

# Photography on the screen

## ■ Definition

**Cinematography** – the art of photography on the screen – is a fusion of science and art that uses a series of images to create a motion picture. In the cinema business, the person responsible for making artistic and technical decisions related to the image is the director of photography (DP).

## ■ The process

This process involves different techniques such as:

- general composition of a scene;
- lighting of the set;
- choice of cameras, lenses and filters;
- angles and movements of the camera;
- integration of special effects.

These elements create a visual **environment** which helps the spectators to follow the plot of the story, to understand the personality of the character and to feel immersed in the story.

## ■ The crew

Cinematography needs the active collaboration of many professionals: the producer, the **director**, the designer, the sound technicians, the camera crew, the actors, and the “grips”.

**director:** regista  
**environment:** ambiente  
**head:** testa  
**foreground:** primo piano

**scale:** dimensione  
**shooting:** ripresa fotografica  
**waist:** punto vita



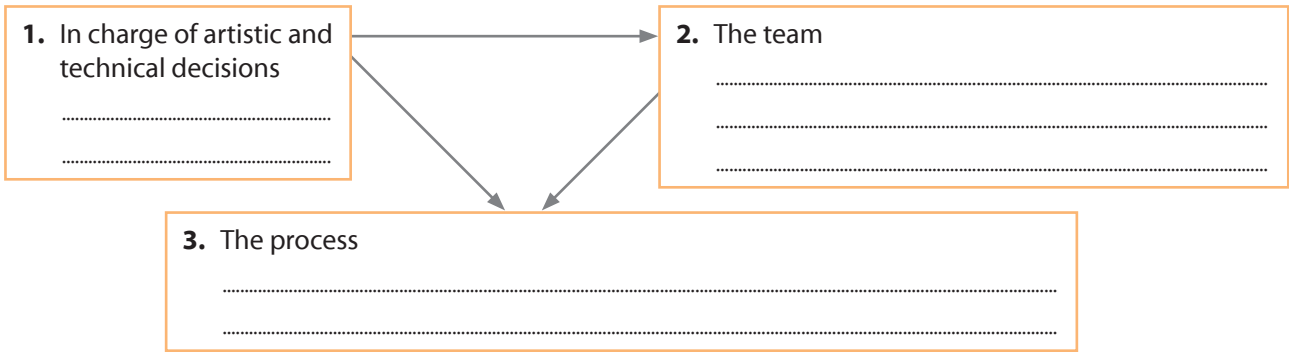
## ■ Shooting techniques

Controlling what the spectator sees and how the image is presented by choosing the right **shooting** technique is the main job of the DP. According to the emotional strength of the scene, there are different types of shooting:

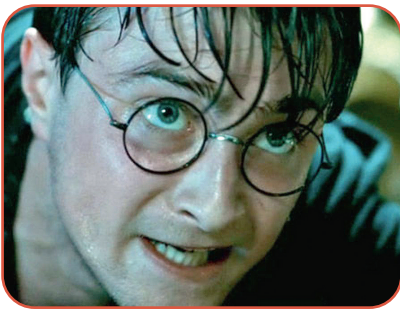
- a **bird's eye** shows a wide area of land from a very high angle;
- an **extreme long shot** captures a very wide area to show the **scale** of subjects in relation to their environment;
- a **long shot** is closer to the area where viewers can have a better look of what is going on;
- a **medium shot** shows a person from the **waist** up; it is used for general group scenes;
- a **close-up shot** features the entire **head** of the character;
- an **over-the-shoulder shot** shows an out-of-focus shoulder and head in the **foreground** and another person or object in focus in the background.



**1**  Read the text and complete the chart.



**2**  What shooting technique has been used?



1. ....



2. ....



3. ....




4. ....



5. ....



6. ....

**3**  **GROUP WORK** Choose three types of shooting techniques, surf the net and find some images, then describe the photos and explain which technique/s has/have been used.



**AN ITALIAN DP**

One of the most famous contemporary directors of photography is the Italian Vittorio Storaro (1940 -) who has been nominated for and won many awards in his career. He won three Oscar Prize for the Best Photography in 1979 (*Apocalypse Now*), 1981 (*Reds*), and 1987 (*The Last Emperor*).

