Film Techniques

Editing

Mise-en-scene

Sound

Cinematography

Learning Intentions

- **What is the POINT of films? Why make them?**
    - To entertain people
    - To inform people
    - To make money
    - To tell a story/express the author's vision
- Films are pieces of art – like a novel or a painting. They are considered to be 'texts'
- Every tiny aspect of the film, each technique used, is <u>chosen</u> deliberately by the filmmaker to create a certain effect
- By looking at all the techniques and thinking about WHY they were chosen, we can understand more about the film's meaning, point or purpose

Benefits of Film

Why tell a story using film instead of words?

1. "A picture is worth a thousand words"

Film can show & explain things quickly, especially speedy action

2. Creator has more control/power

Audience sees it exactly the way the director wants them to see it

3. Visual nature of modern life

Visual medium works well for modern audiences who are used to visual messages

Editing

Editing

Editing = the way shots are pieced together

- **Order** – which happens first
- **Transitions** – how the film switches between shots
- **Length** – how long we spend on each shot

Types of Transitions

- **Cut** – Switch to new scene immediately. Suggests no time has passed

- **Cutaway** – Switch to a new scene & then back to first. Gives new information

- **Cut-in** – Switch to a zoomed-in portion of the same scene. Draws attention to a new aspect of the scene

- **Cross-cutting** – Switching back and forth between two scenes in different times/places. Shows they're linked

- **Dissolve** – Slow transition between scenes. Implies time has passed or the new scene is a dream or memory

Cut

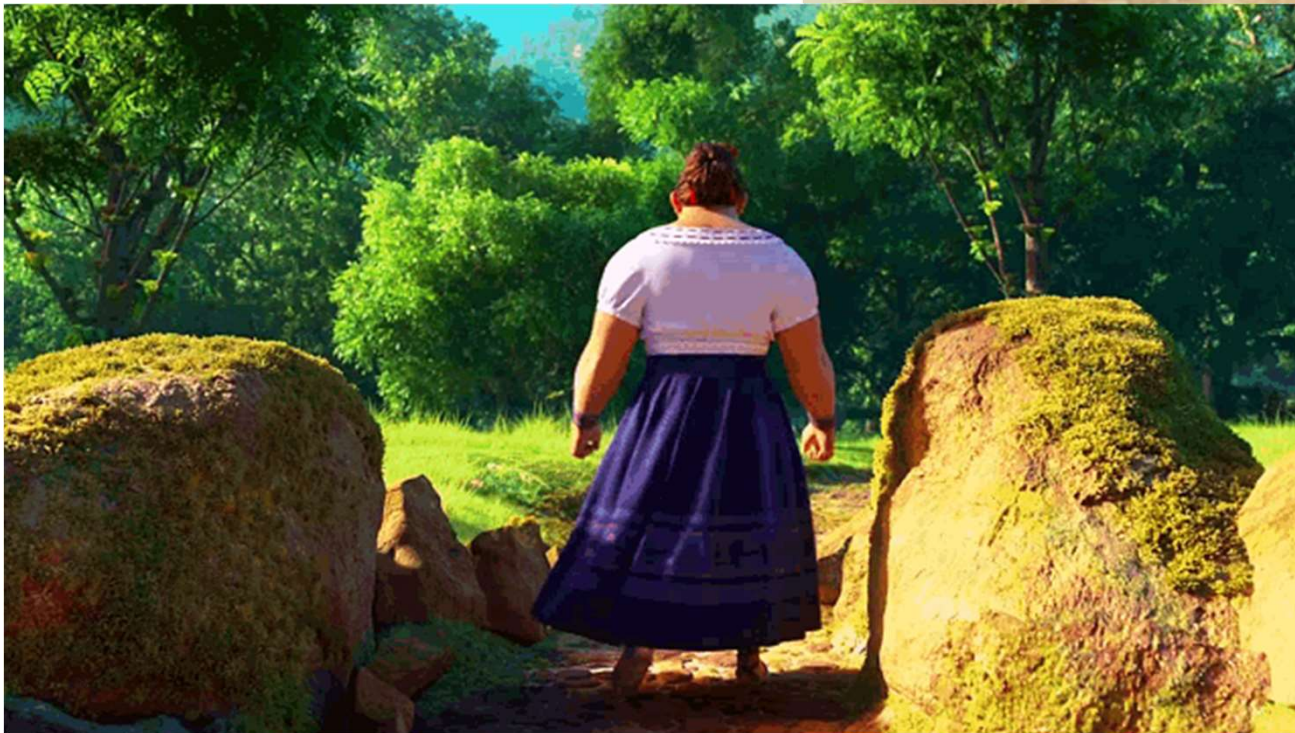- When the camera switches straight to a new shot. Suggests no time has passed.
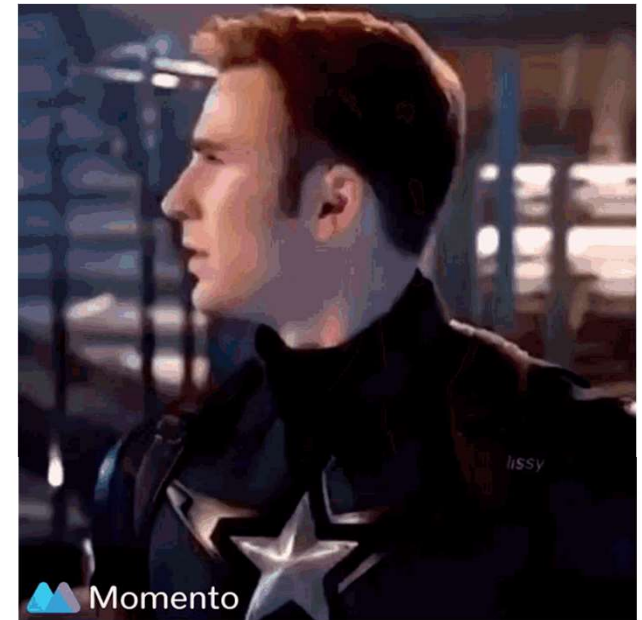
Cutaway

