

Role 1 Film Assignment

The Opening Shot

A film project with a focus on Mise en scene

Opening scenes establish the setting and tone of the film, introduces the audience to the main character, and explores the dramatic premise of the story.

Watch Hitchcock's [Rear Window Opening Scene](#)



In the first 3 minutes of Rear Window we learn about the character's neighborhood, the time of year (summer), the character's name, profession, situation (broke leg, likely on assignment as a photographer/photojournalist), and relationship (girlfriend who is a model).

TASK: In teams of 2-4, you will create an opening scene (60-120 seconds) of a larger work in film. (Note: you are only creating the opening scene, not the whole film. Yet, this scene should introduce the audience to the character, and give information on the film's plot and dramatic situation).

This activity is focused on the skills of **DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER**
In this teacher-led assignment, everyone will take on the role of cinematographer. That does not exclude you from also performing other roles, as you often will.

- This clip should consist of various *stylistic cuts and transitions* (not merely a continuous tracking shot), color grading, and pacing if used and submitted for the **EDITOR** role
- This scene should contain some dialogue if used and submitted for the **SCRIPTWRITER** role.

Inquiry

Download and review the role of Cinematographer in **Film Roles Explained**

Research the role of cinematographer. Explore the award winning cinematographers here.

Complete [this assignment](#)

Choose a cinematographer that will influence your work

The arrangement of everything that appears in the framing – actors, lighting, décor, props, costume – is called **mise-en-scène**, a French term that means “placing on stage.” The frame and camerawork are also considered part of the mise-en-scène of a movie. In cinema, placing on the stage really means placing on the screen, and the director is in charge of deciding what goes where, when, and how. This includes:

1. Camera shot and Proxemics
2. Camera Angles
3. Camera Lens, Filter and Stock
4. Colour
5. Dominance
6. Lighting
7. Subsidiary Contrast
8. Density
9. Composition
10. Form
11. Framing
12. Depth of Field
13. Character Placement
14. Staging Positions
15. Character Proxemics

Read for more info: [Mise-en-scene in films](#) and [Learn 15 key elements of mise-en-scene](#)

Watch this video essay '[Mise-en-scene in Moonrise Kingdom](#)'

Create an action plan and set out your filmmaker intentions

To Do:

- Choose a Cinematographer and Research the influential filmmaker which will inspire your work.
- Identify the genre
- Articulate the stylistic choices you will attempt in your own work
- Create a scene from a genre using elements of mise en scene.
- You should have at least one character in your shot.
- Plan an establishing shot with a creative way to give detailed information about who your character is, and what this film may be about.
- Ensure the sequence is at least 60 seconds

OPENING SCENE

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Student filmmakers often limit themselves unnecessarily in their production design.

- Instead of looking for a room that is exactly what you envision for the scene, take creative steps to change the environment into more of what you want.
- Attention to detail in the dressing of the set and characters can be the difference between a scene that is believable and a scene that looks phony.

Think of it as establishing shots or a sequence from a film, rather than an entire film in itself.

- What would it take to make your garage look like a prison cell?
- What would it take to make your backyard look like a rainforest?
- Could you make a street in your neighborhood look like a street in a foreign country or a different time period?

These might seem impossible at the moment, but a bit of ingenuity could put all these possibilities within your grasp.

What's Next?

Very well, so you have an actor, cast by type, and a genre.

Now you need a little backstory.

- Where and when does your scene need to take place?

→ What is going on in the world of the film?

Technical Skills

You must aim for the highest **quality** in:

Cinematography – correct exposure, focus, white balance, steadiness, movement, camera angle, framing, composition. Try to increase the production value of your cinematography by using our ISM specialist equipment (mini-jib, dolly, glidecam etc)

Sound – make sure you design the soundtrack. Remember that this consists of

Diegetic Sounds	Non-diegetic sounds
Actual sounds when filming	Sound FX
Ambient sounds recorded separately	Music (use only original sound bytes)
Foley – to enhance the natural sounds	Voice-over

Editing/post production

Once you have your shots, the requirements for submission include the following -

Formal Requirements -

- Film sequence is at least 60 seconds and no longer than 120 seconds
- A variety of camera shots, angles, and movement is evident.
- A distinct genre is employed
- Details about the character are revealed in the mise-en-scene
- Information about the dramatic premise of the film can be inferred from the strategic use of Mise-en-scene

Think about all the choices you have for camera shots/angles/movement, composition, keyframing, pacing, transitions, sound. (Sometimes a well chosen special effect on the soundtrack can really enhance the impact). Remember, all sound must be created by you.

Choose any effects carefully (e.g. speed change, split screen, colour correction, distortions etc) Do you actually need any effects? Does it look contrived? Or does it add to the style of your narrative?

When considering all of the above, always have in mind exactly what meaning you are trying to create for the audience. How will technique enhance that meaning?

Other Requirements

1. The set has been transformed to meet genre conventions and story requirements
2. The props, costumes, acting, and sound meet genre conventions and

3. The staging, lighting, and camerawork enhance the overall effect of the scene

Research

Describes the main features of mise-en-scene.

- **investigation of how the elements of mise-en-scene affect the scene (lighting, camera work, editing, sound).**
- **Include secondary sources**

What is mise-en-scene?	
How is mise-en-scene created?	
Mise-en-scene Case Study	
Film Name	
Director	
Cinematographer	
Editor	
What other works has the Director/Editor created?	
Provide Link to Video	
How was the mise-en-scene created?	
Why is it successful?	
How does the mise-en-scene affect the scene?	
How does the editing (pacing, rhythm) affect the scene?	
What have you learned? How could you use it in your next project?	
Sources (Using MLA referencing)	

