

JUMP CUT

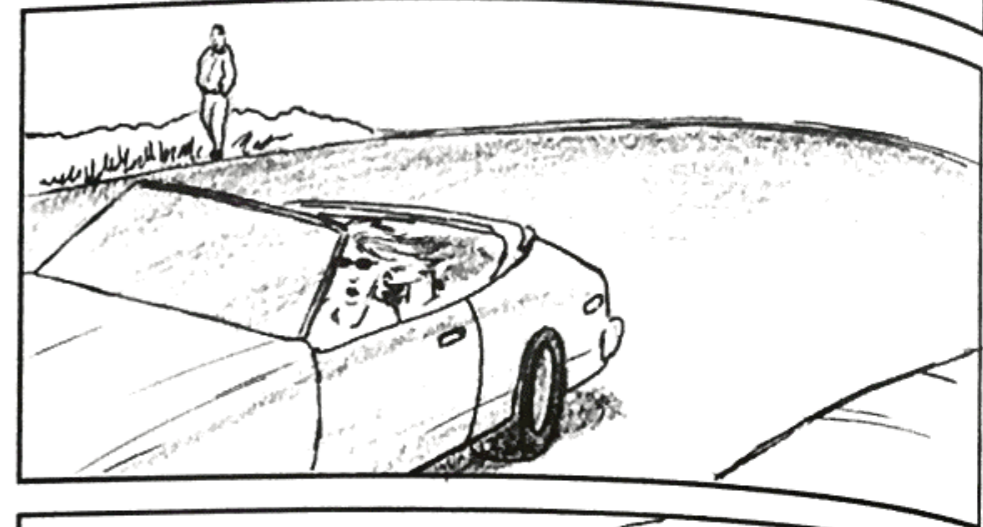
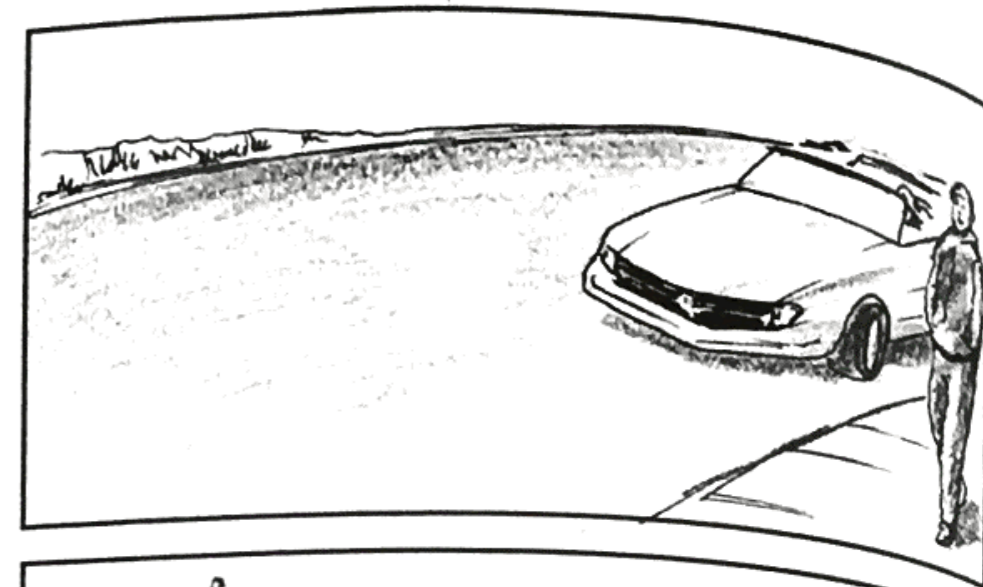
What does it look like?

In most films, directors and editors do their best to hide cuts from us. They cut when an action occurs, cut when a character's eyes move, and use cutaways (see the Cutaway technique). Another technique is to make sure the angle and distance change significantly for each cut. This keeps the audience from noticing "jitters" in the scene.

Directors don't have to make a cut transparent; they can use a *Jump Cut*— any cut that isn't seamless. For example, if a character in a scene suddenly jumps from one part of the screen to the other without moving there, the audience will take notice to this *Jump Cut*.

Where can I see it?

In Breaking the Waves, many subtle jumps in space and time are used as *Jump Cuts*. In Godard's Breathless, jumps in time and space are made during the dialogue.



Jump Cuts

MATCH CUT

What does it look like?

A *Match Cut* is the antithesis of a jump cut. Instead of making us sit up and take notice when a cut occurs, *Match Cut* is used to make the transition from one image to another as seamless as possible.

The most common way to do this is to cut on the action. When an action is started in one frame, the camera cuts, and then the action is finished in the second frame. Because the audience is paying more attention to the action than they are to the cutting of the film, this cut can become almost transparent.

Another way to do this is to cut on a look. When an actor shifts his eyes to look at something, the camera cuts to a new image. This is a very natural transition because we experience the scene through the character's eyes. It is natural for us to see something new as the character looks around.

A *Match Cut* can be improved by changing the distance and angle for each cut to avoid "jitters" in a scene.



Match Cut

SUBLIMINAL CUT

What does it look like?

A *Subliminal Cut* is a cut that happens very quickly. The film cuts from the first image to a new, impact image, and then cuts back again. The new image lasts only a few frames, and the audience gets only a very brief glimpse of it.

This technique works like a subliminal message, activating something in the viewer's subconscious, but not necessarily registering at a conscious level.

Where can I see it?

In *The Exorcist*, Father Karras sees the face of death as a *Subliminal Cut* after his mother's death. In *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *Subliminal Cuts* are used to show but not reveal a bloody murder scene. In *The Bride Wore Black*, the camera *Subliminal Cuts* to Julie as she arrives at the doorway of her second victim's apartment.

In *The Graduate*, *Subliminal Cuts* are used as Mrs. Robinson attempts to seduce Benjamin with her body. In *Easy Rider*, many *Subliminal Cuts* are used as the riders are attacked in their sleep.



