

Lexicon and grammar of cinema

Christophe and Olivier Defaye

I teach with cinema

course 2

Composition / Plan scale / angle of view

General shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up... foreground, second shot, background, normal angle, high angle, low angle, depth of field.





Lexicon and grammar of cinema

by Christophe and Olivier Defaye

"Lexicon and grammar of cinema", for ages 6 to 12, is presented in the form of a course made up of games and exercises created from films on the platform: platform.films-pour-enfants.com

This course will allow students to identify and appropriate through vocabulary, analysis and expression tools, but also to carry out preparatory activities for making a film.



Seen © Katie Sung Lee

SUMMARY

1

Frame / On-camera / Off-camera / Voice-over

Framing, framing, camera operator, shot-reverse shot.

2

Composition / Plan scale / angle of view

General shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up... foreground, second shot, background, normal angle, high angle, low angle, depth of field.

3

Movements / Still shot / Panoramic / Traveling / Zoom

Entering and leaving the field of characters and objects.

4

Shot / Sequence / Scene

5

History / Scenario / Storyboard / Direction



Expected end of activity

Understand and use the tools to compose an image.
How does the framing influence the message?

Express your sensitivity and imagination with cinematographic language.
Say to be heard and understood using appropriate vocabulary.
Use drawing in all its diversity as a means of expression.



The Extraterrestrial Fairy, Olivier Defaye, 2017

Presentation

How to frame?

To frame and compose his image, the cameraman must organize the characters and objects in the field and make several choices to position your camera.

For example, if the camera operator wants to frame a character:

. The camera operator chooses the size of the character in the frame.
He can decide to frame the entire character or to frame only part of the character, the face for example.

This is called choosing the plan scale.

The word plan° is also used to describe the arrangement of objects or characters in depth: we thus distinguish the foreground, the second plane and the background depending on their distance from the camera. For accentuate this distance, the camera operator can play on the depth of field which corresponds to the part of the image whose elements are sharp and not blurry.

If the camera operator chooses to frame several characters at the same time, he can position them in depth, more or less far from the camera.

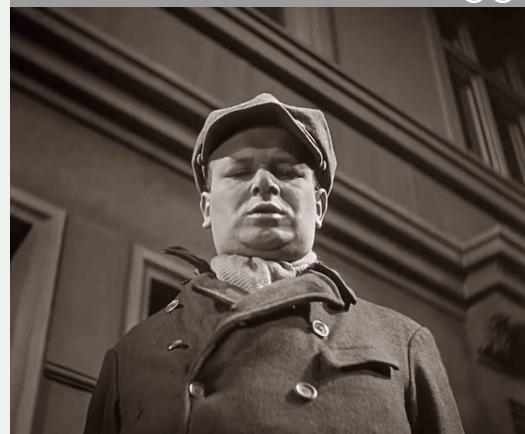
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. The camera operator also chooses the angle of view.

He chooses to frame the character from the front, in profile, from the back and chooses the position in height of the camera relative to the character. He can choose an angle normal and position the camera at the same height as the character, a high angle and put the camera above the character or choose a low angle and put the camera below the character.

In reality, all these choices are made at the same time before starting to film.
To remember all these choices before filming, the camera operator has two tools at his disposal: very practical, the scenario and the storyboard (see Session 5).

Low angle in M the cursed, Fritz Lang, 1931



The director uses the low angle to give the character a dominant, superior position.

Diving into M the Accursed, Fritz Lang, 1931



The director uses the low angle to give the character a fragile, inferior position.

1 In cinema, the word shot also has another meaning: it is the moment between the start and the end of a shot (see Session 5).



Cinema questions

Questionnaire for students.

. What are the camera operator's choices when framing a character?

The shot scale, i.e. the size of the character in the frame and the angle of view.

. What is a close-up of a character?

A close-up is a framing that isolates a part of the human body (face, hand, foot, etc.).

. What is a general plan?

A general shot is a framing that shows the entirety of a setting and describes a place.

. **What is depth of field?**

Depth of field corresponds to the part of the image whose elements are in focus.

. Where is the camera located in relation to the character in the case of a high angle?

The camera is located above the character.

. Where is the camera located in relation to the character in a low angle?