- Switch to another shot & then back to the first. The second shot usually provides new information to the audience or characters.

Cut in

- Regular cut in

- Zoom cut in

Cross cutting

- Switching back and forth between two shots. Shows they're linked, creates fast-paced feel

Long & Short Takes

Short takes – camera switches rapidly between many quick shots

- Fast-paced action
- Create tension
- Mashup of many short takes is called a montage

Long takes - camera keeps filming without jumping to any other scene

- Allows time for conversations, character development
- Can seem relaxed, unhurried, peaceful
- Can linger too long on painful scenes to create feeling of discomfort

Editing is linked to structure

Short takes often used during the **climactic** scenes of a film
- Make it seem more tense & dramatic
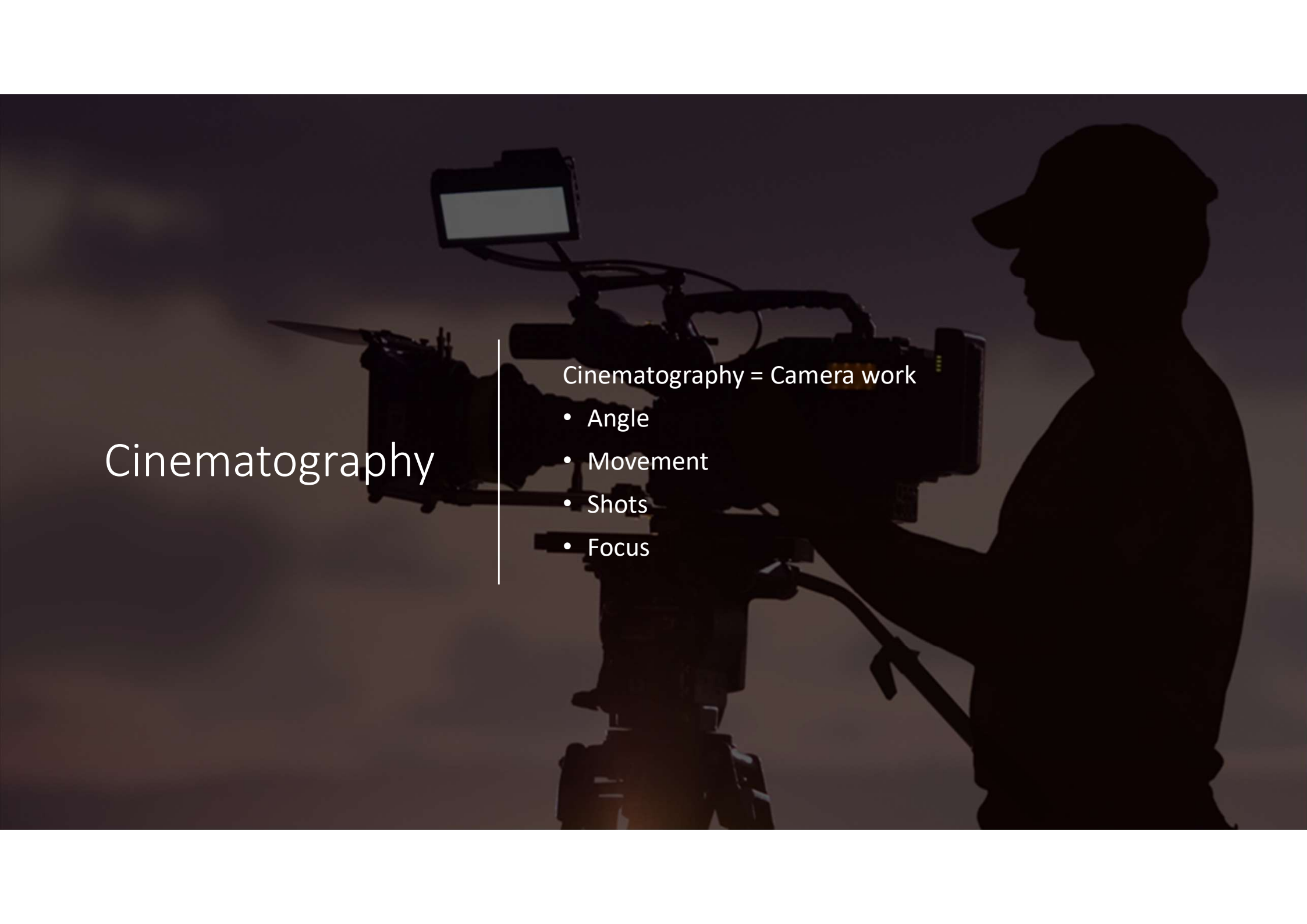- Reach the conclusion more swiftly

