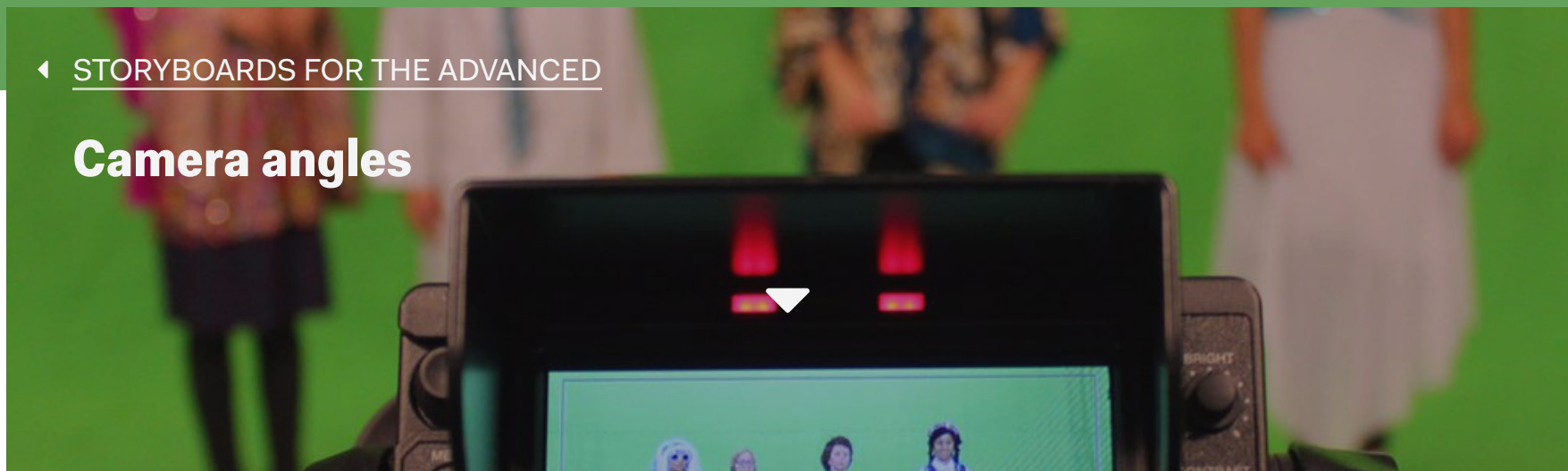


[◀ STORYBOARDS FOR THE ADVANCED](#)

Camera angles



Camera angles

You've hopefully learnt all about shot types, now it's on to the camera angles you see used with those shots. The way the camera is angled can contribute to the meaning the audience will get from the shot and can be used to make characters look strong, weak, intimidating, inferior. They can also help an audience get a sense for what a character is experiencing and what they are feeling; all these by simply changing the angle of the camera.

Eye-level

The most standard camera angle is shooting from eye-level. In fact a large percentage of shots are from eye-level, it's easy and it's a natural perspective for the viewer to see characters from.



A classic eye-level shot, notice though Forrest Gump is sitting down, so the camera has been moved or positioned to meet his eye-level. This means that eye-level can change position depending on whether the character is sitting down, standing up, kneeling and so on. (Forrest Gump, Paramount Pictures)

Low angle

Low-angle is when the camera is placed well below eye-level to face up at a character or object. The effect is this will change depending on the intent of the director or cinematographer. For example, looking up at a character can make them look heroic and strong. But take the same angle and face it up at an evil character, and they will look scary and intimidating. Sometimes you'll see really low angle shots, where the camera is looking up from the ground. This can make a character look tall and strong, but because the angle is unnatural in the sense it's not a perspective any human would have (unless you were an inch tall) it can make the audience feel something unusual, unnatural, or even supernatural is happening.



