

# Do You See What I See?



Just like camera frames and angles, camera movements play a part in storytelling. There are many ways a camera can move. Here are the main ones:

**a. Pan** – The camera moves horizontally, sometimes to keep a moving object in the picture.

**b. Tilt** – The camera moves vertically, like you're scanning someone from head to toe.

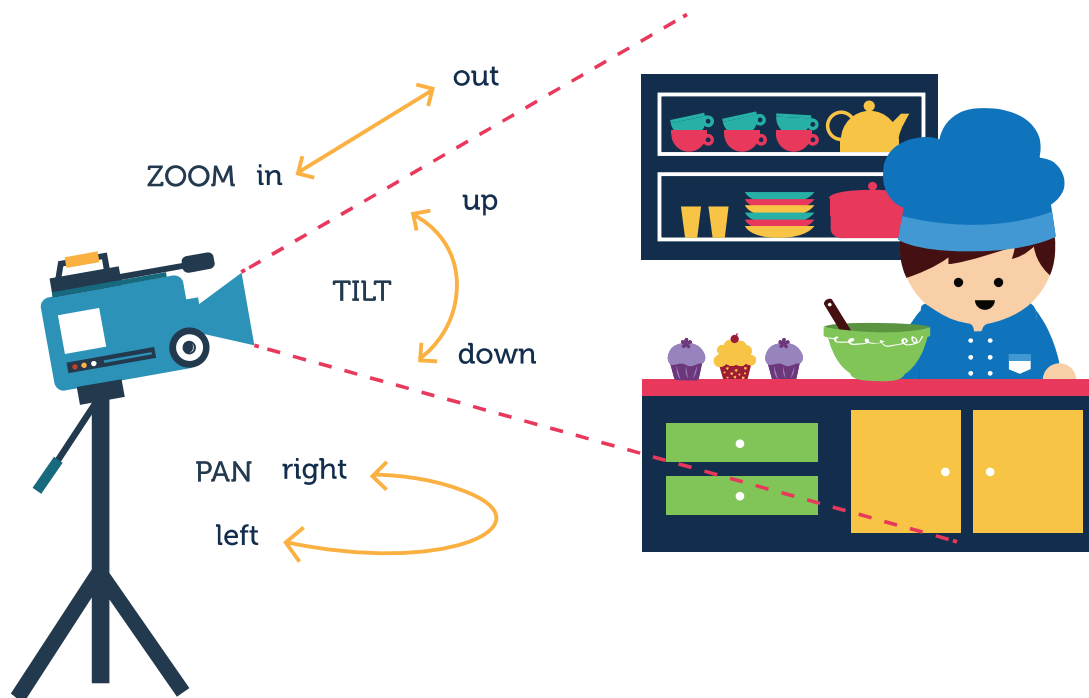
**c. Tracking** – Also called a dolly shot, the camera follows a moving figure. If the camera needs to cover a big distance, a track is built and the camera runs along it—hence the name tracking shot. The camera may also be mounted to something moving, like a car.

**d. Handheld** – Exactly what it sounds like, this shot requires that the camera be held in the hand. As you can imagine, the camerawork might be a little unsteady with some shaking, but the effect is that the scene feels very real and immediate.

**e. Steadicam** – A fairly new innovation, a Steadicam is a camera held in a harness worn by the camera operator. This device lets the camera operator move around more freely, capturing shots much more easily without any of the shaking you see from handheld shots.

**f. Crane shot** – The camera is attached to a crane to allow for free range of motion: it can move in any direction, swoop in on action, or move diagonally out of it.

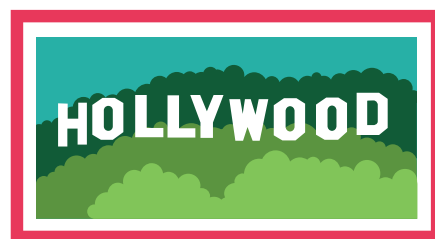
**g. Aerial** – Usually taken from a helicopter, aerial shots enjoy great flexibility: it can go anywhere, keep up with anything, move in and out of a scene, and give a feeling of exhilaration and action.



**h. Zoom** – As the camera zooms in, you get closer to a subject. As it zooms out, you get farther away. This is accomplished with zoom lenses, which can take you closer even as you stay in place.

