



# **TEACHER TUTORIAL:** THE FILMMAKING PROCESS

PowerPoint Presentation

Featuring movie stills and production shots from  
*Citizen Kane* (1941, directed by Orson Welles)

*To be a writer, you need a pen. To be a painter, a brush. To be a musician, an instrument. But to be a filmmaker, you need the collaboration of others to bring your vision to the canvas that is the movie screen.*

—Martin Scorsese



## Overview:

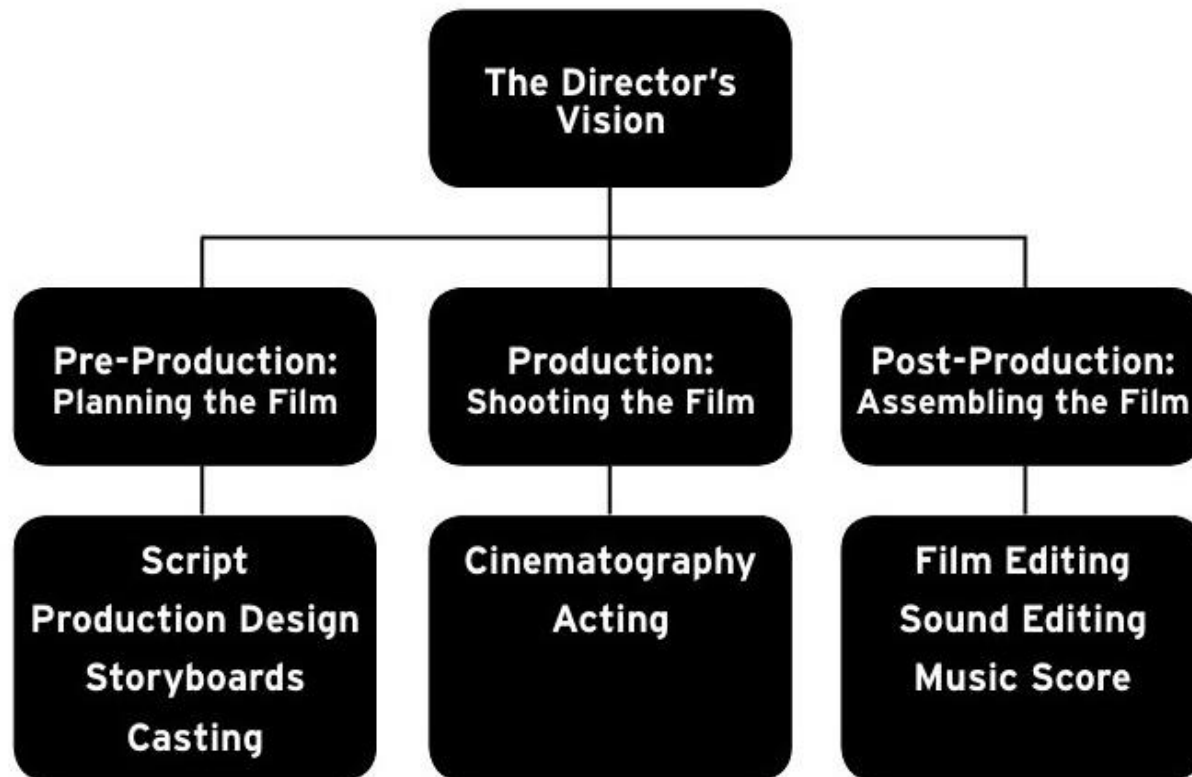
This short tutorial introduces the three stages of production in making a movie. Screenshots and production stills used to illustrate key concepts of the filmmaking process are from the classic film *Citizen Kane* (1941, directed by Orson Welles).



