. Explain the movement of the camera in this scene and what the camera movement reveals to the audience in terms of color. *The camera pulls back. As it does so, the audience sees more and more of the writhing mass of dun color in the rail yard, as well as Scarlett stumbling through the sea of that earth tone and all the suffering.*
4. In your opinion, what effects do the movement and the use of color create? *Some students may suggest that as the camera pulls back, the audience sees more and more of the same color palette—the dun color of the wounded and dying—and that this suggests the overwhelming destruction and death caused by the Civil War.*
5. Flags appear in both scenes. How do the movement and the color of the flags differ in each scene? *In the first scene, the flags are stationary, not moving. They are in the background, not a point of emphasis, and do not appear very colorful. In the second scene, the flag does not appear until the camera pulls back far enough to bring it into the frame. The flag is in motion and in the foreground, so that the audience sees it clearly. It is a point of emphasis here. The flag in this scene is tattered and brighter red, perhaps suggesting the blood spilled in battle.*

### Think More About It

Both film segments have music, but the use of music, just like the use of color, differs. How does the use of music mirror the use of color and movement in each segment? *In part 1, the music is cheerful and fast-paced, a dance. This mirrors the merriment of the dancers in their colorful costumes. In part 2, the music is more solemn and subdued, just as the colors are. Some students may suggest the music is sad, yearning, or melancholy. The overwhelming feeling of grief in the music is echoed in the camera's expanding view of the suffering.*

## Enrichment



- Distribute  **Reading Activity 3-3, Enrichment: The Tech in Technicolor.** Either read aloud or assign this activity sheet as silent reading. Discuss the passage as recommended below.

### Guided Discussion

1. True or false—the Technicolor process used black-and-white film. *True. Students should understand that Technicolor was not a type of colored film stock, but rather a filmmaking process that used black-*


and-white film and colored filters to create color images on the screen.

2. True or false—There were no color films prior to the 1930s when Herbert Kalmus invented Technicolor. *False. Films were hand painted and/or used a tinting or toning process to bring color to the screen. (You might wish to share with students that a two-strip process in the 1920s also allowed a limited use of color—red and green. This particular article, however, does not discuss the two-strip process.)*







- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-6, Enrichment: The Use of Technicolor in *The River*.** In the film clip in part 1, students will hear director Martin Scorsese talk about *The River* (1951, directed by Jean Renoir) a film that left a lasting impression on Scorsese when he first saw it, when he was a child. The film clip also provides shots from the film. This is a good opportunity for students not only to see images from this classic film, but to hear a director explain how important and meaningful color can be in a film.
- View  **Film Clip 3-6, Enrichment: The Use of Technicolor in *The River*, Part 1.** Allow time for students to complete the chart on the Screening Sheet. You will want to run this film clip more than once. Then review the students' responses. Recommended answers are below. Students may have one or more of the responses listed.

### Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-6, Enrichment: The Use of Technicolor in *The River*, Part 1 -- The Interview

1. Martin Scorsese says the film “looked like no other movie I’d ever seen.” What does he suggest was different about the “look” of this film? *Answers will vary but should include the main idea that the film was Scorsese’s first exposure to this foreign culture (India). The rich intensity of the color affected him deeply. He says it was one of the “most beautiful color films” ever made.*
2. *The River* is about a young girl coming of age in India, but Martin Scorsese says the film had a “universal” appeal. What does he mean? *Universal appeal means that many different kinds of people (different ages, genders, races, etc.) can relate to or understand the film.*
3. Martin Scorsese says that, beyond the use of color, “the real power is the humanity in the film, the humanity of the culture.” What does he mean? *Answers will vary but should focus on the main idea that color can make a film look beautiful, but the story and how it is told also make a film worth watching. He said that even though the “gold and color and glitter gets you,” the problems of the people, what it is to be Hindu, the different beliefs and ways of seeing life, are what interest you most. The movie made him, even as a child, want to learn more about the Hindu culture.*
4. Why was it important for the director to avoid subtle colors in the film? Why does Scorsese say that lush, tropical vegetation was so important? *The director felt that in Technicolor landscapes, subtle colors ran the risk of making the film muddy or murky. The green vegetation provided strong colors to prevent that problem.*
5. Martin Scorsese says that the director’s use of color in *The River* was so important that color became “a character” in the movie. What do you think he means by “a character”? *Answers will vary. Some students will state that a character is a player, someone who interacts with other characters and that perhaps Scorsese meant that the use of color in the film was as interesting to him as were the human characters. Emphasize that color was not more important than the characters but just as integral to the storytelling process.*

- View  **Film Clip 3-6, Enrichment: The Use of Technicolor in *The River*, Part 2.** Pause the DVD player after each still to allow students time to record their responses. You may wish to emphasize that we as viewers cannot know why a filmmaker selected a particular color or color palette unless he or she tells us. And not all viewers will react to the same image and use of color in exactly the same way. Therefore, the comments of the students in column three of the chart below will vary. The important point here is to encourage them to move beyond the literal interpretation of what is in the image to thinking about how the use of color affects or influences what they see.

Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-6, *Enrichment:*  
The Use of Technicolor in *The River*, Part 2 – Movie Stills

Image	Identify the colors. What colors dominate the image?	Comment on the use of color. How do you react to the image? What do the colors make you feel or think?
<p><b>A</b></p> 	<p>The women's clothing (they are each wearing a traditional Hindu sari) is red or coral, trimmed with shimmering gold. The foliage is a deep green. The dresses dominate because the warm coral color contrasts brightly against the cooler green of the foliage.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p><b>B</b></p> 	<p>Reds and browns dominate. The man's traditional headdress is a shade of red, his garment is a tint of red (pink), and red is in his beads. His brown skin contrasts with the darker brown of the cobra and with the darker colors in the background.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p> 	<p>Browns dominate. Draw students' attention to the various shades or tints of brown. The river, for example, is a different shade than the muddy bank, and both are different from the stone house.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p><b>D</b></p> 	<p>Blues dominate. The blues suggest coolness or restfulness and contrast with the tan window mats and the skin tones.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p><b>E</b></p> 	<p>Red and blue dominate, standing out in contrast to the green foliage and browns.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p><b>F</b></p> 	<p>Greens, skin tones, browns, and grays dominate. Some students may comment that the blue shirt the boy in the foreground wears contrasts with the brown skin of the boy in the background. One boy wearing a shirt and another bare skinned may suggest the difference in their cultures.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>

**Close**

Ask students to comment on how color, in general, affects their emotions. Then extend the discussion to film. What considerations might filmmakers use when selecting a color palette to express emotions or moods, convey an idea, or tell a story?

## Teacher Overview

Just as the cinematographer controls the camera, telling the audience where to look, so too does the film editor shape what the audience will see and how. As explained in chapter 2, editing a film involves assembling hundreds of shots into scenes, and scenes into a coherent story. Editing is all about choices. The editor considers three things—pacing (timing), continuity, and the intended meaning of the scene. In addition, the editor decides how best to transition from one scene to another. Students are introduced to the concept of cinematic point of view. In film, camera placement determines point of view. The shift between objective and subjective camera placement ensures a visually interesting story as well as a way of communicating meaning and creating an emotional response in the audience.

The lesson concludes by explaining that editing is also about audio choices. The soundtrack of a film both presents information and creates mood or atmosphere. In doing so, sound – like other elements – influences the audience’s perception of what is happening on the screen. A film’s soundtrack includes three types of sounds – dialogue, sound effects, and music.

The bottom line is this: Editing affects the audience’s thoughts, associations, and emotions, which is why identifying and understanding editing choices is an important part of understanding film language.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will







- understand the difference between *real* time and *reel* time in film;
- define what a sequence is;
- identify four transitional devices the editor uses to move from one scene to another—fade, dissolve, wipe, and cut;
- distinguish between two different cinematic points of view—objective and subjective;
- identify the three elements of a soundtrack—dialogue, sound effects, and music;
- describe the functions of a soundtrack—to communicate information and to trigger an emotional response in the audience to a specific character or situation.

## Key Terms

(Note: Most terms are defined within the activity text that follows. You may also refer to the glossary.)









*real time, reel time, pacing, sequence, transition, fade in, fade out, dissolve, wipe, cut, superimposition, cinematic point of view, juxtaposition of images, soundtrack, sound editor, sound effects, wavelength, amplitude, frequency*

## Materials

Activity	Print	DVD
<p><b>Activity A</b> Real Time v. Reel Time</p>	<p> Screening Sheet 3-7: Smith Comes Out Swinging</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-7: Smith Comes Out Swinging</p>
<p><b>Activity B</b> Scene Transitions</p>	<p> Graphic Organizer 3-6: Editing Decisions—Scene Transitions</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-8: Scene Transitions</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-8: Scene Transitions</p> <p> Still 3-13: Superimposition</p>



Materials (cont.)

Activity	Print	DVD
<p><b>Activity C</b> Cinematic Point of View</p>	<p> Graphic Organizer 3-7: Point of View (POV)</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-9: Identifying Point of View</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-9: Identifying Point of View</p>
<p><b>Activity D</b> How the Soundtrack Communicates</p>	<p> Reading Activity 3-4: Buzz, Buzz—Chatter, Chatter—WALLA, WALLA!</p> <p> Graphic Organizer 3-8: What Is Sound?</p> <p> Graphic Organizer 3-9: Visible and Invisible Sounds</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . . Almost</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . . Almost</p>

Activity A Real Time v. Reel Time


Concept


Most films, though not all, alter time. In some instances, multiple shots and scenes compress time so that many hours, days, weeks, months, or years transpire within the film's playing time of two hours. In other instances, the juxtaposition of shots can expand time so that actions unfold more slowly than in reality.

Engage

Explain that a congressional hearing such as the one investigating Mr. Smith's alleged ownership of land surrounding Willet Creek would likely take weeks, if not months. On the screen, however, the scene depicting this investigation transpires in just a few minutes. Ask students to cite other examples of films altering time.

Explain & Explore

- Write these two phrases on the chalkboard or overhead projector: *real time*, *reel time*. Discuss each. *Real time* is the actual time required to complete an action. *Reel time*, on the other hand, is time that has been compressed or expanded for the sake of telling a story on film in just two hours. Hours, days, weeks, months, even years can pass within seconds or minutes on camera through the use of carefully planned shots and sequences. Or an action that might take just a few seconds in real time can be slowed down to minutes in reel time in order to build suspense.
- Next, write the word *sequence* on the chalkboard or overhead projector. Explain that a sequence is a series of related events. In film, sequence has a more technical definition—a series of shots, or scenes, assembled one after the other. The shots may show different people, different locations, or different times of day or night. Even so, the scenes are related in some way. Some controlling idea or thread links the images. And so, even though the images may look different, they are related. Emphasize this important link between *reel time* and *film sequence*: The film sequence is a way to compress or expand real time into reel time.
- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-7: Smith Comes Out Swinging**. Explain that this segment is an excellent example of a sequence. It is also an excellent example of how film editors compress real time into reel time. Review the directions and the Word Builder term.

