

A Short
Glossary
Of
Film Production
Terms

A

A/B Roll Editing

Editing from two source VCRs to a third recording VCR. A switcher or mixer is used to provide effects such as dissolves.

A/B Story

"A" story is the main story/theme while "B" story refers to the background story.

A-Wind

Emulsion position of the film. Holding up a piece of film, if the emulsion faces you, then the image will appear correct. If its reversed (mirror image), it is considered B-Wind.

Academy Aperture

The full frame of a 35mm image that is exposed by the camera. Aspect ratio = 1.33:1.

Academy Leader

AKA "S.M.P.T.E. leader." The countdown leader used at the beginning of a film which allows the lab to line up the sound.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Awards

The coveted annual award, the "Oscar," which is presented to the best of the best.

Academy of Motion Picture Sound

A UK-based organization whose aims are to promote and encourage the science, technology and creative application of all aspects of motion picture sound recording and reproduction, and to promote and enhance the status and recognition of the contribution of those therein engaged.

Action

"Action" is called during filming to indicate the start of the current take.

Actor/Actress

The "talent" who plays the role of a character.

Adaptation

Rewriting of fact or fiction for film presentation, usually in the form of a completed screenplay, or a proposal treatment.

Added scenes

Material, shots, sequences, or scenes written into a script during its principal filming or after its completion.

Additional Camera

An extra camera operator, often needed for complicated action sequences or stunts.

Additional Dialogue Recording

AKA "A.D.R." The dubbing (re-recording) of additional dialogue in a film.

Additional Photographer/ Photography

Handles the secondary shooting or reshoots.

Advance

Dual meaning: When referring to a "composite print:" the distance between a point on the soundtrack and the corresponding image. When referring to "payment:" an amount given before receipt of services.

Ad Lib

Improvised lines, phrases, or even action bits used by an actor in spontaneous reaction to the given situation of a scene.

Aerial Shot

Camera shot from the point-of-view of an airborne craft, such as an airplane or helicopter.

Agency Meeting

Gathering in which a potential client of an agency meets with the agents to discuss the agents' plan and goals for creating a career for the potential client.

Agent

Manager responsible for the professional business dealings of an actor, director, screenwriter, or other artist. An agent typically negotiates the contracts and often has some part in selecting or recommending roles for their client.

American Cinematic Editors

Union guild for film/video editors; also known as ACE

American Society of Cinematographers

Organization dedicated to advancing the art of cinematography.

Anamorphic

Optical system which creates a widescreen image from a standard image.

Ancillary Rights

Enable the screenwriter to receive a percentage of the profits generated by the film in areas such as posters, action figures, books, records, T-shirts, etc.

Angle

Relationship between the camera and the subject(s) of the shot.

Angle On

Direction in a shooting script which indicates that another camera angle is to be made of a previous shot, usually to emphasize a specific object in the shot.

Animation/Animator

Process of creating (or person responsible for) the illusion of motion by creating individual frames, as opposed to filming naturally-occurring action at a regular frame rate.

Anime

Animated movies produced in Japan.

Annotation

Comment specifying the source of each script element that is not wholly fictional, including all characters, events, settings, and segments of dialogue.

Answer Print

First completed edited-dubbed-scored, color-and-sound print of a film ready for initial scrutiny by the production team.

Antagonist

Villain of the film or script who is in conflict with the protagonist.

Anticlimax

Anything that happens in the final few moments of a film that dulls down the story crescendo and leaves the audience feeling let down and unsatisfied.

Antihero

Protagonist who has pronounced personality or character defects or eccentricities which are not usually associated with the hero archetype.

Aperture

Measure of the width of the opening allowing light to enter a camera. The apparent diameter of a lens viewed from the position of the object against a diffusely illuminated background is called the "effective aperture". The ratio of focal length of a lens to its "effective aperture" for an object located at infinity is called the "relative aperture", or "f/stop". Higher apertures allow more light to enter a camera, hence darker scenes can be recorded. Conversely, lower apertures allow less light to

enter, but have the advantage of creating a large depth of field.

Arm

Metal rod (arm) which attaches to a C-Stand.

Arri

Abbreviation for the Arriflex Camera, a lightweight reflex motion-picture camera which comes in both 16mm and 35mm speeds

Art Department

Crew concerned with visual artistry of a production. Members of art dept. include: Art director, assistant art director, draftsman, leadman, production designer, production buyer, property master, set dresser, special effects supervisor, among others.

Art Director

Individual who oversees the artists and crafts people who build sets.

A.S.A.

Sensitivity to light which measures the film's speed. (Example: ASA 400.) "ASA" stands for American Standards Association.

Aspect Ratio

Measurement of the relative sizes of the horizontal and vertical components of an image.

Assembly Edit

Edit wherein all existing signals on a tape, if any, are replaced with new signals.

Assistant Art Director

Assistant to the art director.

Assistant Cameraman

Member of the camera crew who assists the camera operator and is responsible for the maintenance and care of the camera. Also may do duties of clapper-loader and/or focus puller.

Assistant Director

Duties include tracking the progress of filming versus the production schedule and preparing the call sheets.

Assistant Film Editor

Editing room crewmember responsible for providing logistical assistance to the editor. Duties vary, depending on whether picture or sound is being edited.

Assistant Production Manager

Assistant to production co-ordinator.

Associate Producer

Producer who shares responsibility for creative and business issues.

Association of Film Commissioners International

Non-profit educational organization that assists the needs of on-location film, television and commercial production.

Association of Film, Television and Radio Artists

Association with jurisdiction over some works that can be recorded by picture or by sound.

Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers

Union guild for Film/TV producers.

Atmosphere

Tone or dimension added to the action by concrete or nebulous qualities or elements such as rain, wind, heat, cold, danger, spookiness, tranquillity.

Auction/Bidding War

Situation in which a spec script, book, or written material is presented to several studios, all wanting to buy the work.

Automatic Dialogue Replacement (ADR)

Re-recording of dialogue by actors in a sound studio during post-production, usually performed to playback of edited picture in order to match lip movements on screen.

Avant Garde

Experimental or highly independent film that is often the forerunner of a new artistic genre

AVID Editor

Non-linear editing system.

B

B Roll

Cutaway shots which are used to cover the visual part of an interview or narration.

Backdrop

Artificial background, usually painted on a cyclorama, curtain, or flats, used to achieve the effect of a natural environment such as a forest, beach, prairies, mountains, or other landscape in a shot or sequence.

Backend

Film's profit from theater ticket sales, video rentals, and ancillary markets.

Back (REAR) Projection

Photographic technique whereby live action is filmed in front of a screen which the background action is projected on.

Background Artist

Individual responsible for designing or constructing the art placed at the rear of a set.

Balance Stripe

A second stripe on 35mm mag stock to prevent warping.

Barn Doors

Hinged metal flaps attached to tops and/or sides of lighting devices in order to control the light, create desired shadows, or block unwanted shadows

Base

The clear perforated strip of a piece of film.

Beat

Directional word used to indicate a pause in an actors speech or action.

Behind the Scenes

The off-camera goings on associated with film/videomaking.

Best Boy

Chief assistant, usually of the gaffer, but more often lately used as a general term for the second in command of a group.

Betacam

The most common broadcast quality video format.

Billing

Size and placement of the order of names in the movie's title in printed publicity material or opening credits.

Biographic Picture

A filmed story of a person's life story.

Bit Part/Role

Small unimportant role, usually lasting only one scene.

Black and White

Films prior to the advent of Technicolor.

Black Comedy

Comedy in which the humor is derived from subjects which are typically considered "serious", or for which

humor is usually considered as unsuitable: death, war, misery.