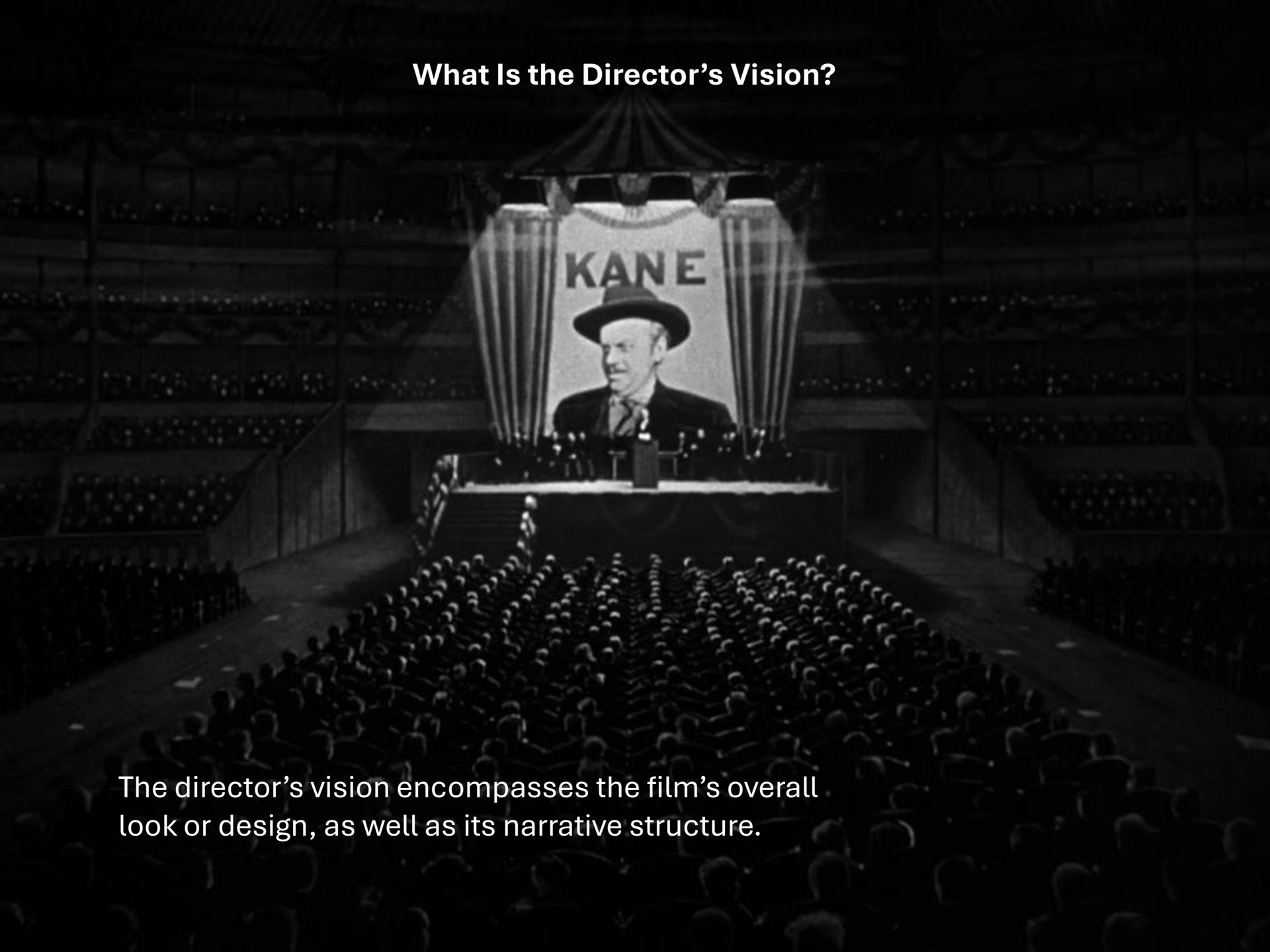
Charles Foster Kane is a fictional character, a wealthy and arrogant publisher. His life story is told in flashbacks by various people who knew him.

# Three Stages of Production

**CONCEPT:** Making a movie is a collaborative process that involves the knowledge and talents of a team of professionals, from actors to production designers, and cinematographers to composers. The director is the one person who has the greatest understanding of how all the parts fit together to make a whole.



## What Is the Director's Vision?



The director's vision encompasses the film's overall look or design, as well as its narrative structure.