- View  **Film Clip 3-7: Smith Comes Out Swinging.** You will probably need to run this film clip more than once. Allow time for students to complete the questions on the sheet, then discuss their observations. Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-7: Smith Comes Out Swinging

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Action What happens in each scene?	LOCATION Where does each scene take place?
<i>Smith walks down the street.</i>	<i>On a street near the Capitol</i>
<i>Three men are reading a newspaper and smiling.</i>	<i>On the steps of a building</i>
<i>Smith punches the man with the newspaper.</i>	<i>On the steps of a building</i>
<i>Another man is laughing as he reads a newspaper.</i>	<i>On a street near the Capitol</i>
<i>Smith grabs the paper, punches him, and throws the paper on the ground.</i>	<i>On a street near the Capitol</i>
<i>Smith grabs a man who is getting into a cab and punches him. The man lands inside the cab.</i>	<i>On a street</i>
<i>Smith walks down a hallway and punches a man, who falls to the floor, dizzy.</i>	<i>Inside a building</i>
<i>Nosey and two other reporters are walking down the street. Smith sees them.</i>	<i>On a street</i>
<i>Nosey runs into the National Press Club and tells Diz Moore that Smith is punching everyone.</i>	<i>Inside the National Press Club</i>
<i>Smith enters the Press Club.</i>	<i>Inside the Press Club</i>
<i>Nosey dives under a table.</i>	<i>Inside the Press Club</i>
<i>Members of the press restrain Smith and force him to sit.</i>	<i>Inside the Press Club</i>
<i>Nosey pops up between tables and introduces Smith.</i>	<i>Inside the Press Club</i>

### Think More About It

1. Real time: If someone were really to complete all of the actions listed in column 1, how long might it take? Provide a reason for your answer. Keep in mind the different locations identified in column 2. *Answers will vary. The main idea here is that walking through the city and into and out of buildings, punching four different people and chasing another, would probably take 30 minutes to an hour, depending on the locations and distances of the buildings.*
2. Reel time: Approximately how long is the film sequence you just viewed? *Approximately 60 seconds long*
3. What is the thread, or controlling idea, that links all the shots in this sequence? *All the people Smith attacks are either journalists we've seen before, such as Nosey, or are reading and laughing at the newspaper. The link then is Smith's anger at being misquoted and ridiculed.*

### Close

Ask students to identify the sounds used in this film segment. They include fast-paced music, music that mimics laughter, and bird sounds when Smith knocks down one of the journalists. Ask students why the filmmaker might have added these sounds. *Some students are likely to say that the sounds add humor or that the music adds excitement to match the action on the screen.*

## Concept

A transition is a visual effect that signals the end of one shot or scene and the beginning of another.


## Engage

Write the word *transitions* on the chalkboard or overhead projector. Tap students' knowledge of writing conventions by asking them to suggest words or phrases that a writer might use to link ideas within a paragraph. Some suggested transitions are: *for example, also, in addition, therefore, however, first, second, finally*, etc. Emphasize this main idea: Transitions not only link ideas but also help explain how and why ideas are related. The writer uses transitions to create coherence within a paragraph or a longer paper. Transitions help the reader comprehend the written message.

When piecing shots together to create a sequence, the film editor also uses transitions, and the purpose is much the same—to create coherence called *continuity* in film language. Scene transitions are not words or phrases, however. They are visual effects that link one scene to another, or in some way signal the passage of time or the relationship between two characters or two ideas.

Write the word *pacing* on the chalkboard. Ask students to explain what pacing might mean in terms of sports. A long-distance runner, for example, must pace the amount of energy expended so that he or she can endure the long run. In a film, pacing also refers to timing. The filmmaker must decide how long a shot or scene should run so as to keep the audience's attention. If a shot runs too quickly, the audience may not be able to follow the action. If a shot runs too slowly, the audience may lose interest in the action. Pacing is an important element in editing a film.

## Explain & Explore

- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-6: Editing Decisions—Scene Transitions.** Review the key points as suggested below.

### Scene Transitions

Transitions are visual effects that bridge one shot or scene and another. The film editor creates transitions in the studio during post-production. Scene transitions include the following:

#### Fade

The image evenly appears (*fades in*) from a black screen or disappears (*fades out*) into a black screen.

#### Dissolve



One image slowly melts away while another image gradually appears or overlaps to take its place.

#### Wipe

A vertical bar, like a wiper blade, moves horizontally across the screen, removing one image as another takes its place.

#### Cut

A change from one image to another without a fade, dissolve, or wipe.

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-8: Scene Transitions.** Each of the four film segments identified on the sheet illustrates one of the four transitions described above. Explain that transitions, like sequences, are used by filmmakers to convert real time into reel time. Review with students the Word Builder terms on the Screening Sheet.
- View  **Film Clip 3-8: Scene Transitions.** Stop the DVD between segments. Give students sufficient time to take notes on each segment before you move on to the next. You may need to show each film segment more than once. Discuss each transition, identifying the type of transition and the time lapse suggested by the transition. Recommended answers follow.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-8: Scene Transitions

1  
2  
3  
4

### A—Fade

1. What do you see at the point when the first scene “fades out”? *A close-up on the sculpted image of Abraham Lincoln’s face*
2. What do you see when the next shot “fades in”? *Clarissa Saunders is on the telephone.*
3. What passage of time is suggested by the use of this fade-out, fade-in technique? *It is daytime when the camera fades out. When the camera fades in, Clarissa’s lines of dialogue suggest that a passage of time has occurred. First she suggests ways to find Smith, implying that he’s been missing for a while. Then she says that she’ll wait “just one half hour” more, implying that she’s been waiting a long time. So the fade echoes the passage of time that is implied in the dialogue.*