Subliminal Cut

CROSS CUT

What does it look like?

A *Cross Cut* cuts back and forth between separate scenes that are occurring in different places, usually at the same time. The camera alternates between multiple perspectives to show us the relationship between the scenes, increasing the drama of the events. *Cross Cuts* are often used to build tension and suspense.

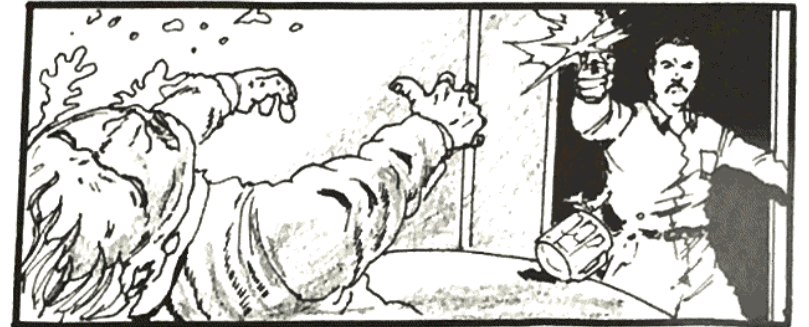
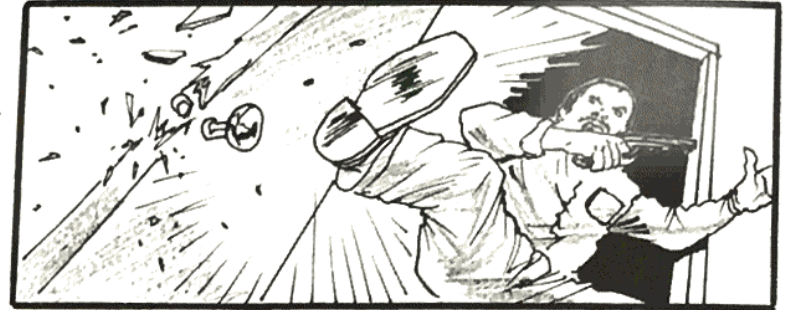
An interesting way of stylizing *Cross Cuts* is to vary the camera speed in one of the scenes. One can be shot in slow motion while the other scene is filmed in real time. This makes the *Cross Cuts* more dramatic and interesting.

Where can I see it?

In *A Better Tomorrow*, John Woo cuts back and forth between the image of an assassin approaching his victims in slow motion and the victims sitting obliviously at a table in real time. Many gunfight sequences cut back and forth between the warring factions as they fight.

In *Rocky*, *Cross Cuts* contrast the training styles of Rocky and Apollo Creed. In *Batman*, the camera cuts between the Joker dancing and Batman fighting. In *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, the camera *Cross Cuts* between soldiers marching, Clint Eastwood assembling his gun, and assassins approaching.

CROSS CUT



Cross Cuts

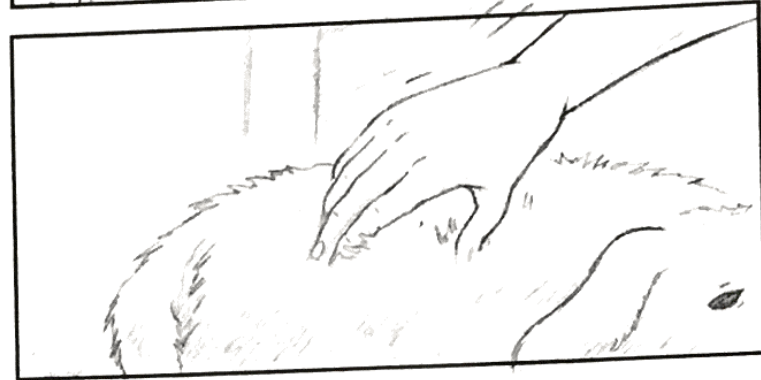
CUTAWAY

What does it look like?

A *Cutaway* is used in the film editing process to hide mistakes or to focus on interesting objects. This technique is simply a cut away from the main scene to an object within the scene—a prop for example. This object can be used as a “glue” to cut together two sequences that don’t splice together smoothly.

The editor can compose the film in this order: Sequence 1, *Cutaway*, Sequence 2. Because the camera cuts away to an intermediate object, we don’t notice the awkward transition between the two sequences.

A *Cutaway* can also emphasize images, objects, and characters within a scene.



