AERIAL SHOT – Filming a shot from above through use of plane or helicopter. Should be used only when necessary due to the costs involved.

ANGLE – AKA camera angle. The viewpoint from which the subject of the shot is depicted

ANGLE ON – Directing the camera to move and focus onto a specific subject.

ARC SHOT – Filming the subject through a moving, encircling camera.

ASIDE – When a film character breaks the imaginary “fourth wall” and speaks directly to the film viewers.

ASPECT RATIO – A measure of the relative sizes of the horizontal and vertical components of an image.

ASSEMBLY – Arranging all the shots in accordance with the order of the script. This is the first step of editing.

AVAILABLE LIGHT – At an off-set location, this is the light that is naturally available. Shots are more realistic when natural light is used rather than artificial light.

AXIS OF ACTION – Also called the “180° line” is an imaginary line that passes through the two main actors of a scene, defining the spatial relations of all the elements of the scene as being to the right or left.

BACKLIGHTING – Lighting for a shot emitting from behind the subject, causing the subject to appear as a silhouette or in semi-darkness.

BALANCE – How elements such as light, sound, and movement work together within a film’s visual frame.

BLUE SCREEN – Also known as green screen. This is a blue or green backdrop that actors are filmed in front of. Later the blank screen can be filled with digitally generated images to complete the background.

BOOM MICROPHONE – A long pole with a microphone on the end. Controlled by the “Boom Operator.”

BOUNCE BOARD – A large white card made of foam or poster board used to reflect soft light.

CEL – A hand drawn sheet representing a single animation frame, usually made of a clear material like cellulose.

CLOSE-UP – A shot in which the subject is larger than the frame, revealing much detail.

CROSS-CUTTING – Also known as inter-cutting or parallel editing. The act of alternating two different scenes – usually in different locations – to suggest parallel action.

CROSSFADE – Fading out of one scene and into another. There is a moment of interruption between the scenes.

CUT – A change in camera angle or placement, location, or time. “Cut” is called during filming to indicate that the current take is over.

DEEPFOCUS SHOT – a shot with exceptional depth of field.

DEPTH OF FIELD – The distance between the elements in the foreground and background of a shot that appear in sharp focus.

DIFFUSION – Placing materials (such as filters, glass, mesh, etc.) in front of the light in order to reduce the light’s harshness.

DIRECTING THE EYE – The use of lighting to emphasize what is important in the shot.

DIRECT SOUND – When sound and image are recorded at the same time.

DUTCH TILT – A shot composed with the horizon not parallel with the bottom of the frame.

DYNAMIC FRAME – The narrowing and widening of a frame to fit an appropriate ratio for the scene.

ESTABLISHING SHOT – The first shot of a new scene that introduces the audience to the space in which the forthcoming scene will take place.

EXTREMELY LONG SHOT – When the camera is placed an extremely far distance from the subject.

EYELINE MATCH – Creating the illusion of a character looking at an object by cutting between two shots.

FAVOR ON – Focusing and/or highlighting a specific subject or action in a shot.

FLASH CUT – A very quick shot that can have an almost subliminal effect. These shots can sometimes be as short as one frame.

FOURTH WALL – The imaginary plane that separates the characters and action of the film from the viewing audience.

HIGHLIGHTING – Using beams of light for the purposes of illuminating particular aspects of a subject.

INTO FRAME – A person or object moving into the picture without the camera moving. This is similar to a character making his way onto the stage in a play.

IRIS OUT – Ending a scene with a closing circle that comes in from the edges of the screen. Similar to an iris of the eye contracting.

KEY LIGHT – The primary light source illuminating the subject.

LAP DISSOLVE – Transitioning between two scenes by fading out of the first as the next one becomes clearer.

LOCKED-DOWN SHOT – Filming a scene while the camera is fixed to keep the image motionless.

LOW-ANGLE SHOT – When the scene is filmed from below; often to make the subject(s) appear larger.

MEDIUM SHOT – Camera shot from medium distance, typically above the waist. Allows viewers to see body language, but not facial expressions.

OFF BOOK – When an actor has completely memorized his or her lines and is no longer in need of the script.

PAN – The action of rotating a camera about its vertical axis. Related to a tilt, the action of rotating a camera up and down its horizontal axis.

POINT OF VIEW (POV) – A shot from the vantage of the eyes of a character to show the viewer what the character is seeing.

PULL BACK – A shot where the camera physical moves away or zooms out from the subject to reveal the full context of the scene.

PUSH IN – The opposite of a pull back; a shot in which the camera moves towards or zooms into an object.

SCENE – A series of shots taking place in one location dealing with one action.

SHOT – The section of unedited film from the time the camera starts to the time it stops.

SMASH CUT TO – An abrupt cut from one scene to another without a smooth transition.

SOFT FOCUS – A visual effect blurring the image by using filters or shooting with an out-of-focus lens.

SOUNDSTAGE – A large area (usually in a studio) where elaborate sets may be constructed.

STATIC SHOT – A shot using an immobile camera.

STOCK SHOT – Previously recorded footage, such as footage of historical events, which can be edited into the film.

STORYBOARD – Sequence of pictures created to describe each scene in the film production. Usually indicates camera angle and movement, blocking of actors, and size of the frame.

TIGHT ON – A close-up shot of the subject.

TRACKING SHOT – A shot which follows the subject through space. Often involves mounting the camera onto a dolly and moving it along dolly track.

TRANSITION – The style by which shots and scenes are joined together and progress from one to the next.

ZOOM SHOT – A shot in which the magnification of the objects by the camera’s lenses is increased (zoom in) or decreased (zoom out/back).