The camera is located below the character.

Vocabulary [Learn more...](#)

A close-up is sometimes called close-up, English term.

The American plan is the framework of a character at mid-thigh.

Named thus ^{because} it's a framing very used in films Americans from the 1910s-1940s.

Diving and **low angle** are terms also used in painting and photography.

Few blurry elements in a image corresponds to a large **depth of field**.

Activities

1. Classify the images of the film in order of magnitude of the shot scale (from 6 to 12 years).

General shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up...

(material from the films "Alike" and "Shipwrecked" for this activity p 6 and p 7)

2. Make groups of "Lost Property" images from the film by angle of view (from 6 to 12 years old).

(material from the film "Lost Property" for this activity p 8)

Normal angle, high angle and low angle.

3. Compare two portraits using the words diving, low-angle (from 9 to 12 years old).

4. Take a photo or video with a smartphone of different plan scales and different viewing angles (from 9 to 12 years old).

5. Draw a character framed in long shot, medium shot and close-up.

6. Describe the foreground, middle ground and background of the images in the film (ages 6 to 12).

(material from the film "Automne" for this activity p 10)

7. Describe the sharp and blurry elements of images. (from 6 to 12 years old).

(material from the "Automne" films for this activity p 11)



Materials for activity 1

Classify the images from the film "Alike" in order of magnitude of the shot scale.

Print and distribute to students the images from the film and the definitions of the shot scales.

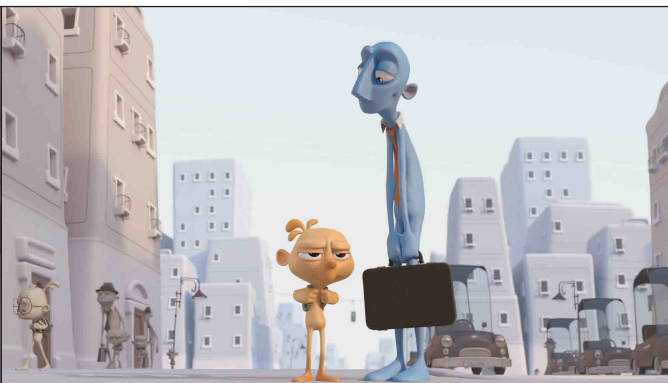


To print (without numbers)

①



④



②



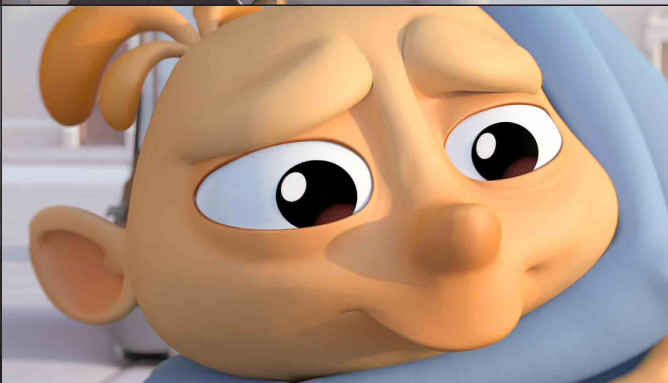
⑤



③



⑥



Alike © Daniel Martínez Lara & Rafa Cano Mendez

Plan scales

1. The general plan places the action in its geographical and topological context.
2. The overall plan, close to the general plan, focuses on a place such as a street or a square.
3. The half-set shot only covers part of the setting.
4. The medium shot frames one or more characters in full.
5. The Close-up frames the characters at waist level and creates a certain intimacy.
6. The close-up frames very closely and focuses on the expressions of a character or on an object.



Materials for activity 1

Classify the images from the film "Shipwrecked" in order of magnitude of shot scale.
Print and distribute to students the images from the film and the definitions of the shot scales.