Cutaway

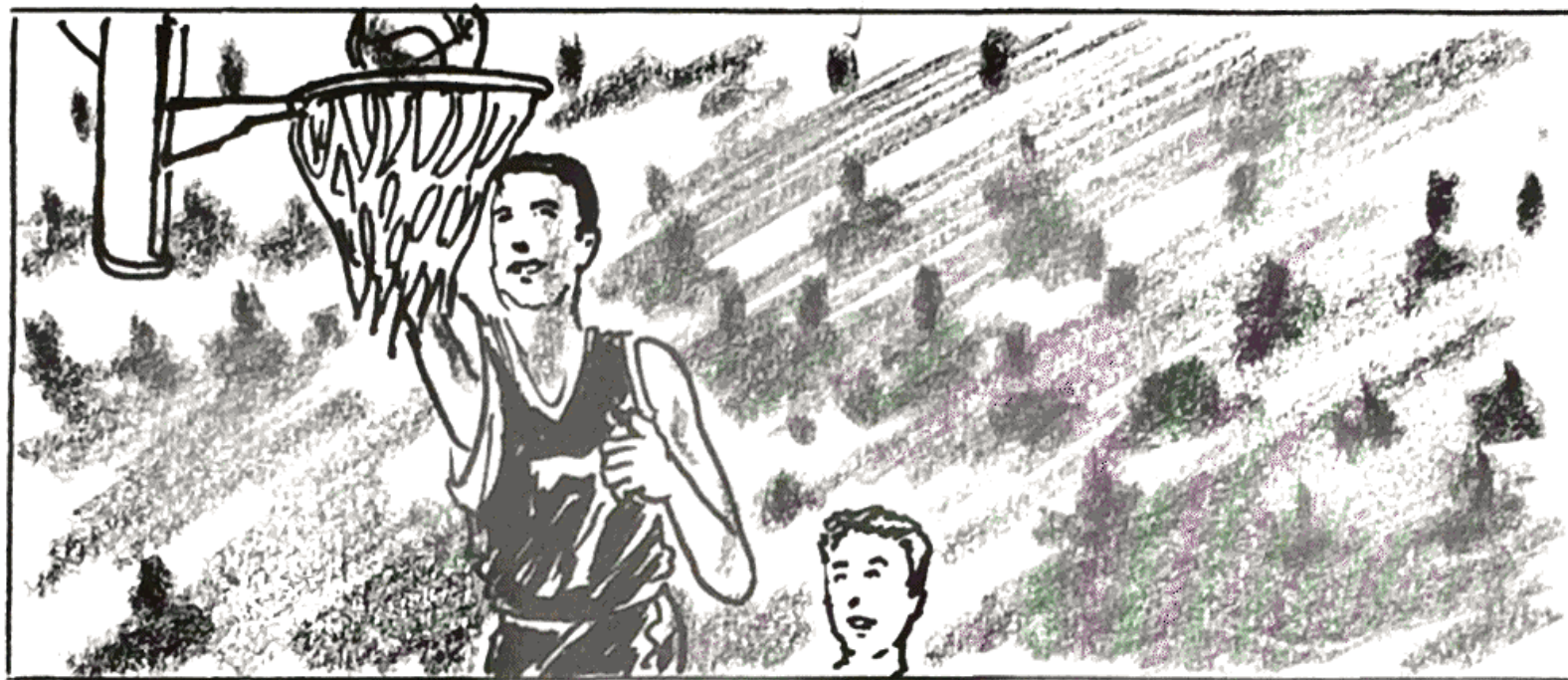
FREEZE FRAME

What does it look like?

Quite simply, a *Freeze Frame* is a single frame of film played continuously to create the effect of a frozen image. The most frequent use of this technique is to end films on an enigmatic or emotional note.

Where can I see it?

Freeze Frames are used to end Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Wild Bunch and Rocky. La Jetée is a film that is composed almost entirely of photographic *Freeze Frames*. In Goodfellas, Strictly Ballroom, and Out of Sight, *Freeze Frames* are occasionally mixed in for effect.



Freeze Frame

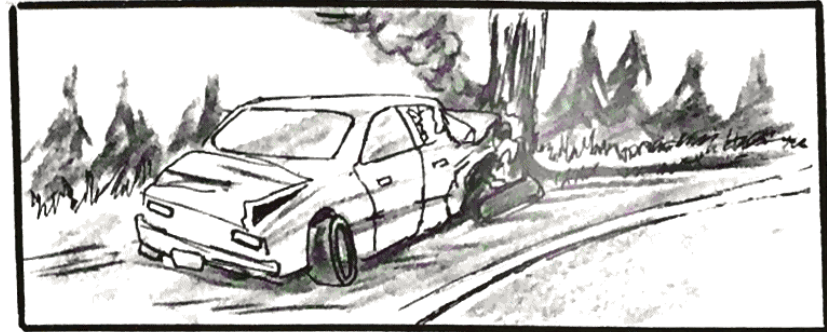
LOOK AT

What does it look like?

Look At starts with an actor looking towards something offscreen. The camera then cuts to the object that is being looked at. The camera may then cut back to the actor for a reaction shot.

Look At illustrates an interesting aspect of film montage. While the actor and the object being looked at may be filmed hundreds of miles away from each other, the audience perceives the two elements as existing within the same physical space.

The order of the elements for this technique is very significant. By switching the reaction shot and the look shot, the emotional meaning of the scene is changed. For example: we first see a man driving along, and he looks happily out his window. The camera cuts to a devastating wreck on the side of the road and then cuts back to the driver to show his sympathetic reaction. If we reverse the order of the sequence, we end up with a man who is very sad until he sees a brutal car crash, and that makes him happy. This kind of association might give the audience the idea that the driver enjoys other peoples' pain. This is interesting because the footage didn't change— just the order in which it was presented.



