WB

WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

CAMERA

The camera is an extremely important part of the filmmaking process. Every camera angle is used to help tell the story on screen. Below is an explanation of different camera angles and shots that were used in the Harry Potter films.

Establishing Shot

An establishing shot is used at the beginning of a scene. It helps the audience to understand where a scene is being set. Hogwarts is a great example of an establishing shot as we know exactly where the action is going to take place.

Long Shot

Long shots can be used to show action between characters, to show the characters' costumes or can be used to show more of the setting that surrounds a character. The camera is placed a long way from the action.

Medium Shot

This can show us more specific details about a character. It is a comfortable frame for the audience as we usually speak to each other in a medium shot. They can also show us how the character is moving and what they are wearing – which can be iconic e.g. superhero movies.

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Close-Up

A close-up is used to allow the audience to get close to the character and see their facial expressions and emotions. We can also use close-ups of props to show the importance of a prop.

Extreme Close-Up

An extreme close-up is always used to convey something. It can be an emotion from a character, or something of significance, for example, Harry's scar.

Over the Shoulder Shot

An over the shoulder shot is usually used during conversations so that we can see who is talking and the reaction of the person being spoken to. It can also be used to see what a character is reading.

High/Low Angle

If the camera looks down on a character (a high angle) it usually makes the character look smaller or inferior. A low angle does the opposite, making character appear taller or superior. Hagrid can be shot in a low angle to show how big he is.

Activity 1

Using the examples and explanations above, see how many of the camera shots and camera angles you can identify:
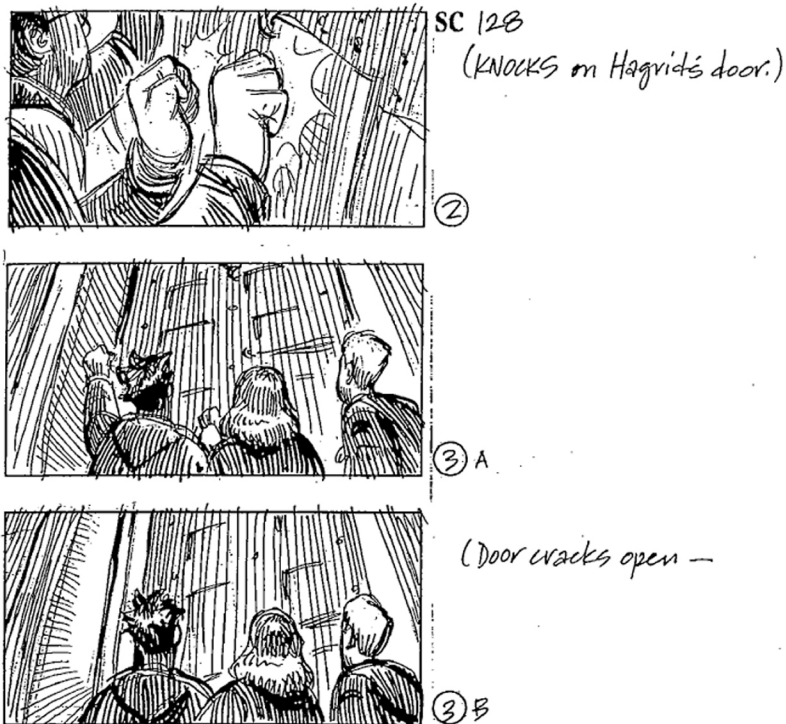

Answers: Over-the-shoulder shot, Medium shot, Close-up, Establishing shot, Extreme close-up, Long shot, High angle, Low angle

STORYBOARDING

Once we understand why we use specific camera angles, we need to create a storyboard for our film. A storyboard is a document that tells us exactly what camera angles are needed for every scene. Every time the camera needs to change position, a new 'drawing' needs to be completed. Here is an example of a storyboard that was created for Harry Potter.

SC 128
(KNOCKS on Hagrid's door.)
②
③ A
(Door cracks open —
③ B

ACTIVITY 2

Using the storyboard sheet, create your own storyboard for a scene of a film showing your morning routine (brushing your teeth, having your breakfast) in one of the following genre-styles:

Science-fiction

Historical drama

Magical fantasy

Comedy

Horror

Use your knowledge of camera angles to convey the mood of the scene effectively.