Basic Film Terms
Frame

- Dividing line between the edges of the screen image and the enclosing darkness of the theater
- Single photo of film
Types of Shots

• Cinematic shots are defined by the amount of subject matter within the frame

• Shots can vary in duration
  – Shots vary in time from subliminal (a few frames) to quick (less than a second) to “average” (more than a second but less than a minute) to lengthy (more than a minute)
Establishing Shot (or Extreme Long Shot)

- Shot taken from a great distance, almost always an exterior shot, shows much of locale

- ELS

*Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*
Long Shot (LS)

- (A relative term) A shot taken from a sufficient distance to show a landscape, a building, or a large crowd
Medium Shot (MS)

• (Also relative) a shot between a long shot and a close-up that might show two people in full figure or several people from the waist up

The Talented Mr. Ripley
Close-Up (CU)

- A shot of a small object or face that fills the screen
- Adds importance to object photographed

Under Pressure
Extreme Close-Up (ECU)

- A shot of a small object or part of a face that fills the screen

The Saint In London

Rocky Horror Picture Show
Over the Shoulder Shot

- Usually contains two figures, one with his/her back to the camera, and the other facing the camera
Types of Angles

- The angle is determined by where the camera is placed, not the subject matter.
  - Angles can serve as commentary on the subject matter.
Bird’s Eye View

• Camera is placed directly overhead
• Extremely disorienting
• Viewer is godlike
High Angle (h/a)

- Camera looks down at what is being photographed
- Takes away power of subject, makes it insignificant
- Gives a general overview
Low Angle (l/a)

- Camera is located below subject matter
- Increases height and power of subject

The Patriot
Oblique Angle

- Lateral tilt of the camera so that figures appear to be falling out of the frame
- Suggests tension and transition
- Sometimes used as the point of view of a drunk

The Matrix
Point of View (POV)

• A shot taken from the vantage point a particular character, or what a character sees
“Eye-Level”

- Roughly 5 to 6 feet off the ground, the way an actual observer might view a scene
  - Most common
Camera Movement
Pan

- The camera moves horizontally on a fixed base.
Tilt

• The camera points up or down from a fixed base
Tracking (dolly) shot

- The camera moves through space on a wheeled truck (or dolly), but stays in the same plane
Boom

• The camera moves up or down through space
Zoom

• Not a camera movement, but a shift in the focal length of the camera lens to give the impression that the camera is getting closer to or farther from an object
Getting from Scene to Scene
Cut

- Transition between scenes when one scene ends and another one begins
- Most common
Dissolve

- A gradual transition in which the end of one scene is superimposed over the beginning of a new one.
Fade-out/Fade in

- A scene gradually goes dark or a new one gradually emerges from darkness
Wipe

• An optical effect in which one shot appears to push the preceding one from the screen.
Iris

- An optical effect in which one shot appears to emerge from a shape on the screen.
What This Means

• These are the basic elements of film that a director can use to tell his/her story.
• Through editing, these shots are put together to create (hopefully!) a coherent story.