Blacklisting/Blackballing

List of filmmakers or actors who have either been formally or informally discriminated against, due to their personal, political, social, or religious beliefs.

Blimped Camera

Camera with internal soundproofing. Camera will say "BL."

Block/Blocking

Rehearsal to determine the position and movement of the camera, actors, and crew during a particular shot or scene.

Blockbuster

Movie which is a huge financial success; \$100 million or more.

Body Double

A body which is used for "doubling" the actor's body in certain scenes; i.e.: nudity shot.

Bolex

Swiss made 16mm non-sync camera. Very popular.

Boom Microphone

Long pole with a microphone on the end.

Boom Operator

Member of the sound crew who operates the boom microphone.

Bootleg

Unofficial and illegally copied or distributed version of a movie, often of a substandard quality.

Bounce Card

Silver or white card that is used to bounce light onto a subject.

Box-Office

Measure of the total amount of money paid by moviegoers to view a movie.

Bracketing

Filming of multiple takes (of the same shot) at different f-stops.

Breakdown Script

Detailed list of all items, people, props, etc. required for a shoot on a day-by-day basis.

Budget

Funds required to produce a film or television production, derived by combining all projected expenses for equipment, salaries, locations, travel, and all other above-the-line and below-the-line production costs.

Butterfly

Scrim which is tightened on an oval frame and used to diffuse strong sunlight on location shooting, or to reduce any excessive light on a subject

C

C-Mount

Screw mount type of lens.

Call Sheet

Listing of which actors will be required for which scenes, and when they will be required.

Cameo

Bit part played by a famous actor who would ordinarily not take such a small part.

Camera Crew

Crewmembers directly involved with operation of the camera. Individual job titles include: clapper-loader, camera operator, assistant cameraman, director of photography, focus puller, grip, key grip, dolly grip, additional camera.

Camera Operator

Individual who operates the camera to the specifications dictated by the director of photography.

Camp/Campy

Form of comedic parody where the cliché conventions of a dramatic form like adventure are deliberately exaggerated to the point of absurdity.

Can

Metal or plastic containers used for the transport and storage of film

Cast

A collective term for the actors appearing in a particular movie.

Casting

Process of hiring actors to play the characters in a script.

Casting Couch

Slang term referring to "Golden Age" of Hollywood, where wannabe stars would grant sexual favors to directors/producers in return for a role in their film.

Casting Director

Individual responsible for selecting actors to play roles.

Cel

Hand drawn sheet representing a single animation frame, usually made of a clear material like cellulose or mylar to allow several layers of composition.

Celluloid

Flammable film base made of cellulose nitrate

Censorship

Changes required of a movie by some person or body other than the studio or the filmmakers, usually a national or regional film classification board. See also certificate.

Certificate of Authorship

Form signed by the author of a screenplay or other written work that warrants the author's work is original, does not libel another party, does not invade anyone's privacy, and will not cause the buyer of the work to be sued for any legal action.

Change Pages

When a script is being edited during production, changes are distributed to actors and the filmmakers on "change pages", which are usually a different color to the pages of the script.

Change-Over Marks

Marking on last few frames of a reel to signal that projectionist that the current reel is approaching the end, and they should be ready to start the next projector, which should have the next reel prepared for projection.

Changing Bag

Double chambered black bag used for loading film into magazines.

Character Actor

Actor who specializes in playing a particular style of character, often stereotypical, offbeat, or humorous.

Character Arc

Formulaic inferred curved line which traces the development, growth, and transformation of a character over the course of the screenplay

Character Generator

Electronic typewriter that creates titles for video.

Check Print

Print made to verify the level of success of a specific effect.

Choreographer

Individual who plans and directs dance sequences within a movie.

Chroma

Color information in a video signal, consisting of hue (phase angle) and saturation (amplitude) of the color subcarrier signal.

Chroma Key

Process of overlaying one video signal over another by replacing a range of colors with the second signal.

Chrominance

Color portion of a video signal.

Cinch Marks

Scratches on a strip of film running parallel to its length caused by improper reel winding which allows one coil of the print to slide against another.

Cinema Verité

Meaning is "cinema truth." A documentary style in which no directorial control is exerted. The term is frequently misused to describe new-wave "handheld" camera techniques ala M-TV.

Cinematographer

Individual with expertise in the art of capturing images either electronically or on film stock through the application of visual recording devices and the selection and arrangement of lighting.

Clamp Light

A lighting fixture which can be attached (via a spring clamp) to a variety of places (door, table, chair, etc.)

Clapboard

Small board which holds information identifying a shot: working title of the movie, names of director and DP, scene and take numbers, date, and time. Used at the beginning of a take, the clapboard has a hinged stick which is "clapped" to provide audio/visual synchronization.

Clapper-Loader

Individual who operates the clapboard at the beginning of a shot, also responsible for loading film magazines into the camera.

Claymation

Animation of models constructed from clay or plasticine.

Cliffhanger

Moment of high drama, frequently used at the end of serials.

Close Captioned /CC

System which displays the current dialog on screen for deaf or hard-of-hearing viewers.

Close-up (CU)

Shot in which the subject is larger than the frame; approx. from the top of chest to top of head.

Co-Producer

Producer who has equal responsibility for the completion of a project.

Code Numbers

Edge numbers that are inked onto a workprint and mag track after syncing.

Color Bars

Standard video test pattern which includes samples of primary and secondary colors.

Color Consultant

Technical advisor with expertise in film stock and film developing, who provides advice for cinematographers and color timers.

Color Temperature

Method for measuring the overall color of a light source, measured in degrees Kelvin (deg.K). Daylight is approximately 5500 deg.K. Fluorescent Lights are approx. 4100 deg.K. Indoor incandescent lights are 2800 deg.K and professional Movie Lights are 3200 Deg. K

Color Timing

Process which adjusts the final print so that colors match from shot to shot, regardless of the film stock and camera used to shoot the scene.

Colorization

Film alteration process where an operator digitally alters a black and white image to include color.

Compensation

With regard to writers, the money paid for writing services or for the sale of a screenplay. Also called "consideration."

Composer

Musician whose music appears in a movie's score.

Composite Print

Print with a images and sound on the same strip of film.

Conformations

Varying progressive versions of a film that is in the editing stage.

Contact Print

Copy of a print whether it be a workprint, answer print, or release print.

Contingent Compensation

Form of compensation received by a writer, after the writing services have been completed, if he is awarded writing credit for the project. The contingent compensation may include a production bonus, net profits, reserved rights, and/or additional payments in the event of a film or television sequel, remake, or spinoff.

Continuity

Degree to which a movie is self-consistent without error or jumpcuts.

Continuity Report

Detailed list of the events that occurred during the filming of a scene.

Control Track

Type of video editing that controls the in and out points of edits by counting pulses on a control track portion of the videotape.

Cookie

Flat piece of material with irregular holes cut into it. Used for creating pattern of shadows when positioned in front of a light source.

Copyright

Body of United States federal laws and international laws that protect original and creative expression that is in a fixed and tangible form.

Core

Plastic piece used to hold film without a reel.

Costume Designer

Individual who designs the costumes for a movie.

Costume Supervisor

Individual responsible for handling the costumes worn by actors.

Coverage

Performed by a reader, this process involves a script synopsis, reviewed, and evaluated with respect to the story, character development, plot development and so forth, and then rated, with the intention of informing others as to whether or not the script is worthy of further consideration.

Credit

The authorship given to a written work in the entertainment industry. For film: "Story by," "Screenplay by," and "Written by." For TV: "Created by," "Story by," and "Teleplay by."