Look At

MULTI-TAKE

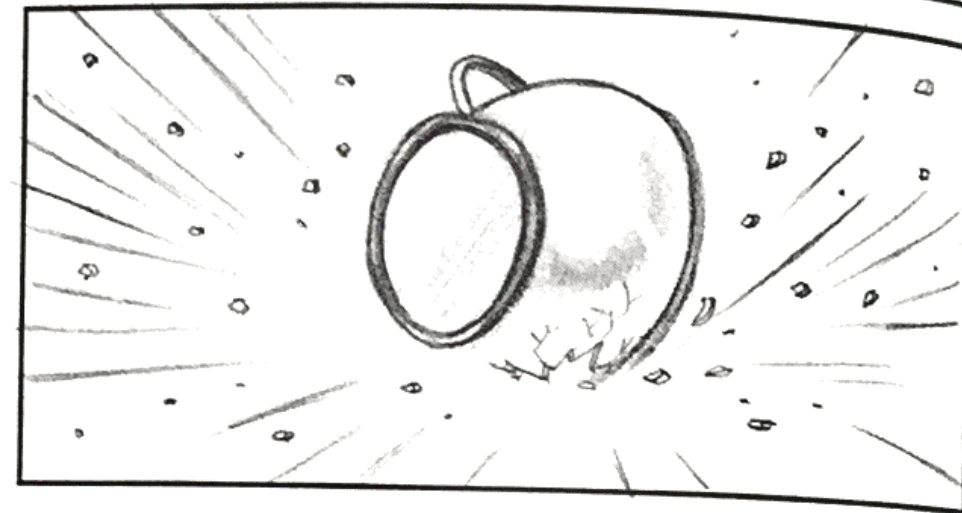
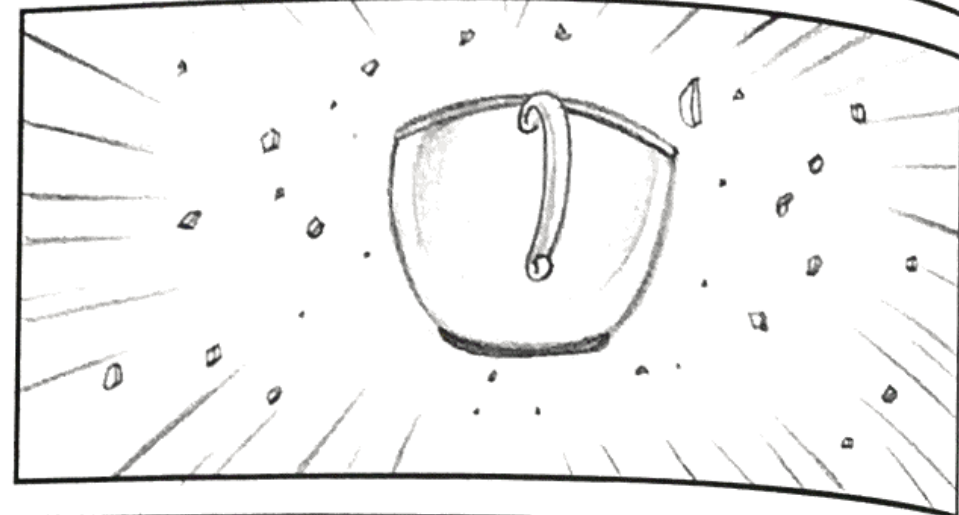
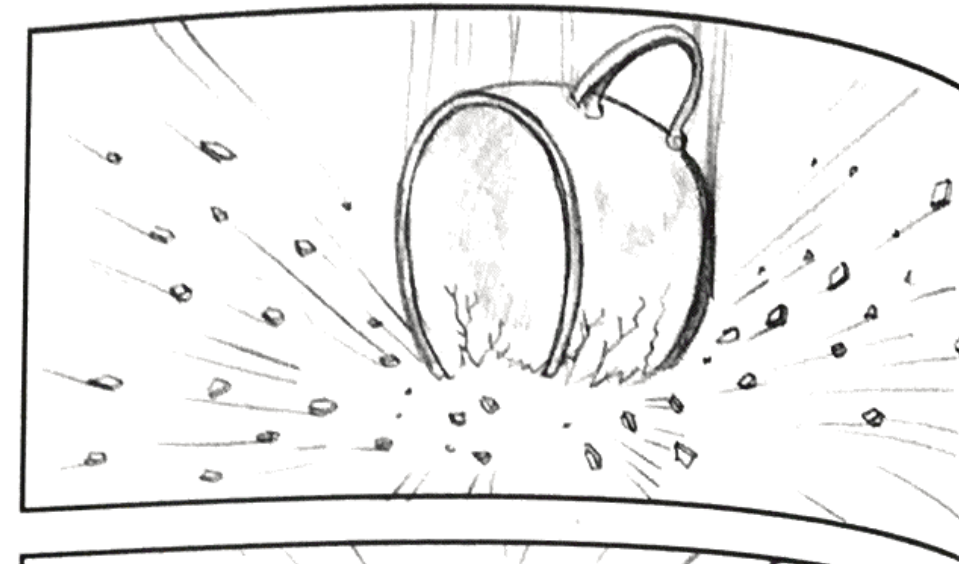
What does it look like?

A *Multi-Take* refers to a single action that is repeated several times, from different angles and distances. The audience sees the same action occur, usually about two to three times. This adds dramatic impact to the scene.

A *Multi-Take* is used when an important or decisive action occurs in a film. Without this technique, the action might happen so quickly that the audience doesn't even notice. One solution would be to film it in slow motion, but the *Multi-Take* provides an effective alternative.

Where can I see it?

In *The Usual Suspects*, a coffee cup falls to the ground and shatters several times. In *The Killer*, John Woo *Multi-Takes* as an assassin pulls out his rifle to kill. In *The Color of Money*, the action of the cue hitting the pool ball is repeated from a few different angles for emphasis. Many martial arts movies use this technique to emphasize the punches and kicks in fight scenes. *Multi-Takes* appear at the end of *The Fury*, when Cassavetes' body explodes; in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, when the Terminator shatters the evil terminator's frozen body; and in *The Graduate*, when Ben spins around to look at Mrs. Robinson.