### B—Dissolve

4. This brief segment has three dissolves between shots. Identify each. *The first shows an image of Smith dissolving into a close-up of the words Equal Justice engraved on a government building. The second shows those words dissolving into a long shot of a building—the Supreme Court building. The third shows that building dissolving into an image of Smith on the bus.*
5. What passage of time or place do these dissolves suggest? *By showing Smith on the bus, then dissolving into images obviously outside the bus, the audience infers that these are the sites he is seeing as the bus moves through the city. A passage of perhaps fifteen minutes to an hour is likely.*

### C—Wipe

6. This brief segment has four wipes. What is happening in each of the shots separated by the wipes? *The first shot is a close-up of signatures on a document. The middle shots show three different handwriting experts. (The first and third of these experts say the signature of Jefferson Smith is authentic; the second expert states it is a forgery.) The last shot is of Senator Paine.*
7. What is the purpose of these wipes—to draw out or to compress time? Provide an explanation for your answer. *To compress time. Within seconds of reel time the audience hears the testimony of three handwriting experts. In real time, that would take an hour, if not more.*

### D—Cut

8. The filmmaker uses three shots, with abrupt cuts between each, to show the governor walking from his car to Jefferson Smith’s front door. Study how the image changes in each shot, then explain how you know this isn’t one continuous shot but rather three shots linked by two cuts. *The camera distance changes. In the first shot, the camera is placed approximately on the street so that the audience sees the street, the house, even part of the car. In the second shot, the camera has moved closer; the Boy Rangers sign is much larger. In the final shot, the camera is even closer to the house.*
9. When the band begins to play, the governor drops his hat and almost flees, then turns around to fetch his hat. This is all one shot. At what point does this shot end and the next shot begin? In other words, where does the cut occur? *The cut occurs when Mrs. Smith opens the door to find the governor bent down picking up his hat—a quick humorous moment. What signals the cut is a change in camera distance and even a slight change in the camera angle. When the door opens, the camera is closer to the door than in the previous shot and a little lower, looking up at Jefferson Smith’s mother.*

## Close


Display  **Still 3-13: Superimposition.** Explain the difference between *superimposition*, which is a special effect, and a *dissolve*, which is a transition. A superimposition is a type of shot, not a bridge between shots or scenes. To create a superimposition, the filmmaker uses two or more images photographed at different times and then layers them one on top of the other. The function of the superimposition is to suggest an association between two like or unlike things. In this image, for example, the Liberty Bell is superimposed over an



image of Jefferson Smith. A bell and a man are two unlike things. But the superimposition suggests a common link—in this case idealism and freedom.

## Activity C Cinematic Point of View

### Concept

Objective and subjective are two cinematic points of view that a filmmaker may use, depending on the dramatic situation and the filmmaker's intended meaning.


### Engage

Ask students to imagine they are standing in an amusement park watching a roller coaster climb and then speed down and around a track. Ask students what feelings they might have as they watch the coaster on its ride. Would they, for example, feel the wind against their faces or the tug of gravity as the coaster sped downward? They would not, because they are not passengers on the coasters. They are some distance from the ride and are simply watching it as spectators.

Next, ask students to imagine that they are seated in the first car of the coaster. How would their vision of the action change? What would they see that they would not have seen from their previous position on the amusement-park grounds?

Use this simple example to introduce students to the concept of cinematic point of view. In the first scenario, they are viewing the action as a spectator. A camera that captures action in this way would be employing an *objective point of view*. In the second scenario, the camera would capture the movement from the viewpoint of a rider in the car. In this case, the audience would view the action as if they were in the car, too. This is an example of *subjective point of view*.

### Explain & Explore

- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-7: Point of View (POV)** Review key points on the graphic as suggested below.

#### Cinematic Point of View

Point of view is a way of seeing the action on the screen. Cinematic POV differs from literary POV in this significant way: In film, POV refers to the placement of the camera.



#### Objective POV

The objective camera is like a window. The audience is outside the window and views the action through the window. The placement of the camera is such that the audience can view the characters as the actions unfold. A good part of a film's story is told using objective point of view. The filmmaker may move the camera closer to or farther away from the subject and may change the camera's angles, but the audience remains outside, looking in, like a spectator.

#### Subjective POV

The subjective camera places the audience in the position of seeing the action through the eyes of one of the characters. The audience sees what the character sees.

- Share this information with students:
 

*Very often POV cannot be determined by examining a single frame or even a single shot. POV is often communicated through the juxtaposition of images—how one shot follows another. For example, in Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, the Senate page explains to Jefferson Smith that a copy of the Senate calendar is on his desk. Jefferson Smith looks down. The next shot is a close-up of the calendar. This close-up, in following the shot of Jefferson Smith looking down, is subjective. The audience sees what Jefferson Smith sees.*
- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-9: Identifying Point of View.** Review the directions and the Word Builder terms.
- View  **Film Clip 3-9: Identifying Point of View.** Allow time for students to record their observations, then discuss their responses as recommended in the answer key that follows.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-9: Identifying Point of View

### Shot Description

The governor paces, then flips the coin.

The coin lands on its edge against a newspaper.

The governor picks up the coin.

The governor reads the newspaper headline.

The governor makes his decision, grabs his hat, and leaves the room.