Here's a low angle shot of a character to make them look heroic and strong. (The Dark Knight, Warner Bros. Pictures)



Here's another superhero in Peter Park (Spiderman) when he's first realising he has powers. The extreme low angle here helps gives the sense something strange or unnatural is happening. (Spiderman, Columbia Pictures)

High angle

High angle is obviously the opposite of a low angle. The camera is placed above a character or characters and angled downwards towards them. Again, the effect of this will differ depending on how it's being used. Sometimes the high-angle is used to make characters look small and weak. It might also make them look cute. It's also often used to suggest something significant is happening high above the characters.



Here the camera looks down upon the character of Matilda making her look extremely small, vulnerable, and lonely. (Matilda, 1996, Tristar Pictures)



Here we have a high-angle that doesn't make The Avengers look a little small, and suggest there's something looming above them that might pose a threat. (The Avengers, Walt Disney Pictures)

Dutch angle

Also known as 'canted' angle or sometimes an 'oblique' angle, a dutch angle shot is where the camera is not level, but angled to the left or the right, putting the camera frame off kilter.

Like an extremely low angle shot, this angle is an unnatural one and can make the audience feel a little off; giving them the sense something is not right. Often this angle is used when a character is experiencing something unusual or distressing. The idea is usually to convey what the character is going through by making the audience experience it through an angle that might make them feel a little weird.



Here's a great oblique angle from Mission Impossible, notice too that it's combined with a low angle shot adding to the unnatural nature of the viewpoint. This comes in a moment of the film where the character is realising he's being set up or framed, so that realisation his world is crumbling is reflected by the oblique angle. (Mission Impossible, Paramount Pictures)



Here's another one, the angle isn't too severe but we can see Tony Stark is physically affected by the antagonist here, and the feeling of being physically unwell that Tony is experiencing is conveyed not just by action, but by the oblique angle. (Iron Man, Paramount Pictures)

Looking at examples of camera angles is all good and well, but you won't get the hang of them unless you try them out yourself.

Try one or all of the following activities:

Quick activity: create a poster that shows examples of all the different camera angles shown above, but find images from movies you know. You can take screen grabs from the film itself, or search online.


Moderate activity: Using a camera, take a series of photos of a subject, preferably a person. You can partner up with someone in your classroom. Take a photo from a low angle, an extremely low angle, high angle, eye level, and dutch angle. Before taking each photo, give some instruction to the person posing for the photo that relates to the reason you're using that angle. For example is your low angle to make your subject look heroic, or evil and intimidating?

A little longer: Using a storyboard template, draw a series of storyboard panels of a single character but seen from all the different camera angles mentioned above. Think carefully about the reason for the angle you've chosen for each shot, for example, what is happening to your character that might be reflected by the use of a dutch angle? Or is your high angle aiming to make a character look weak, or cute and cuddly? Write a brief sentence explaining what you were trying to achieve with each angle.


Back to Storyboards for the advanced ►

Australian Centre for the Moving Image

We are Australia's national museum of film, TV, videogames, digital culture and art.

 OPEN DAILY, except Christmas Day
MUSEUM 10am–5pm
CINEMAS until late

 [Fed Square, Melbourne, Australia](#)

 [+61 3 8663 2200](#)

MUSEUM

EXHIBITIONS

TALKS

WORKSHOPS

EDUCATION

COLLECTION

COMMISSIONS

TOURING EXHIBITIONS

CINEMAS

WHAT'S ON

AUSTRALIAN

FAMILY FILMS

MATINEES

MELBOURNE CINÉMATHEQUE

MELBOURNE FILMOTECA

IDEAS

WATCH

READ

LISTEN

WHAT'S ON

VISIT

CAFE & BAR

ONLINE SHOP

FAMILIES

ACMI X COWORKING

ACMI LABS

JOIN & SUPPORT

DONATE

MEMBERS

VOLUNTEER

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

ABOUT ACMI

CAREERS

CONTACT

SUBSCRIBE

[MEDIA RELEASES](#)[VENUE HIRE](#)[TERMS OF USE](#)[POLICIES](#)[TICKETING AND ENTRY TERMS](#)[COLOPHON](#)[GOOGLE TRANSLATE](#)

acmi

ACMI acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, on whose land we meet, share and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all nations of this land.

[MENU](#)

The word "acmi" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid brown square.

[WHAT'S ON](#)