Credit Arbitration

Process run by the Writers Guild of America in which disputes concerning the award of credit (as in "Story by," "Screenplay by," "Teleplay by," and "Written by") are decided. The method in which these decisions take place has the WGA sending all drafts of the disputed work to three separate individuals; separately and without

knowledge of each other, they decide which writer deserves the award of credit. When two of the three individuals agree on the award of credit, the decision is considered final.

Crew/crew members

Collective term for anyone involved with the production of a movie who does not appear in the movie.

Critic

Individual who publishes a review of a movie from either an artistic or entertainment point of view.

Critical End

Label on a film can that notifies the lab that filming ran out during important shot and to salvage as many frames possible.

Crystal Sync

Sync sound created using a camera that has a quartz crystal-governed motor.

C.T.B. (and) C.T.O.

Abbreviations for "Color Temperature Blue" (and) "Orange" respectively. The color correction gels used to convert the color temp from tungsten to daylight (BLUE) and from daylight to tungsten (ORANGE).

Cut

In filming, to change from one shot to another immediately. In directing, called by the director to stop action by the performers, camera, and audio equipment. In film editing, to eliminate unwanted portions, visual or audio, of a film.

Cutaway

Shot of something outside the frame which can be used to hide an edit.

D

D1/D2/D3

Professional digital video formats. The D1 system uses component video. The D2 and D3 systems use composite video.

D.A.T. (Digital Audio Tape)

Audio recording and playback format developed by Sony, with a signal quality capability surpassing that of the CD.

Daylight Balanced

Color temperature of daylight (5400K). Color film that is "daylight balanced" should be used outdoors. If shot indoors (w/o a filter), the film image will have an orange hue.

Daylight Spool

Black film spool that protects the film from becoming completely exposed when loading a camera in daylight. Note: Always load a camera in a relatively dark area away from any light source.

Dailies

First positive prints made from the negatives photographed on the previous day.

Deferred Compensation

Money to be paid from funds that, for a writer, are generally the net profits. Rarely will the writer ever see such compensation.

Denouement

Concluding scenes of a movie where the story elements are finished and the characters' status after the climax is shown.

Depth of Field

Measure of the range along a camera's line of site in which objects will be in focus.

Development

Process in which a script is altered, changed, modified, etc., by a series of collaborative meetings between the writer and/or production executive, studio executive, director, or other individuals who may be attached to the project.

Diffusion

(1) Material used on a movie light to soften shadows. (2) Filter used on a camera to create soft focus effect.

Digital Compositing

Technique whereby separately filmed components are combined through digital editing.

Digital Editing

Editing a portion of a movie by digitizing one or more frames and altering them electronically or combining them with other digitized images, and then printing the modified frame.

Diopter

Adjustable part of camera viewfinder which compensates for individuals eyesight.

Director

Principal creative artist on a movie set.

Director of Photography

Cinematographer who is ultimately responsible for the process of recording a scene in the manner desired by the director.

Director's Cut

Cut of a movie without studio interference as the director would like it to be seen.

Director's Guild of America

Union guild for directors.

Dissolve

Editing technique whereby the images of one shot is gradually replaced by the images of another.

Distributor

Organization responsible for coordinating the distribution of the finished movie to exhibitors, as well as the sale of videos, laserdiscs, and other media versions of movies.

Documentary

Non-fiction narrative without actors.

Dolby Noise Reduction

Enhances different levels of audio depending upon the desire effect.

Dolly

Small truck which rolls along dolly tracks carrying the camera and some camera crewmembers.

Dolly Grip

Crewmember who moves a dolly.

Dope Sheet

List of scenes from the script that have already been filmed, or a list of the contents of an exposed reel of film stock.

Double Perf

16mm film stripe which has perforations on both edges.

Draftsman

Individual who creates the plans for set construction.

Driver

Individual who drives either equipment or passenger trucks, typically between location shootings, sets, and the studio.

Dropout

Defect on the videotape which causes a brief flash of a horizontal black line on the screen

Drop Frame

Type of SMPTE time code designed to exactly match the real time of common clocks. Two frames of time code are dropped every minute, on the minute, except every tenth minute. This corrects for the fact that video frames occur at a rate of 29.97 per second, rather than an exact 30 frames per second.

Dubbing

Technique of combining multiple sound components into one.

Dub/Dupe

Duplicate copy of a videotape.

Dutch Tilt

Shot composed with the horizon not parallel with the bottom of the frame a.k.a. "canted angle."

E

Edge Numbers

Numbers printed on the edge of a print to allow easy identification of frames.

Editing

Reconstructing the sequence of events in a movie.

Editor

Individual who performs editing (in consultation with the director) on a movie.

Edit Decision List (EDL)

Complete list of time code numbers for each shot and sound used in the off-line edit master. These time code numbers are used to create the final on-line edit master.

Electrical Department

Section of a production's crew responsible for lighting and other electrical matters during filming.

Electrician

Grip that specializes in the equipment of the electrical department.

Emulsion

Thin layer of silver attached to base of a film strip. The silver reacts with the light when exposed which creates a film image.

Emulsion Type

Refers to the composition of a film's emulsion and how it was manufactured. (Example: fast/slow, daylight/tungsten, etc.) The emulsion type is represented by a number which varies from one company to another.

Encode

Process of combining analog or digital video signals, e.g., red, green and blue, into a composite signal.

Epic

Film with large dramatic scope or that required an immense production.

Establishing Shot

Wide shot showing much of the location.

Executive Producer

Producer who is not involved in any technical aspects of the filmmaking process, but who is still responsible for the overall production usually handling business and legal issues.

Exposure Index (E.I.)

Number which is used to measure a film's speed based upon the film stock's sensitivity to light. Similar to A.S.A. and I.S.O.

Exterior (EXT.)

Used in a slug line, indicates that the scene occurs outdoors.

Extra

Individual who appears in a movie where a non-specific, non-speaking character is required, usually as part of a crowd or in the background of a scene.

Extreme Close-up (ECU)

Shot in which the subject is much larger than the frame. Provides more detail than a close-up.

Extreme Long Shot

Camera cue in direction used to describe a shot taken by a long distance from the subject

Eye Line

Direction an actor should be focused on, off-screen, so as to match a reverse angle or point-of-view shot.

Exposure Index

AKA "E.I." or "ASA." It is the specific number used to measure film speed.

F

F-Stop

A scale that measures the size of the opening of an iris. The traditional scale runs: 1.4, 2, 2.8, 5.6, 8, 11, 16, 22. The smaller the number, the larger the opening of the iris, allowing more light. Conversely - the larger the number, the smaller the iris, allowing less light.

Fade

Smooth, gradual transition from a normal image to complete blackness (fade out), or vice versa (fade in).

Fade IN

First words typed in a script. Literally means "to begin."

Fade OUT

Last words in a script which means "the end."

Fast Motion

Shot which in which time appears to move more quickly than normal. The process is commonly achieved by either deleting select frames (called "skip frames") or by undercranking.

Feature

Movie at least 60 minutes long intended for theatrical release or script at least 90 pages long.

Festival

Event at which films can often premiere

Field

One-half of a television frame, containing all the odd or even scanning lines of the picture.

Fill Light

After the key light (primary light) is set, a fill light softens the shadows created by the key light.

Film Developing

Process whereby images recorded on film stock are transferred to a negative print.

Film Magazines

Reel of film stock ready for use in a camera.

Film Noir

Describes a genre of film which typically features dark, brooding characters, corruption, detectives, and the seedy side of the big city.

Film Plane

The plane of depth from the lens of the film (behind the gate) in the camera.

Film Printing

Process of transferring images from a negative print to a print.

Film Speed

Film stock has a variety of speeds which is created by the size of the silver halides in the emulsion. The smaller the grain, the slower the film which in turn requires more light to achieve the correct exposure.