Long takes often used in **orientation** scenes of a film
- Seem more calm and relaxed
- Help establish the setting and characters

Cinematography

Cinematography = Camera work

- Angle
- Movement
- Shots
- Focus

3 Basic Shots

- **Long shot** – gives information about the setting. Where are we? How does the character relate to this place?

- **Mid shot** – gives information about relationships between characters e.g. body language, how do they react to each other?

- **Close-up** – gives information about one character – subtle expressions are easier to see. Creates intimacy, helps audience relate to them & share their emotions.

Long shot

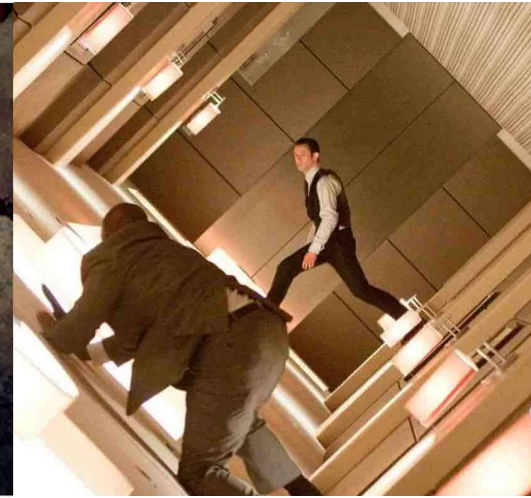Mid shot

Close-up
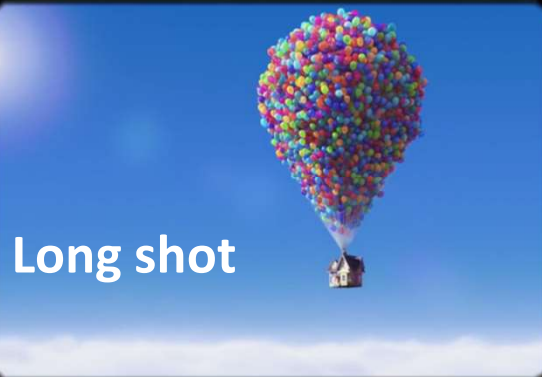
**Mid/eye level angle**   **Low angle**   **High angle**   **Canted Angle**

Camera Angles

- **Eye level angle** – natural, realistic, immersive. See things from normal characters' point of view.

- **Low angle** – Makes subject seem scary or powerful, looming above

- **High angle** – Makes subject seem smaller, vulnerable/weak

- **Canted angle (Dutch tilt)** – creates disorder, imbalance. Feels unsettling, stressful, something is wrong.