**i. The Hitchcock Zoom** – Also known as the Dolly Zoom, the famous horror movie director, Alfred Hitchcock, invented this neat trick to use in his film, *Vertigo*. As the camera moves toward the subject, it is simultaneously zooming out, keeping the subject in place while distorting the background. See if you can catch it in the movies *Jaws*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Ghostbusters*, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Equipped with this cool bag of camera tricks, you're ready to tell your own story. Write a short story that incorporates **four** of the camera techniques described above. For example, you might write, "Our story begins in Los Angeles as we sweep over the iconic hilltop Hollywood sign from the air." In this case, the reader can see herself flying over the sign in an *aerial shot*!



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# Anatomy of a Screenplay



The screenplay, or script, is where a movie is born. It contains almost everything the actors and film crew need to bring the movie to life. What the actors say, what they do, how the camera moves, what the setting looks like—all this is in the screenplay.

If you've ever read a play, a screenplay will look familiar. Take a peek at an excerpt from the screenplay of *His Girl Friday*, written by Charles Lederer.



**FADE IN: INT. ANTEROOM CLOSE SHOT SWITCHBOARD**

Two telephone operators sit at switchboard busy plugging in and out answering calls.

**1ST OPERATOR**

Character

This is the Morning Post... The City Room? Just a moment, I'll connect you.  
(plugs in call)

Dialogue

**2ND OPERATOR**

Character

Morning Post... Sports Department?  
Just a moment --  
(plugs in call)

Camera operating instructions

**CAMERA PULLS BACK** to disclose the rest of the anteroom. To Camera left are the elevators -- at back wall directly behind switchboard are chairs and a table for visitors.

Setting description

At a table sits an office boy, about fifteen, doing a crossword puzzle. The big clock on the back wall shows that it is nearly one o'clock.

Camera operating  
instruction



**CLOSE SHOT OFFICE BOY**

as he bends over paper. We catch a glimpse of the squares of a crossword puzzle.

**MED. SHOT**

as a reporter comes out of the City Room, clanging the gate behind him. The office boy looks up.

● Actor's  
instruction

**OFFICE BOY**

What's a seven-letter word for --?

**REPORTER**

Don't ask me! If I knew any seven-letter words, I'd be something better than a reporter!

He catches a glimpse of the far elevator going down.

**REPORTER**

Hey! Down! Down!

**MED. SHOT ELEVATORS**

as reporter runs into the closed elevator door and pounds on it. It comes back, the door opens, and he gets in. The door closes. The near elevator comes up and discharges Hildy Johnson and Bruce Baldwin. Bruce carries an umbrella and wears a raincoat.



**MED. CLOSE SHOT TABLE**

office boy looking over his puzzle as  
Hildy and Bruce come into the scene.

**HILDY**

(with a smile)

Hello, Skinny. Remember me?

**OFFICE BOY**

(looks up; then a  
glowing smile)

Hildy Johnson!

**CLOSE SHOT SWITCHBOARD**

Hildy approaches the switchboard.

**HILDY**

(to operator)

Hello, Maisie.

The first operator looks up.

**MAISIE**

Hello -- Hildy! You coming back?

**HILDY**

No, just visiting.

Tell me, is the lord  
of the universe in today?



**MAISIE**

He is -- and in a very bad humor. I think somebody stole one of his crown jewels. Shall I announce you?

**HILDY**

No, never mind -- I'll blow my own trumpet.

**THREE SHOT BRUCE, HILDY AND OPERATOR**

Hildy turns to Bruce.

**HILDY**

I won't be more than ten minutes, I promise you.

**BRUCE**

Even ten minutes is a long time to be away from you.



Want to see this script in action?  
Just go to [https://archive.org/details/his\\_girl\\_friday](https://archive.org/details/his_girl_friday).



Think you've got a screenplay in you? Conjure up your own tale, use an event from your life or the life of someone you know, or even borrow a section from your favorite book. Once you have an idea for a story, you can write your very own screenplay! Make sure to include these elements: character names, dialogue, setting description, actor instructions, and camera operating instructions.

A large rectangular area with a dotted teal border, containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



You now have a screenplay on your hands that you want to turn into a movie. But where to start? Run a search online or at a library to see how screenwriters go about getting their words made into a movie. Write about the next steps you'd need to take on the back of this sheet.