### What is the cinematic point of view, and how do you know?

*Objective: There is no one else in the room with the governor, and the audience sees him pacing back and forth. The camera is placed in such a way that it acts like a window.*

*Subjective: In the previous shot, the governor's eyes slowly look down to see how the coin has landed, and we follow his eyes. In this shot, we see a close-up of the coin. The camera is placed approximately where the governor would be standing, and so the audience sees what the governor sees—and just about as closely too.*

*Objective: Once again, the camera is on the opposite site of the desk, so we see the governor face-on. The audience watches his action as a spectator.*

*Subjective: The camera is once more in the position of where the governor would be standing. The audience reads the newspaper headline as the governor is reading it.*

*Objective: For the final shot, the camera is back on the opposite side of the desk, and the audience watches the governor as he picks up his hat and leaves. Emphasize that if this shot were subjective, the camera would show us the hat being picked up from the governor's perspective.*

### Think More About It

Why do filmmakers shift from objective to subjective POV? Why not show all the shots with the same POV? Answers will vary but should focus on two key points: First, POV relates strongly to the dramatic situation in the story. In an emotional or key moment, the filmmaker might wish to bring the audience closer to the action to experience it more personally. Second, shifts in POV, when planned carefully, create a more visually interesting viewing experience. A story told completely in the objective POV might eventually become boring. In this particular film segment, the shift between the two POVs accomplishes both of these goals: It communicates clearly what is happening and does so in an interesting way, letting the audience experience more closely what the governor is experiencing.

1

2

3

4

### Close

Ask students to comment on how POV affects their response to a character or a situation they see in the film. Encourage them to make a connection between what they have just learned about cinematic point of view and other viewing experiences, such as televised news reports or advertisements. The point is not for them to recall a specific POV they may have seen on television but rather to think critically about how POV can affect how they view a subject.

### Concept

A soundtrack has three elements—dialogue, sound effects, and music. The function of the soundtrack is to convey information as well as to trigger an emotional response in the audience.


### Engage

Ask students to each place their thumb and index finger on either side of the throat, or their thumb against the center of the throat. Tell them to say, “Aah” as loudly as possible. What do they hear? What do they feel? Next, ask them to say, “Aah” again, but this time very softly. What do they hear? What do they feel? In the second attempt, they may not hear sound but they can still feel its vibrations against the vocal chords.

Continue by asking students the questions below.


1. What is sound? *Answers will vary. Guide responses to include that sound is a form of energy. Sound can be made in a variety of ways with a variety of results—loud or soft; high pitches like screeches, or low pitches like rumbles.*
2. What is the difference between musical sound and noise? *Answers will vary. Guide responses to include that noise results when irregular vibrations are made at irregular times. Musical sound results when regular vibrations of a voice or a musical instrument are produced.*
3. How does sound influence how you perceive or experience the world around you? *Answers will vary. Discuss the following: Humans perceive the world through the senses, and sound, as one of the five senses, contributes to that. Sounds provide clues to where we are in the environment—a beach, a stream, an airport. Sound helps us to communicate with others. Sound can also trigger reactions. If the pitch is very high or the volume (amplitude) very loud, sound may become painful, even dangerous. On the other hand, sounds can also be soothing.*

### Explain & Explore

- Distribute  **Reading Activity 3-4: Buzz, Buzz—Chatter, Chatter—WALLA, WALLA!** This activity sheet provides insight to elements of sound other than music that are often part of a movie. Review the Word Builder terms, then read the passage and discuss the questions in class. Recommended answers are below.

#### Answer Key for Reading Activity 3-4: Buzz, Buzz—Chatter, Chatter—WALLA, WALLA!

1. What is Capra’s first reaction after watching the director work with the crowd of extras? *He thinks the director’s method is foolish, silly.*
2. Later, after he has had time to think about what he saw, he changes his mind about the director. What does Capra think of Mr. Director by the end of the story? *He is greatly impressed that the director could control the reactions of 2,000 people with such simple directions. Also, he realizes the director was able to guide the reaction from fear to terror.*

- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-8: What Is Sound?** This graphic illustrates more scientifically the different qualities of sound that director Frank Capra described in Reading Activity 3-4 above. Review the characteristics of sound as suggested below.

#### Wavelength


This is the distance between any point on a sound wave and the same point on the next wave. Wavelength determines the quality or tone of a sound. A pleasant sound has a regular wave pattern. The pattern is repeated over and over. Noise, however, has an irregular wave pattern.

#### Amplitude

This is the strength or power of a sound wave. The more energy the sound wave has, the louder the sound will be. Intense sound is loud. Lower-energy waves result in softer sounds.

## Frequency

Frequency is the number of times a wavelength occurs in one second. The faster the sound source vibrates, the higher the frequency. Frequency determines pitch. A lion's roar has a lower frequency than a bird's chirp. As a result, the lion's roar is a low-pitched sound. The bird's chirp is a high-pitched sound.

- Emphasize this important point about sound editing: *A soundtrack may include many different types of sounds. However, three or four sounds playing simultaneously at the same amplitude and frequency are just noise. The sound editor carefully controls or arranges all the sounds on the soundtrack.*
- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-9: Visible and Invisible Sounds.** Discuss the key concepts on the graphic organizer as suggested below.

### Visible Sounds



These are sounds that relate directly to action on the screen. For example, a character slams a door. If the slamming sound is missing from the soundtrack, the audience will notice.

### Invisible Sounds

These are sounds that are heard but not seen. Such sounds add credibility to a scene—crickets “singing” on a summer night, traffic roaring outside an office window, etc. Invisible sound creates the illusion of a real world beyond the boundaries of the frame.

### Effects

The *effect* of sound effects is varied—to create mood and atmosphere and to create realism so that the audience experiences what the characters experience. Not all film sound effects are natural or realistic, however. Sound editors at times exaggerate a sound for emphasis or invent a sound to meet a director's particular need. Whatever its source, sound in general adds levels of meaning to a scene and may influence the audience's attitude or emotional response.

- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . . Almost.** Review with students the meaning of *montage*, originally introduced in chapter 2. Explain that the scene they are about to see is a montage, or series of rapid shots that take place in different locations. Although the film clip is just a few minutes in length, the images suggest the passage of time—many hours. The sequence has very little dialogue but many sound effects and music. Students will view the film clip twice—the first time *without* the soundtrack and the second time *with* the soundtrack. Teachers should note and emphasize that in each viewing, students are asked to observe different elements.
- View  **Film Clip 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . . . Almost.** This clip illustrates a sequence of rapid-cut shots and music, and how the music changes as the sequence grows grim and the boys begin to lose the battle. First, play **Part 1—Images Without the Soundtrack.** Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . . Almost, Part 1 – Images Without the Soundtrack

What image(s) suggest the boys are succeeding in getting the word out about Jeff Smith?

*Answers will vary but may include the following: Boy Rangers running with bundles of Boy Stuff; delivering newsletters in mailboxes and hand-delivering them to people; boys riding in a car with a sign that says*

What image(s) suggest the Taylor machine is threatened by the actions of the Boy Rangers?

*Answers will vary but may include the following: A man brings a copy of the newsletter to McGann; men in cars and trucks grab the newsletters from the boys; men raid the Boy Stuff office and slap the boys; a newspaper headline accuses Smith of lying; fire hoses are turned on the parade*

What image(s) suggest the Taylor machine has defeated the Boy Rangers?

*Answers will vary but may include the following: The parade marchers flee; a truck runs over a Boy Ranger wagon; a truck runs a car off the road—the car in which the boys are riding; Jeff Smith's mother looks very upset when talking on the phone.*



Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . .  
Almost, Part 1 – Images Without the Soundtrack (*cont.*)

What image(s) suggest the boys are succeeding in getting the word out about Jeff Smith?

HURRAY FOR JEFF SMITH. Also, the townspeople have formed a parade to support Smith, so somehow the word must have reached them.

What image(s) suggest the Taylor machine is threatened by the actions of the Boy Rangers?

marchers; signs displayed on a truck say SMITH HAS DISGRACED OUR STATE; a boy is silenced and dragged from the auditorium where a “Stop Smith” rally is taking place.

What image(s) suggest the Taylor machine has defeated the Boy Rangers?

- Play  **Film Clip 3-10, Part 2—Images With the Soundtrack.** Discuss students’ observations. Recommended answers are below.

Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-10: Kids to the Rescue . . .  
Almost, Part 2 – Images With the Soundtrack

Describe the sound effects.

Answers will vary and may include the following: rooster crowing; bugler playing “Charge!”; dogs barking; car tires and brakes squealing; people shouting, cheering, and applauding; wagon being smashed; drums and bands playing; bell ringing; voice on loudspeaker shouting; kids screaming.

Describe the music in this sequence, including how and when the music changes.

Some students may recognize strains of “Clementine” in the opening shots as the boys set out to distribute their papers. The music changes when the Taylor machine roughs up the boys. At that point the music becomes dramatic, sinister. Parade drums and bands play. Another band strikes up a patriotic march to drown out the Boy Ranger being carried from the rally.

How do the sound effects and music work with the images to influence the audience’s reaction?

Answers will vary, but the main idea is that the soundtrack adds not only excitement—the sound effects and the music have a rapid rhythm that matches the action and the quick cuts—but also suggests how the audience should feel about the “bad guys” who defeat the boys. The music associated with them is dramatic, ominous, and sinister.

**Close**

Ask students to make a link between what they learned in this activity and the commercials they see on television. In what way does the soundtrack for a commercial affect the viewer’s comprehension of the message? In what way does it manipulate the viewer’s emotions? Emphasize that the purpose or function of a soundtrack in a commercial is the same as the purpose of a film’s soundtrack—to convey information and/or to trigger an emotional response in the audience.

# Lesson 4 Putting It All Together—Analyzing a Scene

## Teacher Overview

To read visual text requires inference skills. In lessons 1 through 3, students focused on isolated elements of composition—camera angles, camera distances, types of lighting, sound effects, and so forth. Now that they understand these elements, they must draw inferences based on how the filmmaker uses these elements in a film. Therefore, the final two screening activities in this chapter are challenging—in part because students must analyze multiple compositional elements within a single film segment, and in part because they must use critical-thinking skills to comprehend what those elements mean.

Activity A focuses on explicit (directly stated or shown) and implicit (suggested) information in a visual text. Filmmakers create implicit information through the use of compositional elements, such as lighting, and through editing, by juxtaposing images and sounds.

Film language is about how an image is both framed and sequenced. In activity B, therefore, students view a second film segment, analyzing both the framing techniques and the sequence of the images. As students have progressed through the curriculum chapters, they have become more fluent in film language. Therefore, they should use film-specific terms in their discussions and written analyses on the Screening Sheets.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will






- identify explicit information in a scene;
- make inferences about implicit information, based on film composition;
- analyze elements of composition in a single scene;
- use film language to describe and interpret a scene.

## Key Terms

(Note: Most terms are defined within the activity text that follows. You may also refer to the glossary.)

*reaction shot, mise-en-scène*

## Materials

Activity	Print	DVD
<p><b>Activity A</b> Explicit and Implicit Information</p>	<p> Screening Sheet 3-11: Investigating Senator Smith</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-11: Investigating Senator Smith</p>
<p><b>Activity B</b> Mise-en-Scène</p>	<p> Graphic Organizer 3-10: Four Elements of Composition</p> <p> Screening Sheet 3-12: The Senator's New Bill</p>	<p> Film Clip 3-12: The Senator's New Bill</p>

## Activity A Explicit and Implicit Information

### Concept

Filmmakers tell stories with both explicit and implicit information. Filmmakers create implicit information in two ways—through the composition of the frames and through editing.

### Engage

Ask students to write a description of an elderly person walking down the street, without using the word *old* or any synonym for *old*, and without stating an age. Encourage them to select words or phrases that *show*, through description, rather than *tell* the person's age. Some teachers may wish to complete this warm-up activity as a class discussion, writing students' suggested sentences on the chalkboard.

