

READING A SHORT FILM OR SCENE

READING A SHOT

- What is included in the shot: the whole place, a person, just a face or a detail?
- What can you tell about the place you can see?
- If there's a person in the shot, what can you tell about them? For example, what do they look like, how old are they, what are they wearing?
- Are there any important objects or things in the shot?
- Where was the shot filmed from? Was the camera straight in front of the subject, behind, to the side, or at an angle?
- Was it filmed from eye level, looking up, looking down, or from straight overhead?
- How are things arranged in the shot? Does the composition look natural, formal, unbalanced or slanted?
- What movement is there in the shot?
- Does the camera move? In which direction? Is the movement fast or slow, smooth or jerky?
- What colour are the things in the shot?
- Are the colours light or dark, strong or weak, warm (orange/red) or cold (blue)? What about the colour of the light?
- Is the light bright and flat, or dark and shadowy?
- Can you work out where the lights were?
- Is the light natural or artificial?
- What's in focus – the whole scene, or just part of it? Does the focus change?
- Does the lens include a big part of the scene, or a small section (like looking through a telescope)?

COMPARING SHOTS

When you move on to the next shot, you can 'read' it in the same way.

Concentrate on looking at what's new. How is it different from the previous shot? How does it add to the story?

EDITING

- Does the shot cut straight to the next one, or does it dissolve, fade, or change in another way?
- How fast do the shots change? Does the editing speed up (or slow down)?

SOUND

- Try turning the sound off and just watching the images. What difference does it make?
- Try playing the sequence with your eyes closed (or with the screen off/covered). What kinds of sound are there?

TIME AND SPACE

- How does the action on screen compare with real life?
- Does it take the same amount of time, less time or more time?
- Have they done this by leaving things out, adding them, or using special effects?
- Does the action happen in one place, or in two or more places at once?