

## Topic 96

### Camera Angles

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The relationship between the camera and the object being photographed (ie the ANGLE) gives emotional information to an audience, and guides their judgment about the character or object in shot. The more extreme the angle (ie the further away it is from eye level), the more symbolic and heavily-loaded the shot.

#### 1. The Bird's-Eye view

This shows a scene from directly overhead, a very unnatural and strange angle. Familiar objects viewed from this angle might seem totally unrecognisable at first (umbrellas in a crowd, dancers' legs). This shot does, however, put the audience in a godlike position, looking down on the action. People can be made to look insignificant, ant-like, part of a wider scheme of things. Hitchcock (and his admirers, like Brian de Palma) is fond of this style of shot.



A camera man, raised above the action, gets a high angle shot

## **2. High Angle**

Not so extreme as a bird's eye view. The camera is elevated above the action using a crane to give a general overview. High angles make the object photographed seem smaller, and less significant (or scary). The object or character often gets swallowed up by their setting - they become part of a wider picture.

## **3. Eye Level**

A fairly neutral shot; the camera is positioned as though it is a human actually observing a scene, so that eg actors' heads are on a level with the focus. The camera will be placed approximately five to six feet from the ground.

## **4. Low Angle**

These increase height (useful for short actors like Tom Cruise or James McAvoy) and give a sense of speeded motion. Low angles help give a sense of confusion to a viewer, of powerlessness within the action of a scene. The background of a low angle shot will tend to be just sky or ceiling, the lack of detail about the setting adding to the disorientation of the viewer. The added height of the object may make it inspire fear and insecurity in the viewer, who is psychologically dominated by the figure on the screen.

## **5. Oblique/Canted Angle**

Sometimes the camera is tilted (ie is not placed horizontal to floor level), to suggest imbalance, transition and instability (very popular in horror movies). This technique is used to suggest

POINT-OF-View shots (ie when the camera becomes the 'eyes' of one particular character, seeing what they see — a hand held camera is often used for this.

Source: <http://www.mediaknowall.com/camangles.html>