Basic Camera Movement
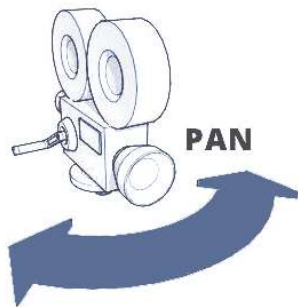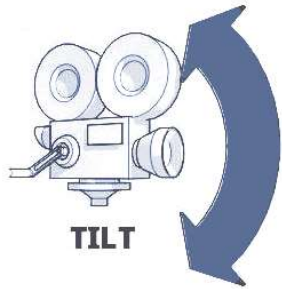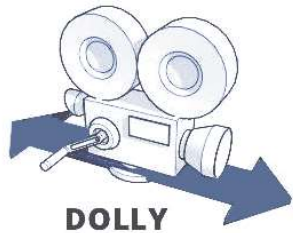
Dollying – camera moves along a track

- Follows characters as they move, keep pace with action
- Fast dollying creates frantic pace, slow can create sense of peace, gently drifting through scenery

Tilting – camera is stationary but tilts up or down.

- Often starts at normal angle & tilts up or down
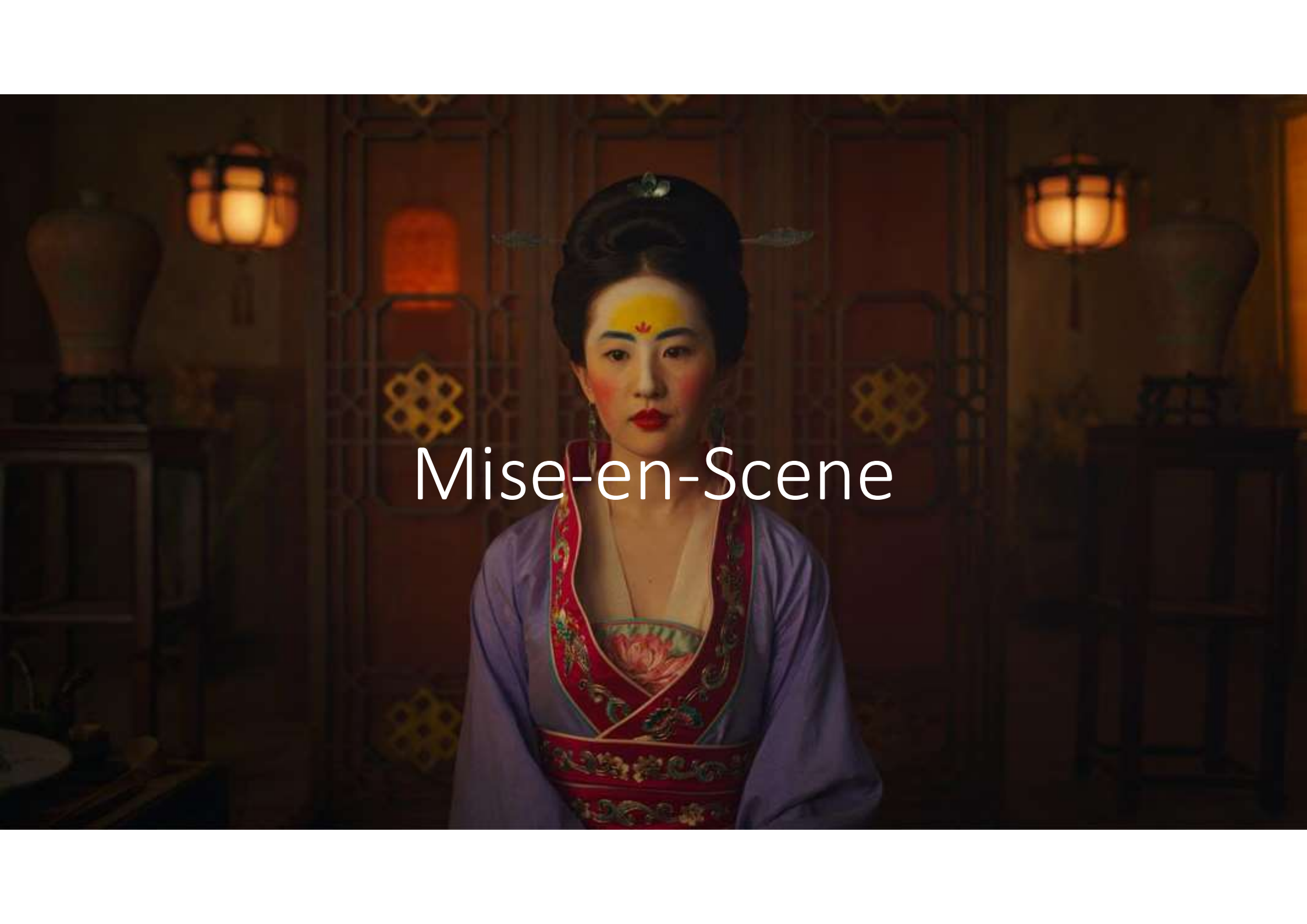- Can show scale or add info about the setting

