

## Camera Angles: Close-Ups and Long Shots

Imagine you are directing a science-fiction movie about a monster that is threatening Paris. You picture the large monster stomping among the buildings of the city, frightening citizens and wreaking havoc. How can you make this threat seem real to the film's viewers? How can you communicate your vision on the screen?

As a director, you have many tools and techniques that can shape the look and feel of a film. You can vary a shot's perspective, lighting, location, or other qualities to achieve certain effects. One powerful way to communicate your vision is through camera angles. Shooting your movie monster from far away, for example, will achieve a very different look than if you were to shoot it up close.

During the planning stages of a film, the director and possibly the director of photography may meet with a storyboard artist to illustrate the flow of shots that will best tell the story. There are a number of camera angles that a director has at his or her disposal. The most common of these are the establishing shot, long shot, medium shot, over-the-shoulder shot, and close-up. The storyboards on this page show how these shots could be used in your science-fiction film to create different effects.

### Establishing shot

A shot, normally taken from a great distance or from a "bird's eye view," that establishes where the action is about to occur. In your science-fiction movie, you will probably need an establishing shot of the Paris skyline, most likely one that shows the Eiffel Tower. This will communicate to the audience that the action takes place in Paris.

### Long shot

A shot that shows a scene from a distance (but not as great a distance as the establishing shot). A long shot is used to stress the environment or setting of a scene. In filming your science-fiction movie, for example, you might use a long shot to show the monster causing traffic jams and panicked crowds.

### Medium shot

A shot that frames actors, normally from the waist up. The medium shot can be used to focus attention on an interaction between two actors, such as a struggle, debate, or embrace.

### Over-the-shoulder shot

A shot of one actor taken from over the shoulder of another actor. An over-the-shoulder shot is used when two characters are interacting face-to-face. Filming over an actor's shoulder focuses the audience's attention on one actor at a time in a conversation, rather than on both.

### Close-up

A shot taken at close range, sometimes only inches away from an actor's face, a prop, or some other object. The close-up is designed to focus attention on an actor's expression, to give significance to a certain object, or to direct the audience to some other important element of the film. In your monster movie, you might use a close-up of the monster's teeth or claws to show how ferocious it is, or decide to zoom in on a frightened passerby to illustrate his or her fear.