Film Stock

The physical medium on which images are recorded.

Filmmakers

Collective term used to refer to people who have a significant degree of control over the creation of a movie: directors, producers, screenwriters, and editors.

Filter

A device, usually a piece of glass or plastic, that is positioned in front of a lens to create an effect or change the color temp of an image.

First Draft

As set forth in the Writers Guild of America Minimum Basic Agreement, a first complete draft of any script in continuity form, including dialogue.

Flag

Apparatus consisting of a black cloth on a frame that blocks part of a light source.

Flare

Pattern of light that washes out a film roll at the start and end of the roll. Another type of flare is a "lens flare" which occurs when light hits the lens and causes the image to be foggy.

Flash Frame

A single frame between two shots that is completely blank or clear.

Flashback

Scene that breaks the chronological continuity of the main narrative by depicting events which happened in the past.

Flashforward

Scene that breaks the chronological continuity of the main narrative by depicting events which happen in the future.

Flatbed

An editing table that has a screen in the center with several editing plates lying flat.

Focal Length

A measurement of the magnification of a lens indicated in millimeters.

Focus

Sharpness of an image, or the adjustments made on a camera necessary to achieve this.

Focus Group

Group of approximately 10/12 members of the public that represent the target audience for a film who attend a sneak preview and then offer feedback to producers before further editing.

Focus Puller

Member of the camera crew who adjusts the focus of the camera during filming.

Foley

Art of recreating incidental sound effects (such as footsteps) in synchronization with the visual component of a movie.

Foley Artist/Editor

Individual who creates (or edits) the foley sound effects.

Follow Focus

Shot in which the camera focus is changed to compensate for the movement of the action or the camera itself.

Footage

Amount of film that has been shot or the entirety of exposed film.

Foot Candle

Simply, a measurement of light. The formula is "the light of one candle, one foot away."

Foreground

Objects or action which is closest to the camera.

Format

Describes the equipment and film or tape used. Examples for film: (8mm, Super 8, 16mm, 35mm). For video: (VHS, HI-8, Beta).

Frame

Individual picture image which eventually appears on a print OR in video: A complete television picture made up of two fields, produced at the rate of 29.97 Hz (color NTSC), or 30 Hz (black & white NTSC).

Frame Rate

Movies are created by taking a rapid sequence of pictures (frames) of action and by displaying these frames at the same rate at which they were recorded, the illusion of motion can be created. Film=24 frames per second and Video=30fps (in Europe using P.A.L.=25 fps).

Freeze Frame

Optical printing effect whereby a single frame is repeated to give the illusion that all action has stopped.

Fullcoat

Mag stock with a layer of oxide that covers one side. 16mm is fullcoat, but 35mm can be either fullcoat or stripe.

G

Gaffer

Head of the electrical department.

Gaffer's Tape

Cloth tape that looks similar to electrical duct tape without the sticky residue.

Gate

AKA "film gate." Opening on a camera (or projector) behind the lens through which a single frame is exposed (or projected).

Gel

Tinted piece of transparent plastic which covers a light source.

General Meeting

A "look-see" type of meeting in which a writer meets with a producer, production executive, studio executive, and so forth, as a form of introduction. Generally, in this meeting the producer, production executive, studio executive, and so forth, does not have a specific project in mind for which the writer will be hired.

Generation Loss

Created when editing or copying one analog videotape to another videotape.

Gofer

Film or video production assistant often sent to "Go for" coffee or other essentials.

Go Motion

Form of animation similar to stop motion, but which incorporates motion blur.

Green Light

To give a film project the studio backing and financing to begin principal photography.

Grip

Individual responsible for the adjustment and maintenance of production equipment on the set.

Gross Profits

Also known as "first dollar gross," this form of compensation entitles an individual to a percentage of every dollar of gross receipts.

Guerrilla Producer

One who produces an effective video on a shoestring budget.

H

Halogen

Gas contained in the lamp of a quartz light.

Handheld

Shooting without the use of a tripod.

Hard Light

Type of light that creates brilliant highlights and sharp shadows.

Head Room

Space between the top of a subject's head and the top of the frame.

HI-8

Video format technically similar to SVHS which uses smaller cassettes.

High Concept

Phrase connected with scripts which have a premise or storyline which is easily reduced to a simple and appealing one line.

Hip-Pocketing

Agent/agency's practice in which an individual(s) is represented by the agent/agency on a single project only, with no agreement that the agency or agent will continue to represent the individual once the project or interest in the project has ended.

HMI

Powerful and bright (but heavy and rather expensive) light that is balanced for daylight. Stands for "Halogen Metal Incandescence."

Hot Set

Set on which a scene is in the process of being shot; labeled thus to indicate that it should not be changed or disturbed.

Hyperfocal Distance

Distance set on the focusing ring which will best use the depth of field for a particular shot.

I

In The Can

Same as "that's a wrap" to indicate that the scene or program which has been completed.

Incident Light Reading

The amount of light measured that hits the camera's subject. The reading is taken with a light meter in which the globe or sphere of the meter is held up against the subject, pointing towards the camera, so that the same amount of lighting that strikes the subject is also striking the meter.

Independent Film /Indie

Movie not produced by a major studio.

Ink

To sign a contract.

Insert

Close-up shot of an object, often produced by the second unit.

Insert Edit

An electronic edit in which the existing control track is not replaced during the editing process.

Interior/ INT.

Used in a slug line, indicates that the scene occurs indoors.

Internegative

Middle grade copy of a film that is used to make additional prints.

Interpositive

Copy of a film on extremely fine grained stock used to make an internegative.

Intertitles

Title card appearing intercut with a scene.

Iris

Opening in the lens which controls the amount of light that passes through the camera to expose the film.
Measured in "f-stops."

I.S.O.

Abbreviation for "International Standards Organization."
It is the same thing as I.E. or A.S.A., though used less.

J

Jam Sync

Process of synchronizing a secondary time code generator with a selected master time code, e.g., using the time code generated by one camera to insert the identical time code on a second camera.

Jump Cut

Cut involving an interruption to the continuity of time.

K

K

(1) Abbreviation for "Kelvin" (scale used for color temp) or (2) an abbreviation for "Kilowatts" (measurement of brightness).

Kelvin

Color temperature scale created by Lord Kelvin.

Key Grip

Chief of a group of grips, often doubling for a construction coordinator and a backup for the camera crew.

Key Light

The primary light used to illuminate a subject.

Kicker

Light placed behind the subject to create a glamorous halo effect on the hair or a rugged-looking highlight on the cheek which helps separate the subject from the background.

L

Lab Roll

Group of camera rolls joined together by a lab for printing.

Latitude

Degree to which a particular film stock can tolerate without being over or under exposed. Color negative stock has a high latitude, while reversal film has a very low latitude.

Lavaliere

Small microphone that is clipped to a person's clothing.

Layback

Transferring the sweetened audio track back to the master video tape.

Layouts

Individual responsible for working out the action before filming begins, including where the characters should be, and the camera angles.

Lead Role

The most important character in a movie, often distinguished by gender.

Leadman

Member of the art department who is in charge of swing gangs and/or set dressers and reports to the set decorator.

Letterboxing

Technique of shrinking the image just enough so that its entire width appears on TV screen, with black areas above and below the image.

Light Leak

Stray light that filters into the camera causing the image to have a foggy appearance.

Lighting Crew

Group of technicians who install, operate, and maintain lighting.

Line Producer

Producer who is responsible for managing every person and issue during the making of a film.

Lined Script

Copy of the shooting script which is prepared by the script supervisor during production to indicate, via notations and vertical lines drawn directly onto the script pages, exactly what coverage has been shot.