Multi-Take

CUT ZOOM IN

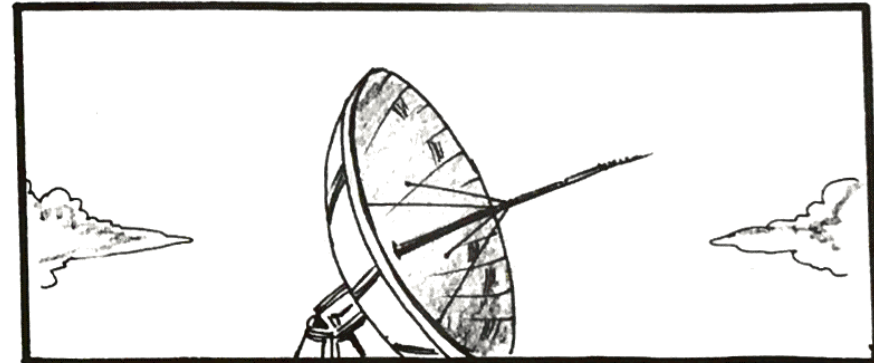
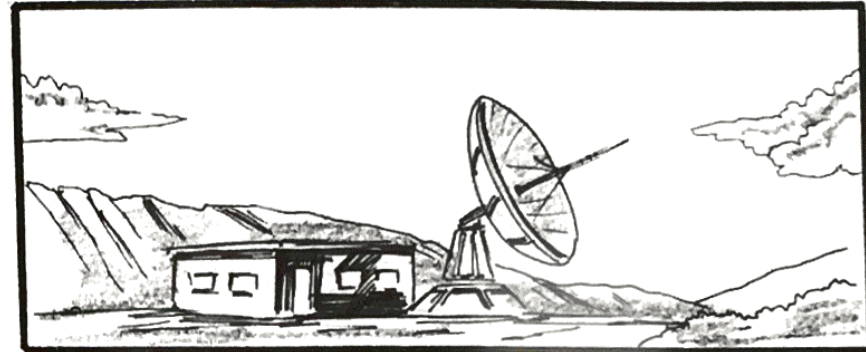
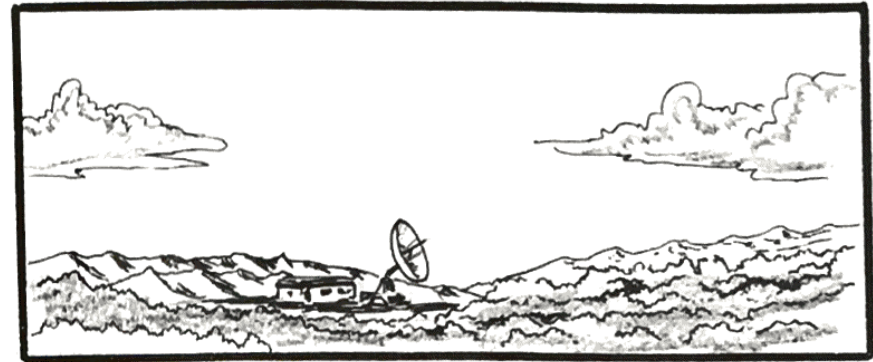
What does it look like?

Cut Zoom In is a technique that adds emphasis to an otherwise static shot. This technique usually has three stages: a very wide shot, a wide shot, and a medium shot. The distances for each shot can vary, but the basic idea is that, for each cut, the camera suddenly “jumps” forward towards the subject being viewed. To soften the effect, the camera can slowly zoom forward during the technique.

The two shot version of this technique is often used, but is not as distinct. A two shot *Cut Zoom In* consists of cutting from a wide shot to a close-up.

Where can I see it?

In *Die Hard 2*, Renny Harlin *Cut Zooms In* on the satellite dish just before it explodes. In *The Fifth Element*, Luc Besson performs a *Cut Zoom In* toward the headquarters of Zorg as Zorg speaks out his first, middle, and last names. In *La Femme Nikita*, there is a two shot *Cut Zoom In* when Nikita breaks open a bathroom window to prepare for an assassination. This two shot cut emphasizes the action. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the camera *Cut Zooms In* towards Hal's eye.



Cut Zoom In

CUT ZOOM OUT

What does it look like?

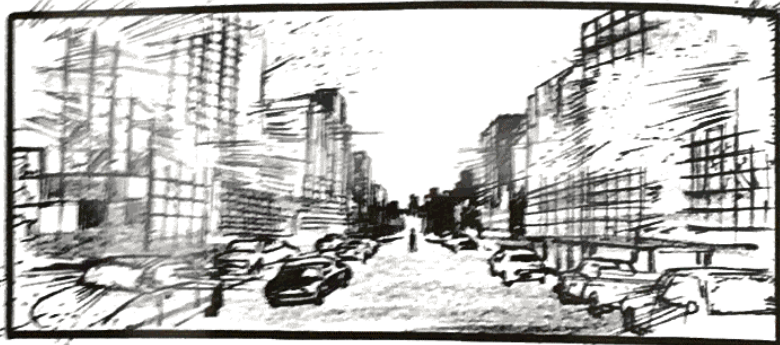
Cut Zoom Out is the opposite of *Cut Zoom In*. Instead of jumping closer to the subject, the camera moves farther away with each cut.

An example of a *Cut Zoom Out* sequence would be: close-up to wide shot to extremely long shot (establishing shot). The distance covered by a *Cut Zoom Out* is usually much farther than its counterpart.

The most common use of this technique is to show how far away something can be seen or heard. If something incredibly loud happens, the camera first shows where the sound originated. Then the camera zooms back to a location farther away where the audience still hears the sound. Finally, the camera moves to a location blocks or miles away where the sound can still be heard.

Where can I see it?

At the end of *The Matrix*, the camera *Cut Zooms Out* from the city.



Cut Zoom Out

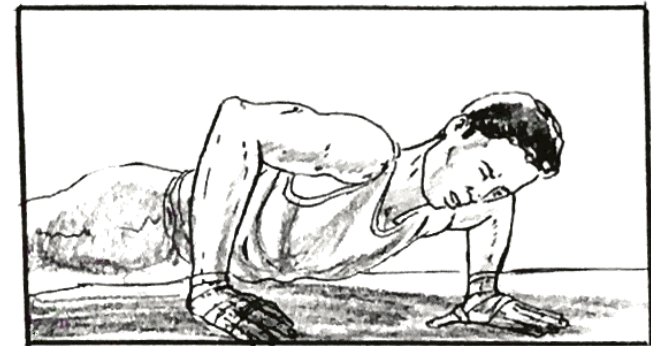
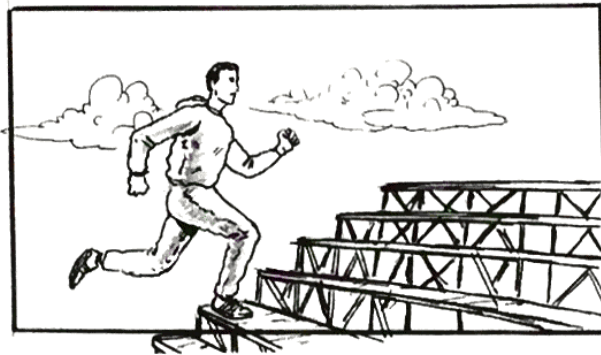
MONTAGE SEQUENCE

What does it look like?

