Shot Sizes

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Shot Size Cheatsheet

EXTREME CLOSEUP (ECU)

CLOSEUP (CU)

MEDIUM CLOSEUP (MCU)

MEDIUM SHOT (MS)
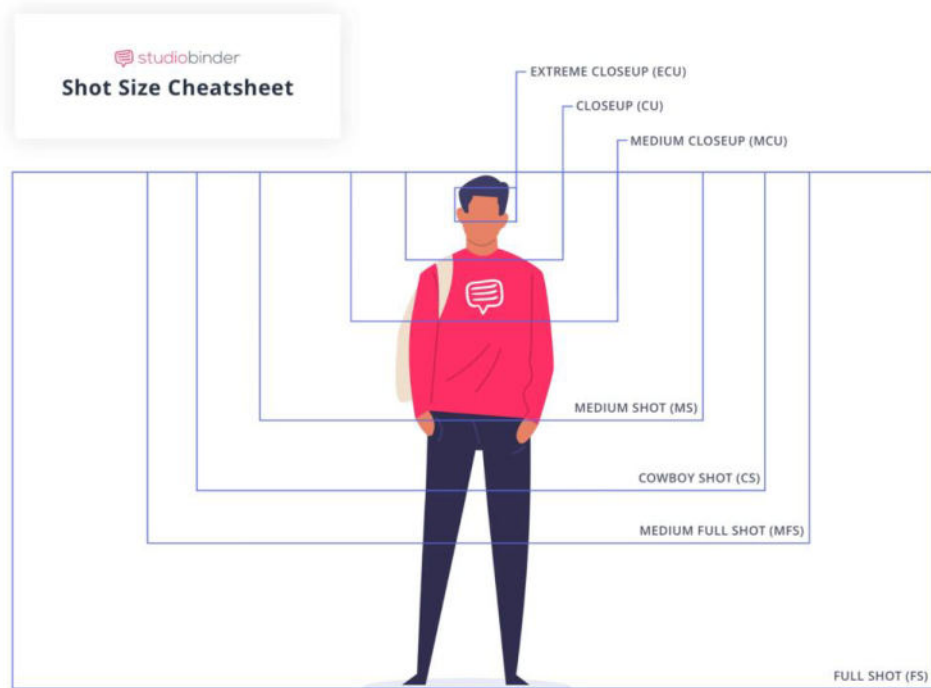
COWBOY SHOT (CS)

MEDIUM FULL SHOT (MFS)

FULL SHOT (FS)

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Extreme Close-Up (ECU)

A very close shot used when one needs to get really close to the object in focus.

An extreme close-up is the most you can fill a frame with your subject. It often shows eyes, mouth, and gun triggers. In extreme close-up shots, smaller objects get great detail and are the focal point.
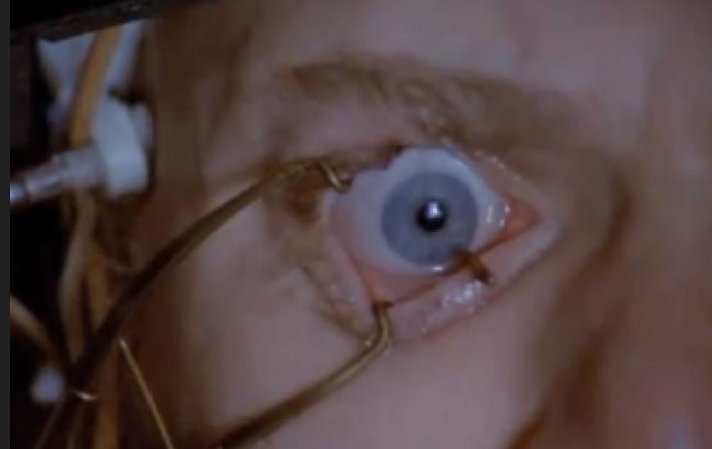
A Clockwork Orange (1971)

Close-Up

A closely framed type of shot used to get the focus on a single object.