Literary Manager

Individual hired by a writer to promote his career, offer advice on the best steps to take to achieve the desired goal, and give guidance on the best people to hire to aid the writer in maximizing his potential.

Live Area

A camera's viewfinder actually shows a greater area of the scene than will appear in the final product so markings are etched in the viewfinder to indicate to the camera operator the extents of the "viewable" film.

Location Filming

Filming which occurs at a place not constructed specifically for the production.

Location Manager

Individual who manages various aspects of filming on location, such as arranging with authorities for permission to shoot in specific places.

Location Scout

Individual who looks for suitable locations for filming.

Location Sound

Sound that is recorded at a particular shoot.

Log

Paper listing of the time code addresses of shots, scenes and takes.

Long-Form TV

Also known as "MOW's," these are movies and miniseries that are aired on free or pay television.

Long Lens

In 16mm, any lens bigger than 25mm. In 35mm, any lens bigger than 50mm.

Long Shot (L.S.)

Camera cue indicating a shot taken from a distance.

Loop

The slack film that hangs below/above the film gate. The "loop" allows a smoother transition for the film as it moves from the constant motion of the spool through the intermittent motion of the gate and back to the constant motion of the take-up spool. Another type of "loop" is described below.

Looping

In recording of dialogue, the film is on a "loop" which allows the actor multiple attempts to match the lip movements that have been filmed.

Luminance

The monochrome portion of a video signal.

M

Macguffin

Term used by Alfred Hitchcock to refer to an item, event, or piece of knowledge that the characters in a film consider extremely important, but which the audience either doesn't know of or doesn't care about.

Macro Lens

Lens used for extreme close-ups. Used widely in nature photography where the subject (for example) might be a flower or insect.

Mag

Abbreviation for either a "Magazine" or "Mag Stock/Track."

Mag Stock (or) Mag Track

Film that has a coating of magnetic oxide emulsion which is used for sound recording.

Magazine

Light resistant chamber that is attached to the camera which can hold up to 1000ft of film.

Magnetic Soundtrack

Composite print in which the soundtrack is recorded on the attached strip of magnetic tape.

Majors

Major Hollywood movie producer/distributor studios (MGM/UA, 20th Century Fox, Sony Pictures, Warner Bros, Paramount Pictures, Universal, and Disney).

Mark

AKA "Sync Mark." The point where the clapsticks come together at the start of a shot. Another type of "mark" is simply a piece of tape on the floor telling the actor where he/she should be standing.

Master Shot

Wide shot that incorporates the entire scene from start to end.

Match Cut

A transition from one scene to another matching the same, or a similar subject within the frame

Match Frame Cut

An edit in which the source and record tapes pick up exactly where they left off.

Materials Contract

Contract for representation by an agency with regard to the sale of a work that the writer has created on his own, in a situation where the writer was not hired to create the work.

Matte Artist

Individual who creates artwork (usually for the background of a shot) which is included in the movie either via a matte shot or optical printing.

Matte Shot

Photographic technique whereby artwork - usually on glass - from a matte artist is combined with live action.

Medium Shot (MS)

A camera angle often used to describe a shot of character from the waist up.

Method Acting

Style of acting formalized by Konstantin Stanislavsky which requires actors to draw experiences from their own personal lives that correlate to the character they are playing.

Microphone

Device which converts sound into electrical impulses, usually for recording or amplification.

Minimum Basic Agreement

Fees and basic working conditions for the employment of writers within the entertainment industry as negotiated and set forth by the Writers Guild of America.

Mini-Series

Television series with a set number of episodes which tell a complete story, usually filmed at the same time.

Mise-en-scene

Literally translated as "what's put into the scene", this is the sum total of all factors affecting the artistic "look" or "feel" of a shot or scene.

Mix

Process of blending the various soundtracks into a single track. .

Mixer

(1) Device which blends together sounds from various sources and (2) the individual(s) who controls the mixing board.

M.O.S.

Abbreviation for "Mute Out Sound" in which a sequence of film is shot without sound and then added later.

Monitor

Video display similar to a TV, but having superior visual quality and without a tuner.

Montage

A rapid succession of shots, through the use of visual editing, which creates the artistic look of a scene.

Motion Blur

Shots of objects that quickly move in the camera's frame, and/or shots with a slow shutter speed are likely to produce a smearing effect, since the object is in a range of positions during a single exposure.

Motion Capture

Animation technique in which the actions of an animated object are derived automatically from the motion of a real-world actor or object.

Motion Picture Association

Association that serves as the voice and advocate of the American motion picture, home video and television industries, domestically through the MPAA and internationally through the MPA.

Motion Picture Editors Guild

Professional organization for editors.

Moviola

Company that makes editing beds of the same name.

Moviscop

Small 16mm table-top viewer used on an editing bench.

Multimedia

Creation of products, mainly software, that may involve the combination of written text, visual imagery, film, and/or music.

Music Editor

Individual who performs editing on the score of a movie.

Music Supervisor

Individual who coordinates the work of the composer, the editor, and sound mixers.

Musical

Production whose dramatic story structure includes unrealistic episodes of musical performance and/or dancing.

N

NC-17: No One 17 and Under Admitted

A certificate issued by the MPAA indicating that no person aged 17 or under will be allowed to attend a screening of the movie. This category was formerly called "X", but many people's mistaken association of "X" films with XXX films caused the MPAA to change this on September 27, 1990.

N.T.S.C. (National Television Standards Committee)

Created the first international television system for use in the U.S. and other countries which produces pictures by creating 525 alternating lines across the TV screen for each frame of video.

Negative

The original film that is used in the camera from which a positive print is made for editing purposes.

Negative Cost

Cost of a movie through the production of a finished negative, not including the costs of prints, advertising, or distribution.

Negative Cutter

Individual who matches the negative of a movie and conforms (matches) it to the final version of the film as decided by the filmmakers.

Net Profits

(1) Participation based on 100 percent of net profits: The sums remaining after a full recoupment and deduction of distribution fees and costs, and after payment of deferments, but with no deduction for other net profit participants.

(2) Participation based on a percentage of the producer's net share: The sums remaining after full recoupment, payment of deferments, if any, and thereafter deducting continuing distribution costs and fees, from which another portion (as much as 50 percent) may be retained by the studio or financing entity as compensation for supplying financing and completion advances.

Non-Drop Frame

Type of SMPTE time code that continuously counts a full 30 frames per second.

Non-Linear Editing

The computer-assisted editing of a movie without the need to assemble it in linear sequence.

Non-Reflex

Camera with a viewfinder that shows the image through a secondary lens.

Non-WGA

Written work for the entertainment industry that is done for a company which has not signed (or become a signatory) to the Writers Guild of America Minimum Basic Agreement.

Normal Lens

25mm lens (for 16mm cameras) and 50mm lens (for 35mm cameras).

Nose Room

Space between the subject's face and the edge of the frame (when the subject is in a profile position).
Generally, 2/3rds in front and 1/3rd behind.

NTSC

The standard for TV/video display in the US and Canada.

O

Offline

Creative editing process which uses copies of the camera tapes on a typically "cuts only" inexpensive editing system.

One Hundred Eighty Degree Rule (180° Rule)

An invisible line that separates the subject and the camera. Crossing over this imaginary line creates a jump which gives the appearance that the subject has reversed directions.

One Light

A print that has not been corrected showing what the shots will look like with the same print lighting.

Online

The final technical editing process which uses the original camera tapes to repeat all decisions made in the off-line editing process.

Optical Printer

Laboratory machine for combining the images of one or more reels of film through photographic techniques.

Optical Soundtrack

Composite print in which the soundtrack is recorded via the varying width of a transparent track which runs beside the sequence of frames on a print.