### Explain & Explore



- Emphasize this key point about reading film language: *Filmmakers do not always state directly what is happening or what has happened.* Nor do filmmakers often directly state the relationship between two characters. Even the passage of time is usually suggested rather than stated directly. In order to read a film, therefore, the viewer must pay close attention to the elements of composition and then draw inferences based on those elements.
- Just as in printed texts, information can be either explicit (directly stated) or implicit (suggested). The ability to read visual text requires inference skills. Define *explicit* and *implicit information* as recommended below.

#### Explicit Information

Explicit information is directly stated or shown. The composition of a frame can clearly reveal explicit information. For example, rain running down a windowpane is explicit because the audience can see the rain.

#### Implicit Information

Implicit information is implied or suggested through visual or sound details. For example, an image of a person whose clothes are wet and who is holding an umbrella suggests that it is raining, even though the audience does not actually see the rain. A rooster crowing off-screen implies that it is dawn. Implicit information is also suggested through a sequence of shots edited one after the other. For example, in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, during the young senator's filibuster, the camera shows us Clarissa in the gallery. The character never states directly that she is worried that Smith may be on the point of collapse, and that he may fail. Nevertheless, the camera's focus on her facial expressions and mannerisms clearly reveal that she is distraught.

- Review the definition of *reaction shot*, introduced in chapter 2. The purpose of a reaction shot is to suggest what a character is thinking or feeling. To achieve this, the camera focuses on the character, recording his or her reaction or response to something that has just occurred. In some instances the character will show surprise or fear or amusement. The emotion is suggested in part by the camera's focus and in part by the actor's performance.
- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-11: Investigating Senator Smith.** Review the Screening Sheet, including the questions and the Word Builder term, to ensure students understand what they are to observe and record.
- View  **Film Clip 3-11: Investigating Senator Smith.** Discuss students' observations. Recommended answers follow.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-11: Investigating Senator Smith

What do you see and hear in this scene?

*Men on the hearing committee sitting around tables; witnesses answering questions about the deed for Willet Creek; a close-up of the deed papers; Senator Paine testifying; Senator Smith reacting to what the witnesses say; committee members waiting for Smith to speak; newsmen taking notes; Smith walking out; photographers pursuing him.*

What do you not see or hear in this scene?

(Limit your answers to the witnesses and Senator Smith's reaction to their testimony.)

*The transitions (wipes) between witnesses suggest the passage of time, so that the audience doesn't see one witness step down and another come forward. You hear the answers to questions but not necessarily all the questions. You do not hear Smith's own thoughts or his testimony.*

What is explicit in this scene?

*Sunlight is on the walls. There is a deed to the dam. Jefferson Smith's name is on the deed. Men are testifying. There is disagreement over whether the signature is authentic or forged. Senator Paine states that Smith became furious when he found out about the dam. Diz Moore refers to the "Taylor machine." Paine refuses to look at Smith. The committee is waiting for Smith. Smith refuses to testify and walks out.*

What is implicit in this scene?

*It is daytime, as suggested by the sun on the walls. The passage of time is suggested by the wipes and the juxtaposition of images. The press is part of the hearing, as suggested by the presence of Diz Moore. Almost everyone is lying. The Taylor machine has pulled many strings. Smith is stunned by the lies concocted about him, as suggested by his reaction shots. Smith abruptly walking out can suggest a number of different interpretations, including his shock, anger, frustration, extreme disappointment, or his acceptance that he just might be a stooge after all.*

### Think More About It

1. What surprised you about Jefferson Smith in this scene, and why? *Answers will vary but likely most students will be surprised that Jefferson simply walked out without even trying to explain or defend himself.*
2. Aside from Senator Smith's reaction shots in this scene, what other character is the focus of a reaction shot? What emotion does this reaction shot suggest? *Senator Paine is the focus of a reaction shot. When he leaves the witness chair and returns to his place at the table, his eyes are somewhat downcast. He does not look at Smith, even though Smith is staring at him. He is very controlled, even stoic. Emphasize that the lack of a response can still be a response, and the reaction shot showing Paine's tightly controlled emotions also suggest what he is feeling—perhaps guilt and certainly displeasure at being a part of this scam.*

### Close

Ask students to compare the use of implicit and explicit information in a movie with the use of implicit and explicit information in television news broadcasts. Do reporters and anchors on news programs always present explicit information? Or are sounds and the juxtaposition of images also used in news broadcasts to suggest meaning? Extend the activity to include photographs. Do photographs convey explicit or implicit information?

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### Concept




A discussion of *mise-en-scène* includes identifying elements of composition in a single scene and explaining how the elements work together to communicate mood and meaning.

### Engage

Use an example of peeling away the layers of an onion to illustrate how film analysis works. In a film, multiple things happen at once. The viewer must peel away multiple layers of film composition, paying attention to not only the selection of images and their arrangement within the frame but also to the use of camera distances and angles, lighting, movement, point of view, sequencing, transitions, and sound. Studying *mise-en-scène*—peeling away the multiple layers of that scene—is a challenging activity.

To avoid overwhelming students, remind them of the watching versus seeing principle they learned in chapter 1. No one “sees” (understands) at once all the layers and how they work together to create meaning. Film analysis requires multiple screenings of the same scene. It can be fun to hunt for all the elements of cinematic composition—to peel away the onion’s layers. But it does require practice.