# Storyboard It!

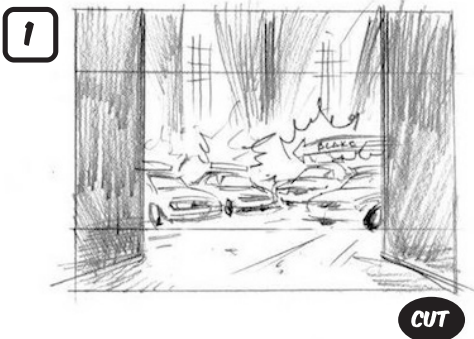


Once you've got your screenplay, you can start to visualize it with a storyboard. Think of it as a comic strip, with each panel of a storyboard moving the action along. Check out the awesome storyboard below from the movie *The Dark Knight Rises*. Look for mentions of the camera angle, dialogue, and explanations for how the action should unfold.

**Director:** Christopher Nolan

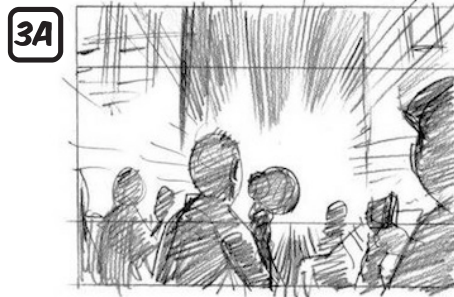
**Storyboard Artist:** Gabriel Hardman

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**1** **ANGLE FROM INSIDE ALLEY.**  
**BLAKE'S CRUISER ENTERS - SEALING THE BOTTLENECK.**

**CUT**



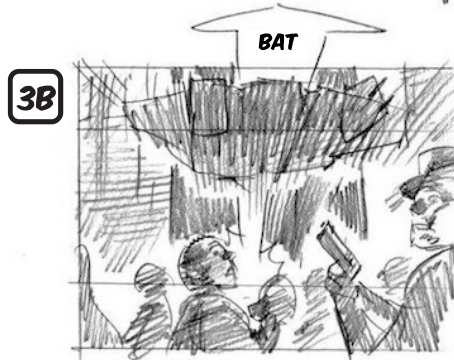
**3A** **OVER FOLEY.**  
**LIGHTS BLAST OUT OF THE ALLEY.**

**SHOT CONTINUED**



**2** **FOLEY SWAGGERS OUT.**  
**FOLEY**  
**"LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP, GENTLEMEN?"**

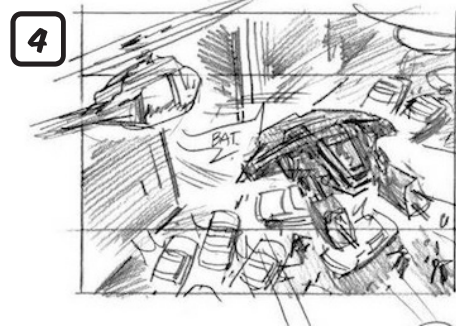
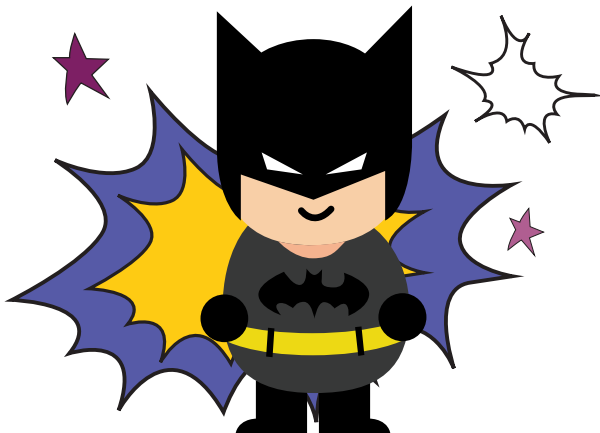
**CUT**



**3B** **"VAROOOM!"**  
**THE BAT ROARS OVER THEM IN A BLUR.**

**CUT**

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**4** **COPTERS SWERVE AS THE BAT ROARS OUT.**