A *Montage Sequence* is a specific subset of montage. Many films contain these sequences that are often set to music. A *Montage Sequence* is used to conveniently express the passage of time or a sequence of events without dialogue. This technique involves the collection of many different visual images spliced together. The transitions between these images (fades, cuts, dissolves) can greatly affect the emotional impact of the sequence.

Where can I see it?

In Rocky, a *Montage Sequence* shows Rocky training for his big fight. NYPD Blue has an opening credits *Montage Sequence* that shows establishing shots of New York. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid has a bicycle-riding *Montage Sequence*. In the beginning of Mimic, a *Montage Sequence* presents the images that fade in and out to present an ominous, chilling introduction. In Easy Rider, several *Montage Sequences* show the characters driving across the country.



Montage Sequence

JUMP CUT SEQUENCE

What does it look like?

A *Jump Cut Sequence* is a specific type of Montage Sequence in which jump cuts are used to show similar actions occurring over a short period of time. What makes this technique different from other Montage Sequences is that the camera focuses on one particular scene or character, using jump cuts to create a sequence. The camera alternates between close-ups and wide shots, changing the angle slightly for each take. Jump cuts add energy to a character's actions.

Where can I see it?

In *Kiss the Girls*, a *Jump Cut Sequence* shows Ashley Judd practicing her kickboxing techniques. In *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, a *Jump Cut Sequence* shows Graham destroying his collection of video tapes.



Jump Cut Sequence

SPLIT SCREEN

What does it look like?

A *Split Screen* shows two separate sequences on the screen at the same time. For example: the image can be split down the middle, allowing one scene to occur on the left side and another to occur on the right. The frame may be split into halves, quarters, whatever, depending on what the director needs.

Where can I see it?

Both When Harry Met Sally and Indiscreet use a *Split Screen* as two lovers talk on the phone. At the end of Carrie, *Split Screen* showcases the hellish prom disaster.



Split Screen

SUB-CLIP

What does it look like?

A *Sub-Clip* is similar to the picture-in-picture effect that high-end television owners have experienced. *Sub-Clips* help to show a new camera shot without cutting away.

Instead of cutting to a new shot, the *Sub-Clip* opens on top of the main scene and plays through. This technique often illustrates some relevant information, such as what a character is looking at.

Where can I see it?

In *The Andromeda Strain*, when research scientists come into the town, they go door to door, looking for survivors. Instead of cutting to the inside of each house as they look in, *Sub-Clips* open on the screen to show the ravaged bodies inside.

In *Knock Off*, a *Sub-Clip* opens as Van Damme looks into a box of knock-off goods. *Sub-Clips* open in *Buffalo '66*, as Billy thinks about his childhood.



Sub-Clip

SUPERIMPOSITION

What does it look like?

Superimposition adds supporting imagery to a scene. This technique is accomplished by overlaying a scene with a secondary image that is semitransparent.

The secondary image adds to the atmosphere. For example: if a director wants to show that a character is thinking about a long lost loved one, the image of the loved one's close-up can be *Superimposed* over the scene.

Where can I see it?

In *The Tin Drum*, the image of a young boy banging on his drum is *Superimposed* over a scene in which he is born.



Superimposition

FILL, REVEAL FRAME

What does it look like?

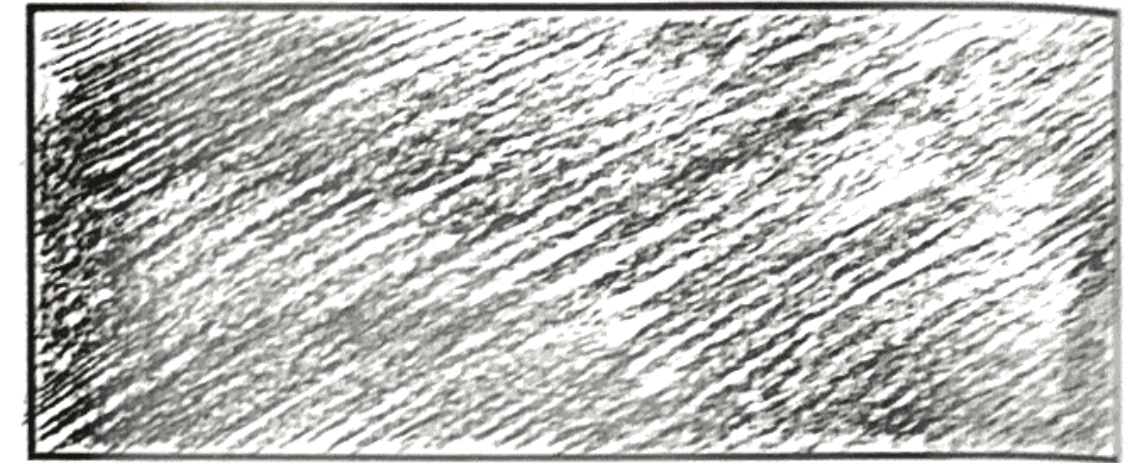
Fill, Reveal Frame allows the director to cut without the audience knowing it. This technique can be used to create jumps in space and time within a film.

If the camera is moving, it may move in front of a wall or some other object that obscures the camera's view. If the object is dark enough, the director can fool the audience by cutting to another shot where the camera is moving away from a different dark object. The cut happens so transparently that the audience may not notice unless they are paying very close attention.

Another variation is a person or object moving into the camera frame. Because that object blocks the light from the camera, the audience can't tell when a cut is made to the object at a completely different location. The object can then be moved away from the lens to reveal the new scene.

Where can I see it?

Fill, Reveal Frame is used throughout Rope to hide the few cuts that exist.