### Explain & Explore

- Define *mise-en-scène*. *Mise-en-scène* is a type of analysis in which the student identifies elements of composition in a single scene, how shots are put together; the actual placing of people and objects in the frame and moving them around to communicate mood and meaning.
- Explain that in this activity, students may work alone or with a partner to analyze a single scene from *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. In their analyses they will identify as many elements of composition as they can. Tell them that they can use any of their notes and/or graphic organizers from this chapter.
- (Note: Teachers may wish to run the film clip more than once, allowing time between the viewings for students to access their notes. To expect students to complete all answers on the Screening Sheet in one viewing is not recommended.)
- Display and/or distribute  **Graphic Organizer 3-10: Four Elements of Composition**. Explain that in earlier lessons students studied each element separately. Review the terms on the graphic organizer. Tell students that in the final screening activity they will be making inferences about these four elements.
- Review with students the concept of sequencing. In film, the sequence is the order in which the shots occur.
- Distribute  **Screening Sheet 3-12: The Senator’s New Bill**. Review the Word Builder terms and each section of the sheet so that students fully understand what they are to observe and record. Remind them that in identifying and analyzing elements, they should whenever possible use the film-specific terms they have learned in this chapter. This includes identifying shots by their film terms, such as close-up, high angle, high-key lighting, etc.
- View  **Film Clip 3-12: The Senator’s New Bill**. Discuss students’ observations. Recommended answers are below.

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-12: The Senator’s New Bill

### Arrangement of People and Objects Within the Frame

1. At the point when Jefferson Smith begins to read his bill, who or what is in the frame, and what is the point of emphasis in the frame? *Smith is the only person in the frame, making him the point of emphasis. Some students may observe more closely that the diagonal lines of the wall behind Smith form a corner and direct the viewers’ attention to Smith’s eyes as he reads. Some students may also point out that Smith’s desk places him in a corner for a reason—he is walking into a trap. His bill is going to put him in a very difficult position.*

## Answer Key for Screening Sheet 3-12: The Senator's New Bill (cont.)

### Camera Distances and Angles

2. Identify a long shot at or near the beginning of this scene, and explain what information that shot presents to the audience. *One long shot is the very opening frame, which shows the Senate in session, including the people on the floor and those in the balcony. Another long shot shows the senators turned in their chairs looking at Smith as he prepares to read his bill.*
3. Describe a low-angle shot in this scene. Identify who or what is in this shot. *The shot of the children in the balcony is a low-angle shot. The camera is placed below the railing. The audience sees about two dozen boys who stand and cheer. The shots of Smith as he reads his bill are also low-angle shots. Additional low-angle shots are those of the press corps seated in the balcony above the clock as well as those of Saunders and Diz in the balcony.*

### Lighting

4. Describe the lighting in this scene. What is its intended effect on the audience? *The lighting is high key. The bright light allows the audience to see much detail, including the papers shaking in Smith's hands and, especially important, the reactions of the people in the Senate Chamber, from the vice president to the senators to the children in the balcony.*

### Movement

5. Is the camera in this scene fixed or mobile? How do you know? *The camera in this scene is fixed. Students must infer from the images and movement of the characters within the frame that while the camera may pan or tilt slightly, it is on a stationary base; it does not move on a mobile platform or track.*
6. Identify one or more shots in which the camera pans or tilts. Describe what is happening in the shot. *The camera pans to the right as Chick McGann leans forward in his seat. Then it tilts up slightly as Senator Paine stands. When Chick McGann jumps up to leave the chamber and stumbles on the steps, the camera remains on a fixed base (moving neither closer nor further away) but pans to the left and tilts upward somewhat as McGann exits. The camera also pans a bit to the left as the cheering boys leave the balcony.*

### Editing

7. Identify one or more reaction shots in this scene, and explain the intended meaning. *There are numerous reaction shots in this scene from which students can choose. The senators react initially by laughing at Smith; later, they applaud. Other reaction shots include the smile of the page, amused at Smith's nervousness and inability to hold his papers still; Senator Paine's and Chick McGann's stunned looks at the mention of Willet Creek; Saunders's reaction to Paine leaving the chamber, which is an "I told you so" smile and gesture with her hands; and Smith's reaction to the kids cheering in the balcony, which is at first surprise, then pleasure as he waves.*
8. In this scene, what happens first—Mr. Smith's eager jump to his feet in order to be recognized, or the senators' laughter at his nervousness? *Mr. Smith's jump to his feet comes first.*
9. In this scene, children in the balcony cheer and applaud Senator Smith's proposed bill. The next shot shows the other senators in the chamber also applauding. If the sequence were reversed—the senators applauding first, then the children cheering—how would that change the meaning of this scene? *If the senators applauded before (rather than after) the children, the sequence would suggest that the senators truly liked Smith's proposal. As the scene plays, however, the senators reluctantly applaud Smith's proposal only after the children do. This suggests that they support or recognize Smith's proposal as valuable only because the people in the balcony do.*

### Soundtrack

10. There is no music in this scene. However, the soundtrack has a number of sound effects. Identify two different sound effects—either visible or invisible sounds—and explain why these sounds are part of the soundtrack. *Sound effects in this scene are all visible sounds that add realism to the presentation. The vice president bangs his gavel for silence; the papers rustle in Smith's hand; the laughter, cheers, and applause are additional effects which students may mention.*

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### Close

Ask students to comment on how reading visual text differs from reading printed text. One point you might emphasize here is that in a printed document, students can stop and review what they have already read. In moving images, however, they have less control over reviewing the text. For both printed and moving-image texts, comprehension often involves second and even third readings.



#### Marketing the Movie—Poster Designs

In 1939, the movie poster was one of the most effective marketing tools used by movie studios. Go to The Story of Movies Web site, [www.storyofmovies.org](http://www.storyofmovies.org), and download images of movie posters created for *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Apply what you have learned about composition in this chapter to analyzing these posters.