Option

Agreement of renting the rights to a script for a specific period of time.

Off Screen (o.s.)

Dialogue or sounds heard while the camera is on another subject.

Out-Take

A take of a scene not used in a movie.

Overcranking

Process of speeding the frame rate of a camera up, so that when the captured pictures are played at the normal frame rate the action appears to be in slow motion.

Overexposure

Filmming a scene using more lighting than the film stock can tolerate.

Oxide

Magnetic coating on video and audio tapes that stores picture and sound information.

P

PAL (Phase Alternation by Line)

A standard for TV/video display popular in Europe and Australia; superior to NTSC.

Packaging

Process of putting together on the same project a writer or screenplay, director, producer, and star talent, all of whom are generally represented by the same agency, and presenting this package to a studio.

Pan

The action of rotating a camera about its vertical axis.

Pan and Scan

The technique of chopping off strips from one or both sides of a picture so it will be properly displayed on a TV screen.

Perf (or) Perforation

Sprocket holes in a piece of film which help thread it through the camera or projector.

Pickups

Movies made by one studio that have been acquired by another.

Pilottone

60hz (50hz in Europe) reference signal, used in sync sounding, which is recorded onto the audio portion of the tape.

Pipeline

A schedule of movie projects in production.

Pitch

Meeting in which one party will attempt to interest another party in a particular work or in a version of a particular work by presenting the story of the work in such an exciting manner that the buying party will find great interest in the work and will either buy the work or pay the "pitching" party to write the work.

Pixelation

A variant of stop-motion animation where actors are the objects being filmed.

Point of View (or) POV

Camera angle in which the camera views a subjective shot from the actor's point of view.

Polish

The writing of changes in dialogue, narration, or action, but not including a rewrite.

Post-Production

Work performed on a movie after the end of principal photography.

Pre-Production

Arrangements made before the start of filming; script editing, set construction, location scouting, and casting.

Premiere

The first official public screening of a movie, marking the opening.

Premise

The basic idea for a story often taking the form of a question or a problem.

Prequel

Movie that presents the characters and/or events chronologically before the setting of a previously filmed movie.

Preroll

5 to 7 seconds of camera running time before a shot can be used. In editing, this refers to a similar amount of automatic backspacing the edit decks perform to insure a stable edit.

Pressure Plate

Spring load plate which holds the film steady on the film plane while its being exposed.

Prime Lens

Simply, the opposite of a "zoom lens." It's a fixed focal length lens which can be normal, wide, or telephoto.

Principal Photography

The filming of major or significant components of a movie which involve lead actors.

Print

Projectable version of a movie, usually consisting of one or more reels.

Producer (Film)

The chief of a movie production in all matters save the creative efforts of the director; raising funding, hiring key personnel, and arranging for distributors.

Producer (TV)

Usually a current or former writer who has successfully written for a number of years as a staff member on a show and is now responsible for the creative aspects of the show.

Production Assistant

Individual responsible for various odd jobs, such as stopping traffic, acting as couriers, fetching items from craft service, etc.

Production Bonus

Cash bonus given to the writer of a screenplay who receives shared or sole "Screenplay by" or "Written by" credit when the screenplay is turned into a film.

Production Buyer

Individual who purchases supplies, equipment, and property necessary for a production.

Production Company

Company headed by a producer, director, actor/actress, or writer for the purpose of creating general entertainment products such as motion pictures, television shows, infomercials, commercials, and multimedia.

Production Date

Refers to the phase of movie making during which principal photography occurs.

Production Designer

Artist responsible for designing the overall visual appearance of a movie.

Production Illustrator

Individual responsible for drawing the storyboards and anything else that needs to be drawn during the production of the movie.

Production Manager

Individual responsible for the practical matters such as ordering equipment, getting near-location accommodations for the cast and crew, etc.

Production Schedule

Detailed plan of the timing of activities associated with the making of a movie, of particular interest to production managers.

Prompter

Individual who supplies actors with the correct lines from the script if they forget.

Prop

Object on the set used by an actor, e.g. phones, guns, cutlery, etc.

Property Master

Individual responsible for buying/acquiring any props needed for a production.

Protection Master

A high quality copy of the master tape.

Public Domain

The state in which the creator of a work loses the copyright on it through the passage of the copyright period, failure to renew the work, or problems with the original registration of the work with the copyright office.

Publicity Department

The section of a production's crew responsible for promoting a movie.

Pull Down

The transfer of sound slowed from 24fps (film) to 30fps (video) which is required to sync the sound correctly when transferring film to video.

Pulldown Claw

Mechanism within the camera that advances the film stock from one frame to the next while the shutter is closed.

Push Processing

Type of film processing when the film is developed for a longer period of time. This is called "pushing the film," so an underexposed roll (or scene) can be adjusted.

Q

Quartz Light

AKA "tungsten" or "halogen" light. Hot/bright light (3200K) which uses a tungsten filament in a quartz container. This type of light can be quite "explosive" so take care never to touch bulb with bare hands. Always use gloves or some type of rag/cloth.

Quick Release

Device that assists in the quick mount/dismount of a camera from its tripod.

R

Rack Focus

Changing (racking) the focus on the focus ring while shooting.

Raw Footage

Exposed film that has yet to see any type of editing.

Raw Stock

Film stock that is unexposed.

Reaction Shot

Shot of a person reacting to dialogue or action.

Reader

Individual who reads scripts and writes down synopsis of the plotline, offering positive or negative comments (the process is called "providing coverage"), which assist studio execs or interested parties if script is worthwhile.

Reading Period

Period after a writer has been hired to write an assignment that a hiring body will review. This body will give suggestions and decide whether to pick up the option to have the writer produce further work.

Recans

Leftover (unexposed) film in a magazine that is still good to use.

Recoupment

Gross funds from a film that are required to pay off negative costs, overhead, ongoing distribution fees, interest, financing and distribution costs, and, in appropriate cases, payment of gross participations.

Reel

(1) Sample of filmmaker's projects (much like a resume).
(2) Metallic (or plastic) spool which is used for holding film during editing (or projection).

Reflective Light Reading

Another type of light reading that differs from "Incident LR." This type of reading is the measurement of light that is bouncing off the subject.

Reflex

Viewfinding system in which the view finder uses the same lens that is used to shoot the image.

Release Form

Statement signed by an individual that generally frees the creator of the document from any kind of liability.

Release Print

Print made after the "answer print" has been agreed upon. This is the copy of the film that is distributed to theatrical houses for public presentation.

Re-recording Mixer

Member of the sound crew responsible for mixing the final sound elements (dialogue, music, sound effects and foley).

Reversal

Type of film and film processing which generates a positive original print.

Reverse Shot

Shot from the opposite side of the prior shot. (Example: a conversation between two actors).

Rewrite

More than a polish, this is considered the writing of significant changes in plot, story line, or interrelationship of characters in a screenplay.

Rider W

Provision of the Artists/Managers Basic Agreement of the Writers Guild of America in which the contract between WGA members and signatory agencies has been pre-negotiated.

Ripple

Automatic updating of an Edit Decision List after making a change to the list.

Rising Action

Notion of dramatic rhythm in which events in a story build upon one another with increasing momentum.

Roll

Credit rolls consist of video text moving vertically up or down the screen, usually from bottom to top.

Room Tone

A recording of the natural ambient "silence" in a set/location for the sound editor, who will use it as a reference point, or for when silence is required.

Rotoscoping

Animation technique in which images of live action are traced, either manually or automatically.

Rough Cut

Edited film between an assembly cut and a fine cut.

Rushes

AKA "Dailies." This is the unedited workprint, direct from the lab, that is scrutinized to see how the shoot came out.