You know it's time for a close-up shot when you want to reveal a subject's emotions and reactions. The close-up fills your frame with a part of your subject. If your subject is a person, it is often their face.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966)
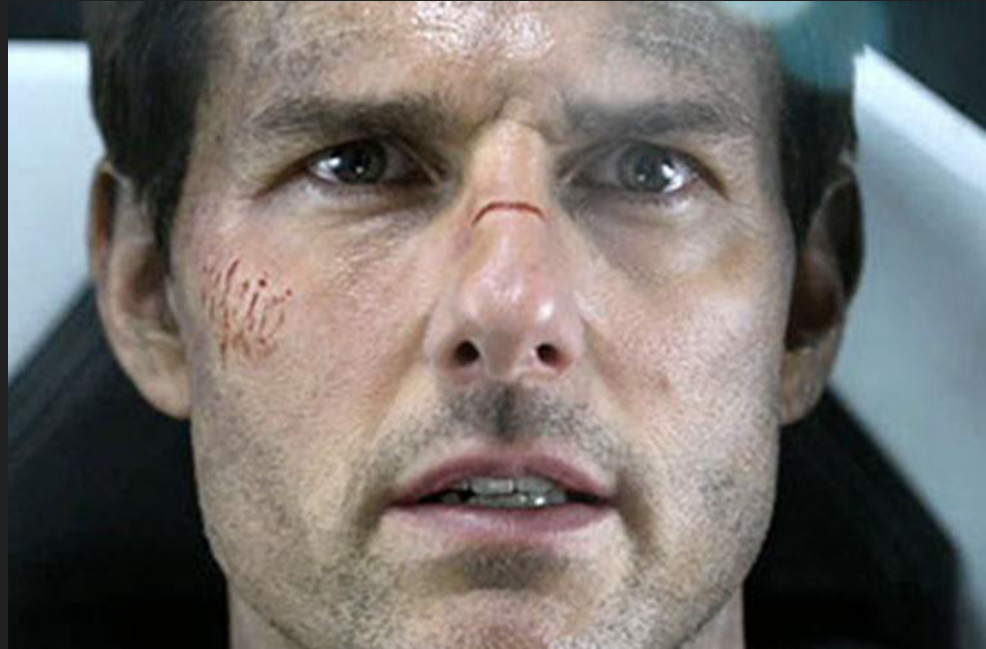
Stranger Things (2016)

The Usual Suspects (1995)

Tight Shot

A shot used to get a close-up focus on a subject within a scene.

Basically a close-up or extreme close up.

Medium Close Up Shot (MCU)

No Country For Old Men (2007)

The medium close-up frames your subject from roughly the chest up. So it typically favors the face, but still keeps the subject somewhat distant. These shots are used when the emphasis is on both the facial expression and body language of the character.

Jurassic World (2015)

Medium Shot (MS)

Titanic (1997)

The medium shot is one of the most common camera shots and frames from roughly the waist up and through the torso. So it emphasizes more of your subject while keeping their surroundings visible.

X-Men: Days of the Future Past (2014)

Cowboy Shot (CS)

A variation of the Medium Wide Shot that frames the subject from roughly mid-thighs up. It's called a "cowboy shot" because it is used in Westerns to frame a gunslinger's gun or holster on his hip.

It is used to signal heroism and confidence while remaining close enough to register emotion. Usually used to show critical action near the hip, like Wonder Woman's Lasso of Truth and The Good's gun.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966)

Medium Wide Shot (MWS)

The Usual Suspects (1995)

Also known as the medium long shot, it frames the subject from roughly the knees up, splitting the difference between a full shot and a medium shot.

Biggest difference between this shot and the cowboy shot is that the Cowboy shot is usually used to highlight something on the waist like a gun, lasso, whip, etc…

Zero Dark Thirty (2012)

Full Shot (FS)

A full shot is a type of wide camera shot in which a character's entire body reaches from the top of the frame to the bottom of the frame. In a full shot, a character is framed from head to toe. These shots allow the audience to see the emotions on a character's face while simultaneously seeing their physicality, body language, and actions. Full shots also capture the setting and context of a character and can be used with one character or multiple.

The Godfather Part II (1974)

Long Shot (LS) or Wide Shot (WS)

The Martian (2015)

Full shots are defined by their framing of a character from head to toe from the bottom of the frame to the top of the frame. Wide shots, however, frame characters with more space around them to capture more of their context and setting. Wide shots are used to stress the environment of a scene.

In the Martian, astronaut Mark Watney is the only person left on Mars. This shot shows the vastness of Mars' landscape and highlights Watney's loneliness.

In Schindler's List, this wide shot shows the little girl in the red coat amongst a sea of black and white. An unaccompanied child surrounded by adults and chaos.

Schindler's List (1993)

Extreme Long Shot (ELS) or Extreme Wide Shot (EWS)

Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)

The shot frames the subject from a distance and focuses on its surroundings. Remember: In a long shot, the character is usually still noticeable in the frame. But in an ELS, it's not always necessary to see the character. The ELS or EWS functions best as an establishing shot since more of the location is in the frame.

True Grit (2010)

Inglourious Basterds (2009)

1941

Establishing Shots

A shot (often wide) taken at the beginning of a scene.

They are often used to to establish geography and location (the mountains, a city, etc…), the tone and mood, and the passing of time, such as showing an outside shot of a house at night to demonstrate that it is now night time.