Fill, Reveal Frame

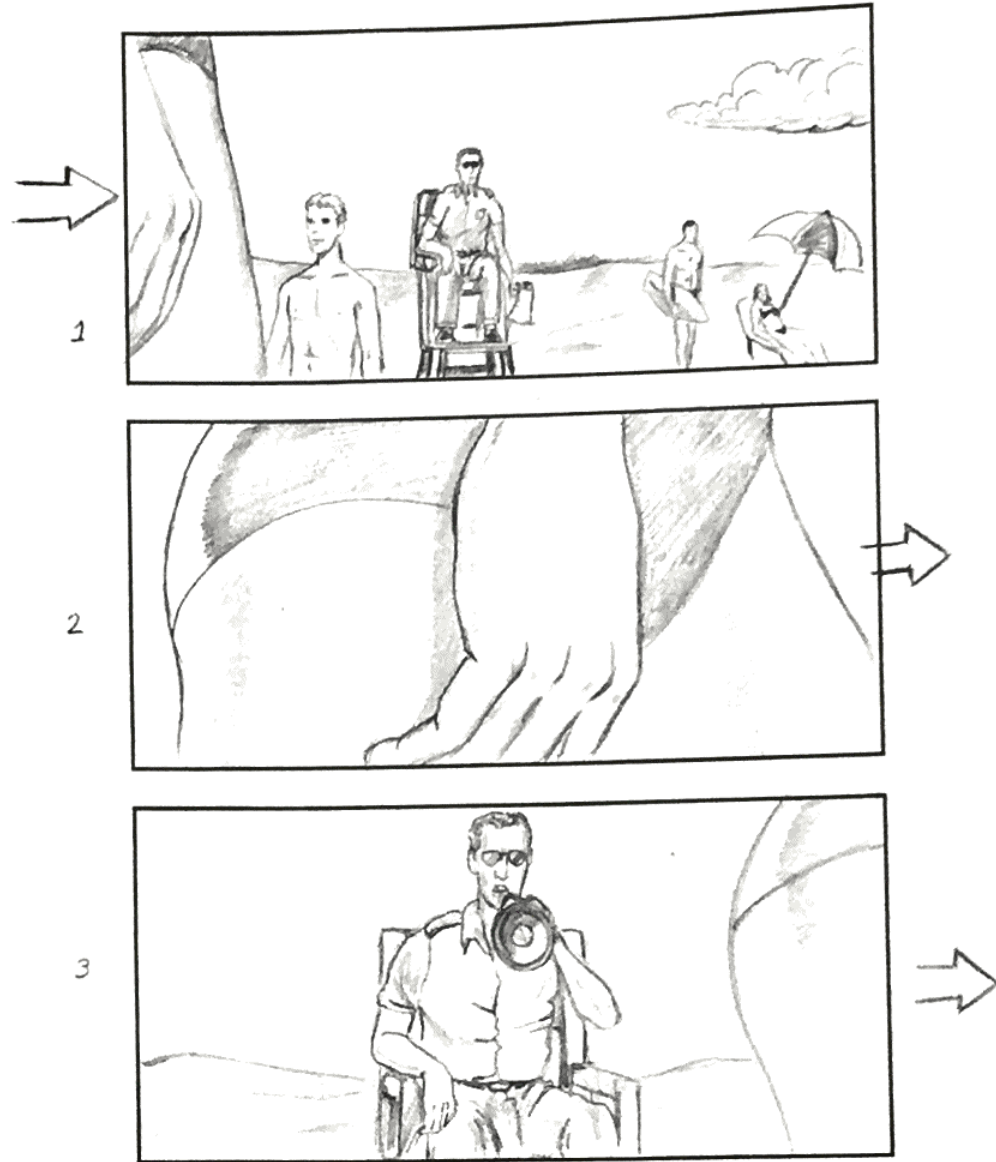
WALK, REVEAL FRAME

What does it look like?

Walk, Reveal Frame is a clever transition technique. It starts out with an actor walking in front of the camera. As the actor passes in front of the lens, the audience's view becomes partially obscured. This allows the editor to cut to a new shot without the audience noticing. When the actor walks away, the camera position has changed.

Where can I see it?

Jaws uses this technique several times before a shark attack at the beach. The Usual Suspects cuts as a character paces back and forth in front of the camera.



Walk, Reveal Frame

COLLAGE

What does it look like?

Collage involves composing small, moving images onto the screen. These images usually consist of imagery that enhances a story's thematic context. The images look as if they were pasted into place, similar to how a collage looks in real life. This is done during the editing process after filming is finished.

Where can I see it?

In Ed Wood, Ed Wood's ideas are displayed as *Collage* elements. In Drugstore Cowboy, various random images float across the screen to simulate Bob's drug-induced state.



Collage

CAMERA SNAP

What does it look like?

A *Camera Snap* gives us a character's perspective when looking through a camera and taking pictures. At first, we see the world from a distance—through the camera lens. As the character presses a button, a snapping sound is played and the images freeze, as if they had just been captured on film. Shortly after, reality starts moving again and this process continues as long as pictures are taken.

A variation on this technique is to show a flash effect just before the freeze frame, to simulate the camera's flash.

Where can I see it?

Camera Snap is used in *Thelma and Louise*, when the two women take a picture of themselves.



Camera Snap

PHOTO TO SCENE

What does it look like?

When a character has just seen a picture or a photograph of a far-away place, a director can use *Photo To Scene* for a clever transition, filling the frame with the photograph, and then dissolving to the actual subject of the photograph, shot from approximately the same angle and distance. The abstract representation becomes reality.

Where can I see it?

At the end of *Fletch*, the scene dissolves from a photograph of the beach to a live shot from the same angle and distance.

