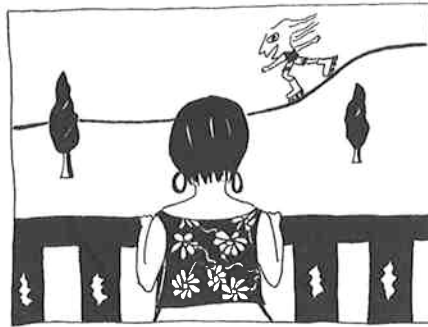


Parallel horizontal lines can shorten perspective and reduce the sense of depth. Try to place a diagonal against a horizontal.

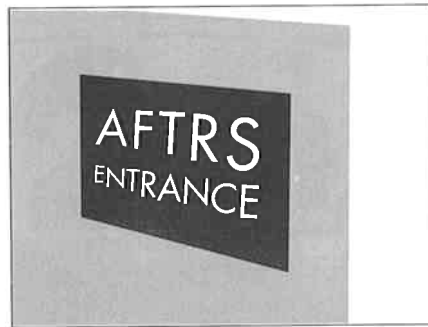


Not so good

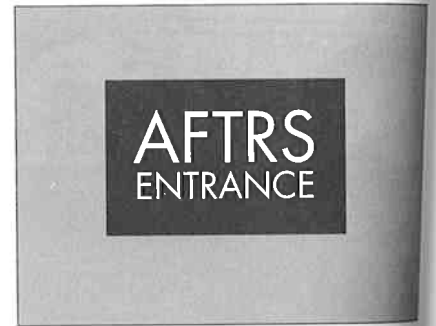


Preferred

Shooting two-dimensional objects, like paintings or signs, from a side angle will produce a distortion. Shoot them straight-on unless the distortion is desired.



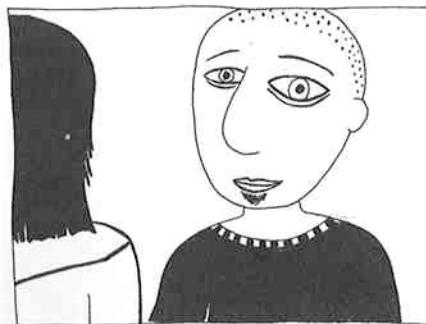
Not so good



Preferred

### Composition for Reverse Shots for Dialogue

The subject facing the camera should get about two-thirds of the screen space.



Main shot



Reverse shot





Medium close-up (MCU)



Close-up (CU)



Big close-up (BCU)



Extreme close-up (ECU)



Richard Fitzpatrick, Camera Operator, Digital Dimensions.

Underwater camera work was traditionally wide shots, following shots. Now we apply standard shot sizes to build story sequences. Anyone who wants to do nature filming should apply the same traditional film techniques that are used in drama, i.e. build up visual sequences. That's what producers look for in demo reels and in programs.

As you can see, shot sizes are defined in relation to the human figure. With the exception of the term *close-up*, these terms aren't applied to other objects. You can't have a mid-shot of a car, for example (regardless of how personal your relationship is with your car!).

There's one other shot size, not shown above. It's the *wide shot*. The wide shot is the unhindered view you get looking at a scene. It can be very wide like a view of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, or smaller like the front of a cafe. In a wide shot it's possible to see many human figures.

## Framing

Here are some guidelines to consider when framing your subject.

### Head Room

Shots of people are usually framed with a small amount of space above their heads. This space is called *head room*.

Shots need to have sufficient head room because when the top of the head is right against the top of the frame, it can produce a claustrophobic impression.

The most common framing error of beginners is to put the subject too low in the picture, leaving heaps of head room. If nothing important is happening in the part of the frame that's above the head, this is wasted screen space and you could more productively either tilt down to show more of the person's body, or zoom in to give the viewer a better look at the subject's face.



Too little head room



Too much head room



Good

If the person isn't framed properly s/he will appear to head-butt the frame or to be hanging by the neck.

### The Eyes

Generally speaking, you should aim to put the subject's eye level about two-thirds of the way up the screen.

The eyes play a very important role in communication, and eye signals and eye orientation are very closely connected to culture.

Although it's standard practice in broadcast television to use close-ups of subjects facing directly to the camera, with their eyes looking straight down the lens barrel, this is culturally inappropriate in many societies, including some Indigenous peoples.

Because it's unacceptable in some cultures for a younger person to meet the eyes of an older person, the full-on gaze of an older person looking out from the television screen can cause some younger viewers to avert their eyes. If it's important for your audience to continue watching the screen, it makes sense to arrange your shot so they can comfortably do so.

It may be more acceptable to have the elder shown in three-quarter face (i.e. looking slightly away from the camera), or even in profile, so their eyes aren't directed straight