To print (without numbers)

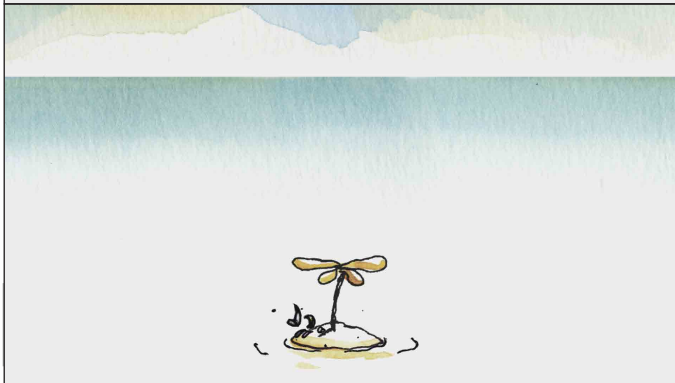
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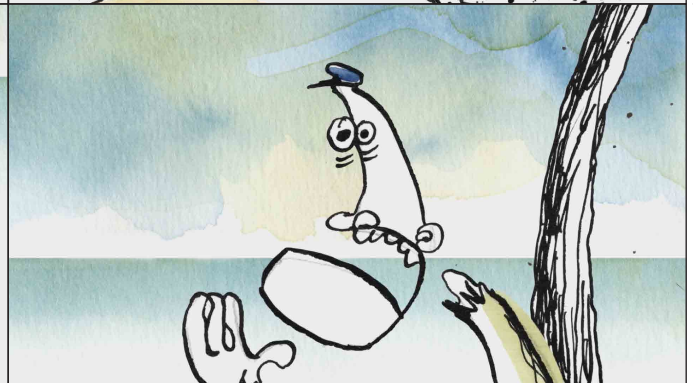
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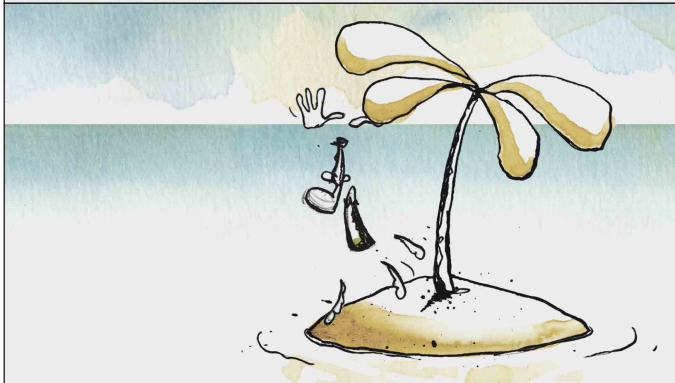
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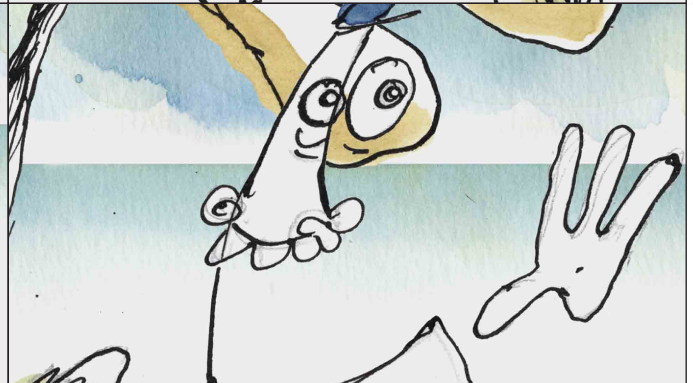
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Shipwrecked © Frodo Kuipers

Plan scales

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Materials for activity 2

Make groups of images from the film "Lost Property" by viewing angle.
Print and distribute to students the images from the film and definitions of viewing angles.



To print (without numbers)

①



①



②



②



③



③



Lost Property © Asa Lucander

Viewing angles

1. At a normal angle, the camera is at the same height as the characters or objects.
2. In a high angle, the camera is above the characters or objects.
3. In a low angle, the camera is below the characters or objects.



Materials for activity 3

Compare the two portraits using the words dive, low angle and certain words below (from 9 to 12 years old).
Small, fragile, harmless, protection / Large, imposing, strong, power...