S

Safe Area

Area beyond the "live area" of a camera's viewfinder that the camera operator might direct the boom operator to place the boom microphone.

Safety

A "back-up" take done after a successful one has been shot.

Sample Reel

Contains samples of a person's or company's best video work for the purposes of marketing; a.k.a. demo reel.

Sample Script

Script a writer has created on his own initiative and used to attain meetings for the writer in order to expose him to the entertainment industry.

Scale

Writing for payment on the minimum rates set forth in the Writers Guild of America Minimum Basic Agreement. Basic rate is scale plus 10 percent in order to include the commission that the writer's agent will receive.

Scene

Continuous block of storytelling either set in a single location or following a particular character.

Scene Cards

Method used by some writers to outline their script by describing each scene on an index card, then arranging and rearranging them to work out the story structure.

Score

The musical component of a movie's soundtrack.

Scratch Track

Sync recording which is created for a reference for the sound editor (or the actors who must re-record dialogue).

Screen Actors Guild (SAG)

Union guild for screen and television talent.

Screen Story

Credit given to a writer who has written a screenplay based on another writer's work but has used the other writer's work only as a springboard, a characterization, an incident, or some equally limited contribution, creating a story that is substantially new and different from the other writer's work.

Screen Test

Form of audition in which an actor performs a particular role on camera, not necessarily with the correct make-up or on the set.

Screening

Exhibition of a movie, typically at a cinema.

Screenplay

A script written to be produced as a movie. Normally between 90-120 pp.

Screenwriter

A writer who either adapts an existing work for production as a movie, or creates a new screenplay.

Script

A written work detailing story, setting, and dialogue. A script may take the form of a screenplay, shooting script, lined script, continuity script, or a spec script.

Script Editing

Process whereby a script is reviewed and changed, based on input from various sources such as the director or producer.

Script Supervisor

Individual who tracks which parts have been filmed, how the filmed scenes deviated from the script; they also make continuity notes, creating a lined script.

SECAM (Systeme Electronique Pour Colour Avec Memorie)

The color television system developed/used in France as well as in other parts of eastern Europe & Africa.

Second Assistant Camera

An assistant to the assistant cameraman.

Second Assistant Director

Assistant to the assistant director whose duties include overseeing the movements of the cast, and preparing call sheets.

Second Second Assistant Director

Assistant to the second assistant director; responsible for (among other things) directing the movements of extras.

Second Unit

Small, subordinate crew responsible for filming shots of less importance, such as inserts, crowds, scenery, etc.

Selects

The "selected" shots that are going to be used in editing which are separated from the remaining footage.

Seperation of Rights

Rights given to the creator of an original written material. Includes: publication, audio, live stage, live dramatic tape, live television, radio, and writer sequels and remakes.

Sequel

Movie that presents the continuation of characters and/or events of a previously filmed movie.

Serial

A multi-part film that usually screened a chapter each week at a cinema.

Series

Sequence of films with continuing characters or themes, but with little other interdependence, especially with respect to plot or significant character development.

Services Contract

Contract that a writer-client signs with an agency for representation in order to receive writing assignments.

Set

An artificial environment which is constructed to make filming easier but still appear natural when viewed from the camera angle.

Set Designer

Individual responsible for translating a production designer's vision of the movie's environment into a set which can be used for filming.

Set Up

Term describing both the function of the first act in posing of the problem which the story will try to resolve, and in a more general way, the process of laying the groundwork for a dramatic or comic situation which will later be complicated, and then resolved or paid off.

Shooting Ratio

Ratio of the film shot compared to the actual running time. (Example: Ten hours of footage for a 1 hour film would have a 10:1 shooting ratio).

Shooting Schedule

Production schedule for shooting a film with the scenes from a script grouped together and ordered with production considerations in mind.

Shooting Script

Script from which a movie is made which contains that includes scene numbers, camera angles, inserts, and certain directors/cinematographers input.

Short Subject/ Short

Movie that is shorter than 60 minutes.

Shot

Continuous block of unedited footage from a single point of view.

Shot Composition

Arrangement of key elements within the frame.

Shotgun Mic

Highly directional microphone that may be hand-held or mounted on a boom.

Shutter Speed

Length of time that a single frame is exposed for.

Silent Film

Film that has no synchronized soundtrack and no spoken dialogue.

Silent Speed

Rate for silent films is 18fps.

Single Perf

Film stock that has only one row of perforations along its edge.

Situation Comedy

Comedy in which humor is derived from people being placed in uncomfortable, embarrassing, or unfamiliar situations.

Slapstick Comedy

Comedy in which the humor is derived from physical interactions, often involving exaggerated but ultimately harmless violence directed towards individuals.

Slate

Small blackboard (chalkboard) used to record the scene number of a specific shoot. Usually has a clapstick attached at the top which is "clapped" to create a sync mark.

Slow Motion

Shot which in which time appears to move more slowly than normal.

Slug Line/Slug

A header appearing in a script before each scene or shot detailing the location, date, and time that the following action is intended to occur in.

Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE)

Technical society devoted to advancing the theory and application of motion-imaging technology including film, television, video, computer imaging, and telecommunications.

Softlight

Light which is diffused and creates very soft shadows .

Sound Crew

Group of crew members directly involved with creating of a movie's soundtrack: sound designer, sound editor, sound effects, sound mixer, sound recordist, boom operator, re-recording mixer, music supervisor, and foley artist.

Sound Designer

The conceptual chief of a movie's soundtrack, responsible for designing and creating the audio component of a movie.

Sound Editor

Member of the sound crew who performs editing on the soundtrack. See also dialog editor.

Sound Effects

Sounds added during post-production by the sound crew.

Sound Mix

Process of re-recording multiple reels of track to produce one final soundtrack, which includes all dialogue, "looped" dialogue (ADR), music, sound effects and foley, and narration (if any), for each reel of picture.

Sound Recordist

Member of the sound crew responsible for operating the audio recording equipment on a set.

Soundstage

Large studio area where elaborate sets may be constructed.

Soundtrack

The audio component of a movie.

Speaking Role

A role is one in which the character speaks scripted dialogue in contrast to a "non-speaking role" where the character is specifically mentioned in the script but who doesn't have any lines of dialogue in the finished film.

Spec Script

Script written before any agreement has been entered into ("on spec" or speculation), in hopes of selling the script to the highest bidder once it has been completed.

Special Effects (SFX)

Artificial effect used to create an illusion in a movie.

Special Effects Supervisor

Chief of a production's special effects crew.

Speed

Term shouted out during the beginning of a shot by the cameraman or sound recordist to let crew know that the camera is rolling.

Spherical

Optical system which in which the magnifications in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the picture are the same.

Split Screen

Matte shot that is divided down the center creating two (or more) images at the same time.

Splice

Editing technique of joining two separate pieces of film together (using tape or cement) to create a continuous piece.

Squib

Small explosive device, which when detonated, will simulate the effect of a bullet/puncture wound or small explosion.

Stand-In

Individual who has the same physical properties of a particular actor, and takes their place during the lengthy setup of a scene.

Steadicam

Camera attached to a camera operator via a mechanical harness which reduces or eliminates the unsteadiness of the operator's motion.

Step Outline

Method used by some writers to outline their story by numbering the major scenes and the order in which they occur.

Still Photographer

Individual who photographs the action (often alongside the camera) to be used in publicizing the movie.

Stock Footage

Footage from other films that are used in a production.

Stop Motion

Form of animation in which objects are filmed frame-by-frame and altered slightly in between each frame.

Storyboard

Sequence of pictures created by a production illustrator to communicate the desired general visual appearance on camera of a scene or movie.

Stunt Coordinator

Individual who arranges and plans stunts.