**BAT EXITS**



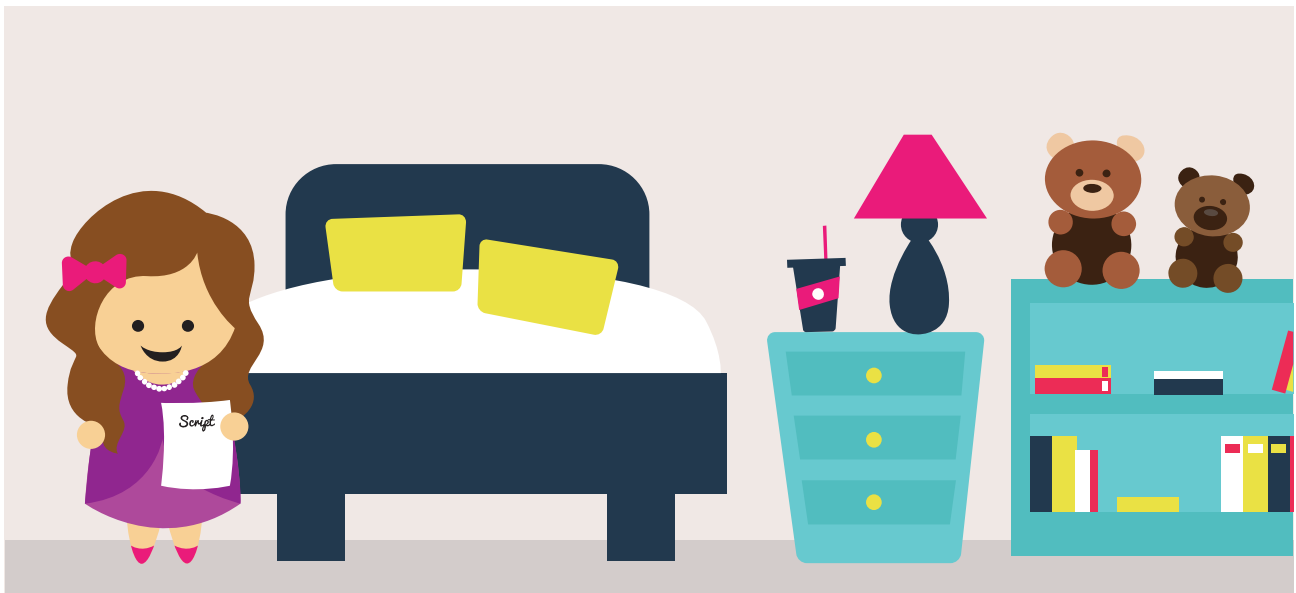
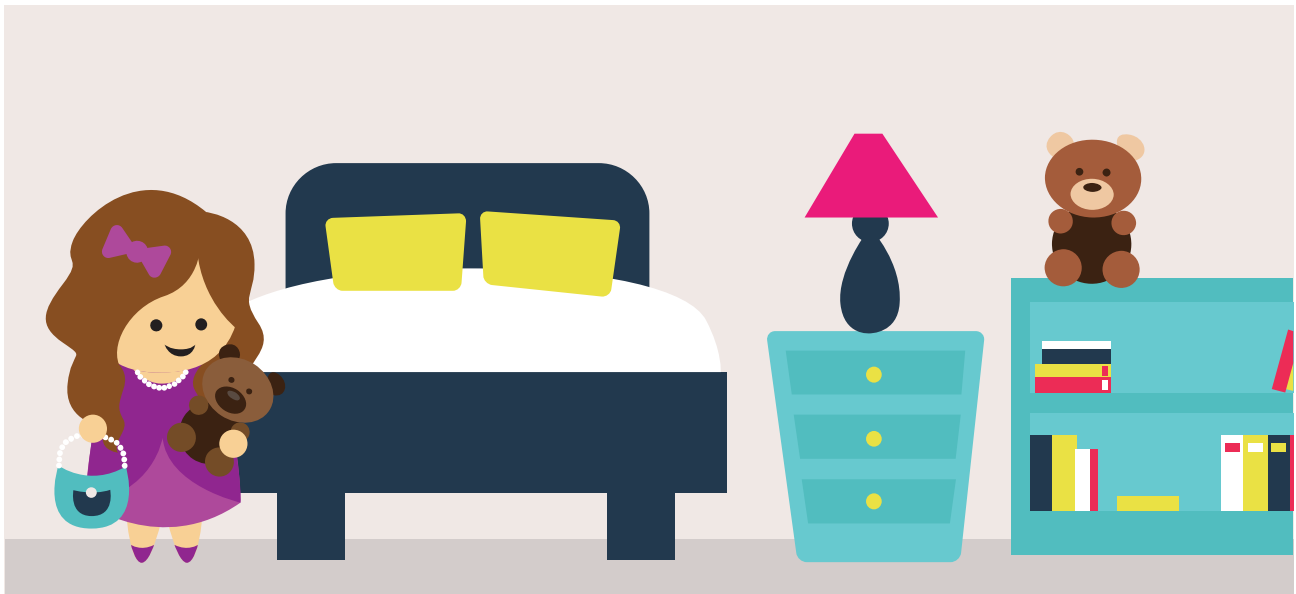
Now it's your turn to take over the action! Give a portion of the screenplay you've written some visuals with this blank storyboard template. Make each frame show a change in action and write any dialogue or descriptions below.