Panning – camera is stationary but swivels from side to side

- Introduces new information
- Can create humour or suspense, revealing information slowly

DOLLY

TILT

PAN

Focus

- **Shallow focus** – only one thing is in focus, forces you to look at that. Blurs out unimportant details, can create romantic or dreamy feel

- **Rack focus or pull focus** – can direct your attention e.g. to a specific detail, or follow a character's mental process

- **Deep focus** – everything is in sharp focus. Conveys clarity, objectivity, realism. Not limited to one viewpoint. You are impartial, not being told what to focus on

Shallow focus

Rack focus

Deep focus

Mise-en-Scene

Mise-en-Scene

- Mise-en-scene = means "setting the stage"

- Refers to set design & all visual elements

- Involves a combination of things and how they create the overall look
  - Props & costumes
  - Set (room or place where scene happens)
  - Lighting
  - Use of space (proxemics)

Props & Costumes

Show time & place

- Gives clues where & when it's set, e.g. typewriter = historical. Robot = future

Believable

- Even in a fantasy setting, props & costumes make you feel like it's a real place
- Suspension of disbelief

Symbolism

- Some objects are associated with ideas or feelings in people's minds, e.g. snakes = evil, clue that Slytherin are baddies
- Director can use repeated shots of a certain prop throughout a film to symbolise something within the film

Lighting

3-point light setup:

- **Key lights** – Front lights, main illumination

- **Fill lights** – Soft, side-on lights, brighten shadows

- **Back lights** – point down from up high, behind the scene, help figures stand out from background
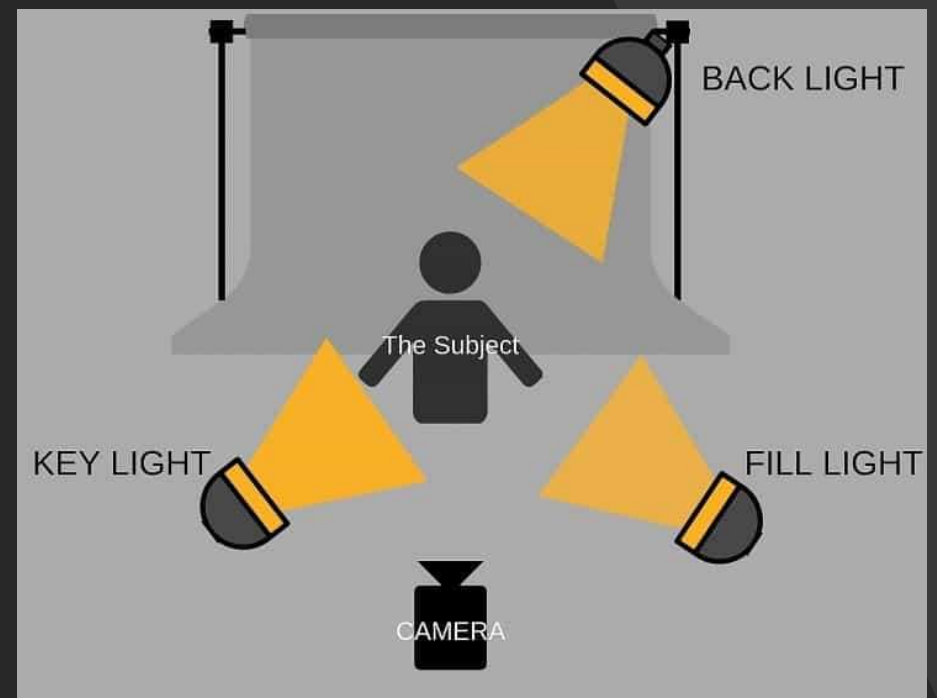
Lighting = mood

Adjusting how much each light shines changes the film's mood.

- **High Key** lighting – all 3 lights are on full, creates bright relaxing mood. We can see everything, no lurking shadows.

- **Low key** lighting – high contrast, bright lights and dark shadows. Often used in thrillers & crime films. Can symbolise contrast in a character – light & shadow. Can be used to highlight/draw attention.

- **Backlighting** – low overall light, stronger backlight, weak key & fill lights. Shadowy silhouettes, create mystery, fear. Can't see faces.

Sound

Diegetic

- Can be heard by characters in the film. Car driving, radio playing, insects buzzing etc
- Creates realism, makes us feel like we're there

Non-diegetic

- Layered on top. Can't be heard by characters in the film. Only the audience can hear it. Voice-over narration & movie soundtrack
- Music builds emotion & creates mood
- Voice-over can help explain what's happening OR subvert (say the opposite of what's on the screen)