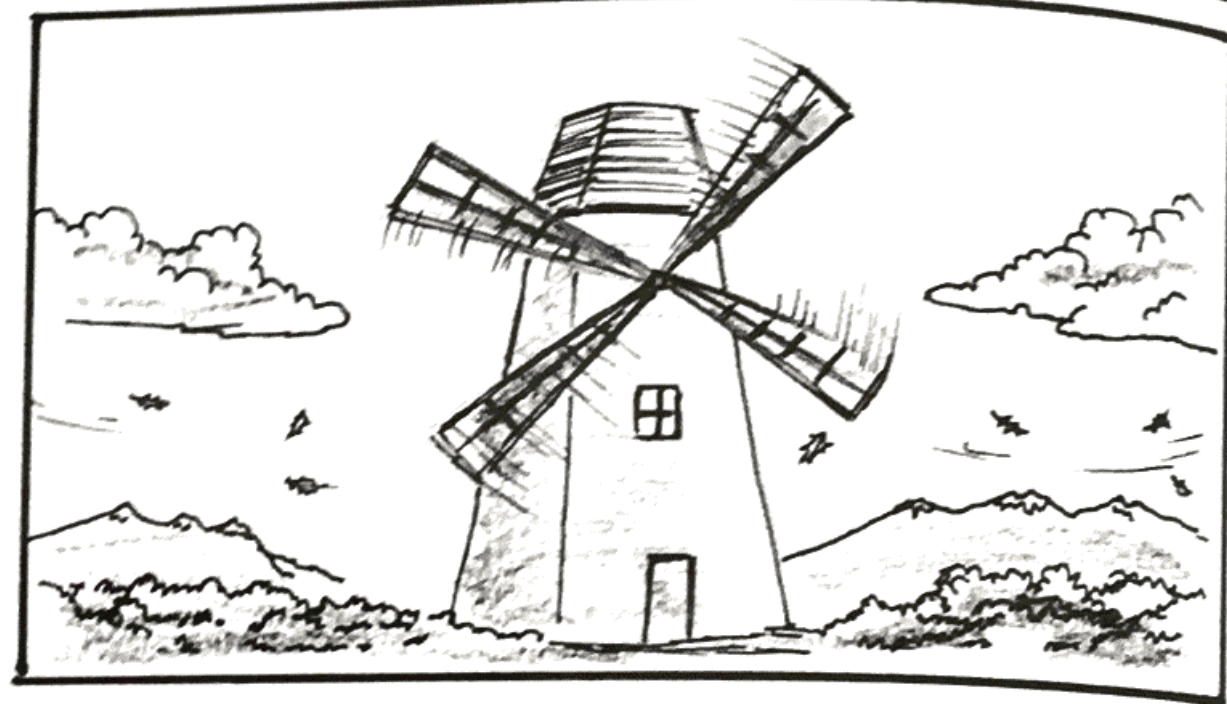


Photo To Scene

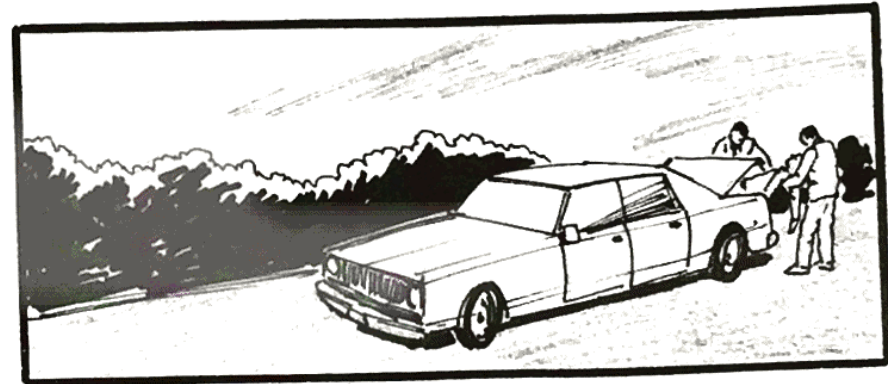
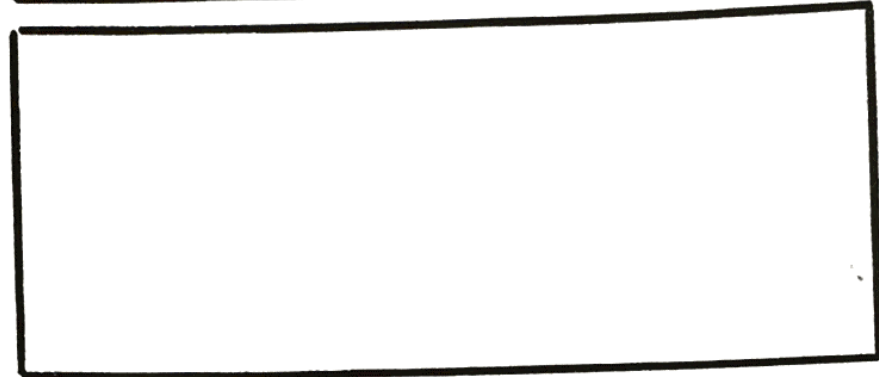
IMPACT FLASH, FLASHED CUT, FLASHED JUMP CUT

What does it look like?

Impact Flashes look similar to photographic bulbs being flashed. This technique is very popular in commercials and music videos, to add impact to a scene.

In a *Flashed Cut*, the camera flashes to white. The film cuts to a different frame during the flash. The flash then dies down, revealing a new image.

Flashed Jump Cut is the same as a *Flashed Cut*, but is used specifically to emphasize a jump cut.



Flashed Cut

EXERCISES

- **Practice editing techniques.** Professional editing systems can cost as much as \$100,000 or more. However, as technology progresses, lower cost video editing alternatives are being made available to consumers who want to edit their home videos and who don't care that the finished product is not broadcast quality. If you're interested in setting up a video editing system, look at some of the lower end video capture cards to get started. You may even be able to use a pair of cheap VCRs to do some simple editing by dubbing from one to the other.
- **Edit "in camera."** What this means is that instead of composing the footage in a video editor, you'll capture the images in sequence on film. This very difficult technique requires that you plan everything ahead of time and that you don't make any mistakes when shooting.
- **Watch movies and observe the rhythm of the edits.** How fast are they? What does the editor cut to? Are there certain patterns? How does the editing affect the scene? Think of ways you might have edited the scene differently and try to visualize what it would have looked like.
- **Write shooting scripts for a small film you want to make.** A shooting script lists the shots that will appear on screen when the audience watches the film. Once again, learn to visualize the final product before you spend time, energy, and money to create it.