# Spot the Goofs!



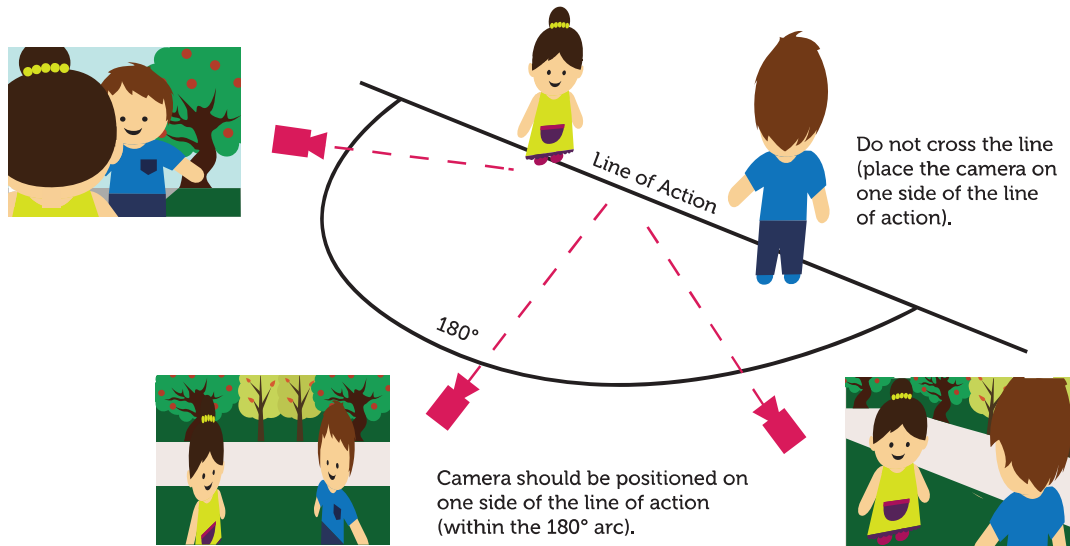
If you're a sharp-eyed movie watcher, you've probably noticed little errors like a character drinking from a half-empty glass one moment and the next moment ... the glass is full! Commonly called goofs, these tiny mistakes are officially named continuity errors and happen in between takes. It's the job of the script supervisor to make sure that when the camera pauses between takes, things on the set are put back in a way that makes sense, including everything from props (like water glasses) and lighting to actors' hair, makeup, and costumes.

Now, see if you've got what it takes to be a script supervisor. The image on top is from the first take, and now the director wants to do a second take. Things have gotten shifted around, and it's your job to spot the differences. Circle all the ones you can find!



# You've Crossed the Line!

The best camerawork is the kind that tells the story clearly and lets you feel like you're right in the middle of the action. That's why filmmakers usually stick to the 180-degree rule, which states that the cameras should not cross the line of action.



**Line of action:** An invisible line connecting two actors onscreen. It's a 180-degree angle, which, as you may recall from math, is just a straight line.

Notice how these two characters are always on the same side of the screen, even when filmed from three different angles. The boy in blue is always on the right side of the screen.

## What the 180-degree rule does:

Here's an example. Imagine a car chase scene in a movie. Two cars are moving at high speed, one chasing the other. Once the director has established the shot, she can use the 180-degree rule to help the audience follow what's happening.