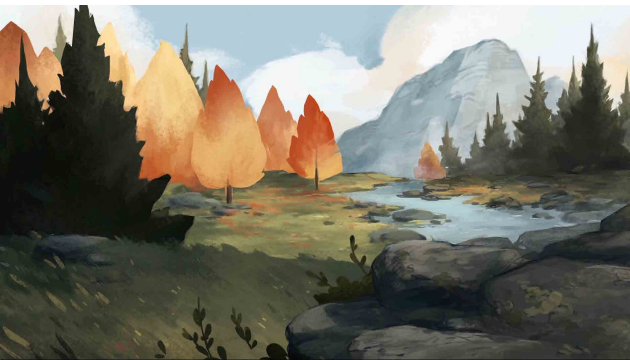




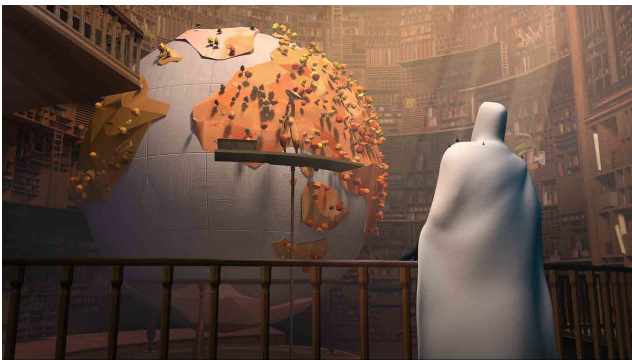


Materials for activity 6

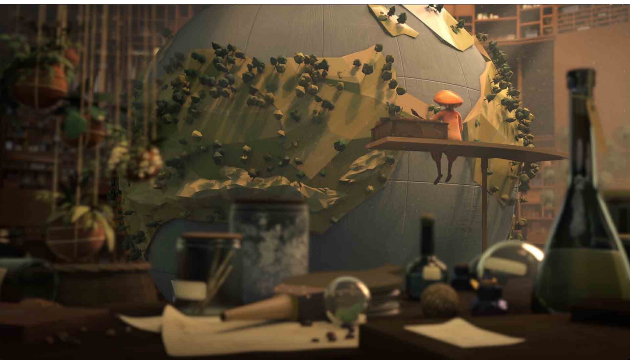
Describe the foreground, middle ground and background of the pictures and use some of the words below (ages 6 to 12).
In front, behind, in the distance, in the background, small, big...



Autumn © LISAA



Autumn © LISAA



Autumn © LISAA

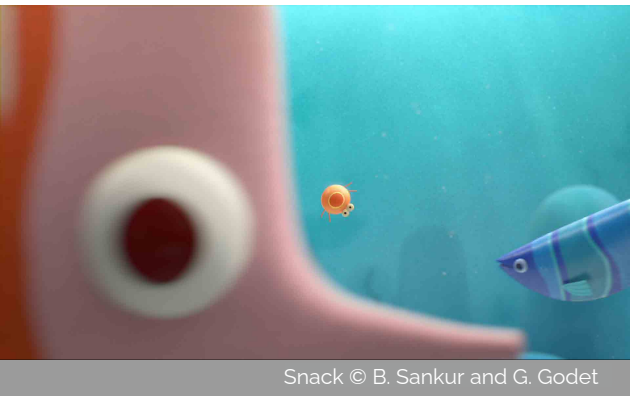


Autumn © LISAA

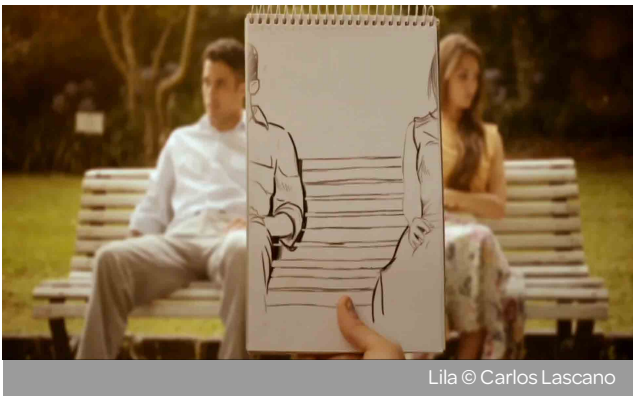


Materials for activity 6

Describe the sharp and blurry elements of images and use the word depth of field. (from 6 to 12 years old).



Snack © B. Sankur and G. Godet



Lila © Carlos Lascano



The Butterfly Woman © Les films du Nord



Ahco On The Road © Soyeon Kim