Stunt Double

Stunt performer who specifically takes the part of another actor for a stunt.

Subplot

Also called the "B Story," the subplot is used in various ways, weaving in and out of the main action.

Subtitles

Words which are superimposed over a film which mirror the dialog that is heard at the time.

Super 16

16mm film on which a wider image is exposed. Used mainly when planning to blow up the film to 35mm.

Surround Sound

Sound system which creates the illusion of multi-directional sound through speaker placement and signal processing.

SVHS

Video format developed by JVC which has largely replaced the 3/4 inch format for low budget productions.

Sweetening

Audio post-production where audio is corrected and enhanced.

Swing Gang

Group within the art department that construct and take down a set.

Switcher

Device with a series of video inputs that permits one or more selected inputs to be combined, manipulated and sent out on the program line or edit VCR.

Sync

The degree in which a picture and accompanying sound are lined up together.

Sync Sound

The sound (usually dialogue) that is actually recorded via a crystal or cable sync during filming. Not to be confused with room tone, sound effects, or other non-diagetic sound.

Syncing

Process of which the film and sound are lined up before editing them together.

Synopsis

Summary of a story told in present tense.

T

T-Stop

Used to measure the actual amount of light that is striking the film in a hselect lens; such as a zoom lens. The "t-stop" is in red on the aperture ring. It is not to be confused with "f-stop" (which is a mathematically measurement) and is in white on the aperture ring.

Talent

Informal term for actors and extras.

Take

Different version of the same shot.

Take Up Reel (or) Spool

Empty reel which gathers the film as it passes through the projector. Similarly, an empty spool that does the same task as it passes through the camera.

Technical Advisor

Individual with expertise in a particular field who provides advice for the production.

Telecine

Device for transferring motion picture film to video tape.

Teleplay

Script written to be produced for television whose length is 42-48 long for a standard one hour TV show, often structured in the teaser/4-acts/tag format. A 1/2 hour sitcom has an average page count of 45-50 pp double spaced and usually consist of 2 acts with 4-6 scenes per act.

Telewriter

Writer who either adapts an existing work for production on television, or creates a new teleplay.

Three-Act Structure

Traditional storytelling sequence which includes (1) the set-up, (2) the complication, and (3) the resolution.

Three-Camera Format/Set-Up

Standard video-studio setup which utilizes three different cameras.

THX

Subdivision of Lucasfilm, Ltd. that is dedicated to improving picture and sound for the cinema and the home.

Tilt

Rotating the camera either up or down.

Time Base Corrector/TBC

Device to correct timing errors which can cause unstable edits. These errors are caused by the slight mechanical defects inherent in the playback of video tape machines.

Time Code

System of numbering each frame of video with a unique address divided into hours, minutes, seconds and frames.

Time Lapse Photography

Form of animation in which numerous single frames are filmed spaced at a given interval to show a process that would take a very long time to occur.

Timing

Process in which a lab renders the proper exposure and color when creating a print. The brightness of the timing lights (or lamps) can be controlled and have a range from (1) the darkest to (50) the brightest.

Timing Report

Report produced by the lab which lists the timing lights (or printing lights) that was used in processing a print.

Title Design

The manner in which title of a movie is displayed on screen is widely considered an art form.

Track

Single component or channel of a soundtrack.

Tracking Shot

The action of moving a camera along a path parallel to the path of the object being filmed.

Trades

Newspapers that report the daily or weekly entertainment news of the entertainment industry; The Hollywood Reporter, Daily Variety, and Weekly Variety.

Trailer

Advertisement for a movie which contains scenes from the film.

Transportation Co-Ordinator/Manager

Individual responsible for managing drivers and coordinating the transportation of a production's cast, crew, and equipment from the various locations and sets used for filming.

Travelling Matte Shot

Shot in which foreground action is superimposed on a separately filmed background by optical printing or digital compositing.

Treatment

A movie in prose form, anywhere from 15-60pp, which details a blow-by-blow summary of the story (important details of each scene, action, and character) told in present tense and generally with no dialogue.

Trims

Outtakes of only a few frames.

Trucking Shot

A camera move which films the subject from side to side.

Tungsten

Color temperature of artificial light (3200K). Tungsten balanced film is to be used for indoor shooting and if used outdoors (w/o a filter) will give the exposed image a light blue hue.

Type C

SMPTE standard for 1-inch non-segmented helical video recording format.

U

U-Matic

Trade name for the 3/4 inch video format developed by Sony.

Undercranking

Process of slowing the frame rate of a camera down, so that when the captured pictures are played at the normal frame rate the action appears to be in fast motion.

Underexposure

Shooting a scene in which there is not enough light for the film stock's emulsion to handle creating a darker image than desired.

Underscan

Video monitor that can reduce the size of the video image so the four outer frame edges can be viewed in their entirety.

Unit Production Manager

Executive who is responsible to a senior producer for the administration of a particular movie.

Upright

Editing machine (Upright Moviola) which has arms in the back to hold the take up and supply reels.

V

Vectorscope

An oscilloscope designed to monitor and tweak the color portion of the video signal.

Vertical Interval

Indicates the vertical blanking period between each video field which contains additional scan lines above the active picture area into which non-picture information (captioning, copy protection and other control signals) may be embedded.

Vertical Sync

Synchronizing pulses used to define the end of one television field and the start of the next, occurring at a rate of approximately 59.94 Hz.

Video Toaster

Software/hardware developed by NewTek for the Amiga Computer which produces affordable special effects.

Videographer

Video photographer who specializes in events like weddings.

Visual Effects

Alterations to a film's images during post-production.

V.I.T.C. (Vertical Interval Time Code)

Type of time code is recorded in the vertical blanking interval above the active picture area.

Voice-Over (V.O.)

Indicates that dialog will be heard on a movie's soundtrack, but the speaker will not be shown. The abbreviation is often used as an annotation in a script.

W

Wardrobe Department

Section of a production's crew concerned with costumes: costume designer, costumer, and costume supervisor.

Waveform Monitor

Oscilloscope designed for monitoring and adjusting luminance and all other parts of the composite video signal.

Whip Pan

Extremely fast pan, incorporating much motion blur.

White Balance

A color camera function which determines how much red, green and blue is required to produce a normal-looking white.

Wide Lens

In 16mm, a lens smaller than 25mm. In 35m, a lens smaller than 50mm.

Widescreen

Movie which has an aspect ratio which is greater than academy ratio when projected.

Wild Sound

Non-sync sound that is recorded when the camera isn't running.

Window Dub

A copy of the original camera tape with time code numbers visually displayed; also called a "burn in."

Wipe

Editing technique in which images from one shot are fully replaced by the images of another, delimited by a definite border that moves across or around the frame.

Work Print

Positive copy of the original negative.

Working Title

Name by which a movie is known while it is being made.

Wrangler

Individual who is responsible for the care and control of entities used on a set that can't be spoken with.

Wrap

To finish shooting, either for the day or the entire production.

Writer's Guild of America (WGA)

Association that represents the writers in the motion picture, broadcast, cable, interactive and new media industries.

Writing Period

The time during which a writer is to complete his work. During this time the writer's services are generally exclusive to the production that has hired him.

Written by

The credit given when one or several writers have created both the story and the screenplay, and there is no source material. The credit is also given in television if the writer has created both the story and the teleplay.

X

Xenon

Extremely bright (5400K) daylight-balanced projection lamp.

Z

Zoom

Shot in which the magnification of the objects by the camera's lenses is increased (zoom in) or decreased (zoom out/back).

Zoom Lens

Unlike a fixed-focal lens (which has one setting), this lens has variable settings which allows the focal length to have a range from wide to long.