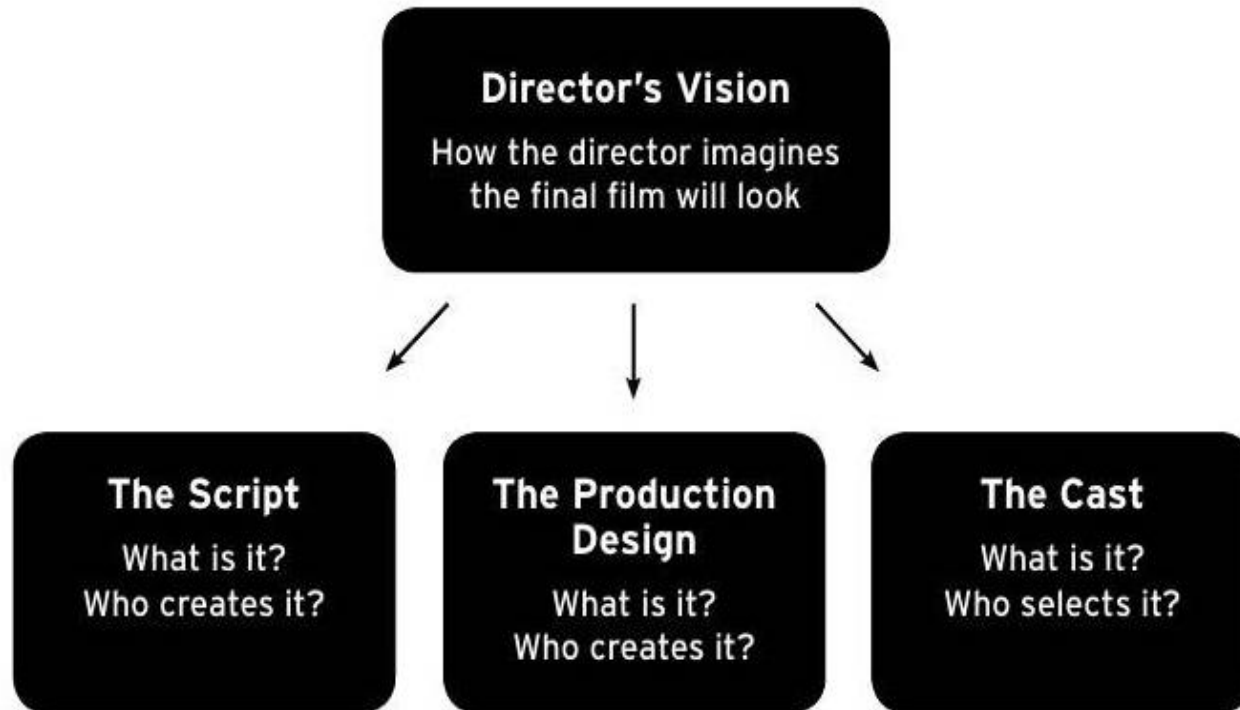
# Visual Design

**CONCEPT:** A movie's visual design is the “look” of the final film. In planning this look, the director considers many different factors, including elements of lighting, set design, costuming and makeup.



# What Happens During Pre-Production?

The director plans the film's narrative structure and overall look.



# The Script

**CONCEPT:** A movie script, or screenplay, is a written document that includes the narrative and basic visual elements of the story. The script is like a blueprint, or plan, for how the story will unfold on the screen.

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. XANADU - FAINT DAWN - 1940 (MINIATURE)**

Window, very small in the distance, illuminated.

All around this is an almost totally black screen. Now, as the camera moves slowly towards the window which is almost a postage stamp in the frame, other forms appear; barbed wire, cyclone fencing, and now, looming up against an early morning sky, enormous iron grille work. Camera travels up what is now shown to be a gateway of gigantic proportions and holds on the top of it - a huge initial "K" showing darker and darker again the dawn sky. Through this and beyond we see the fairy-tale mountaintop of Xanadu, the great castle a silhouette as its summit, the little window a distant accent in the darkness.

**DISSOLVE:**

**A SERIES OF SET -UPS, EACH CLOSER TO THE GREAT WINDOW, ALL TELLING SOMETHING OF:**

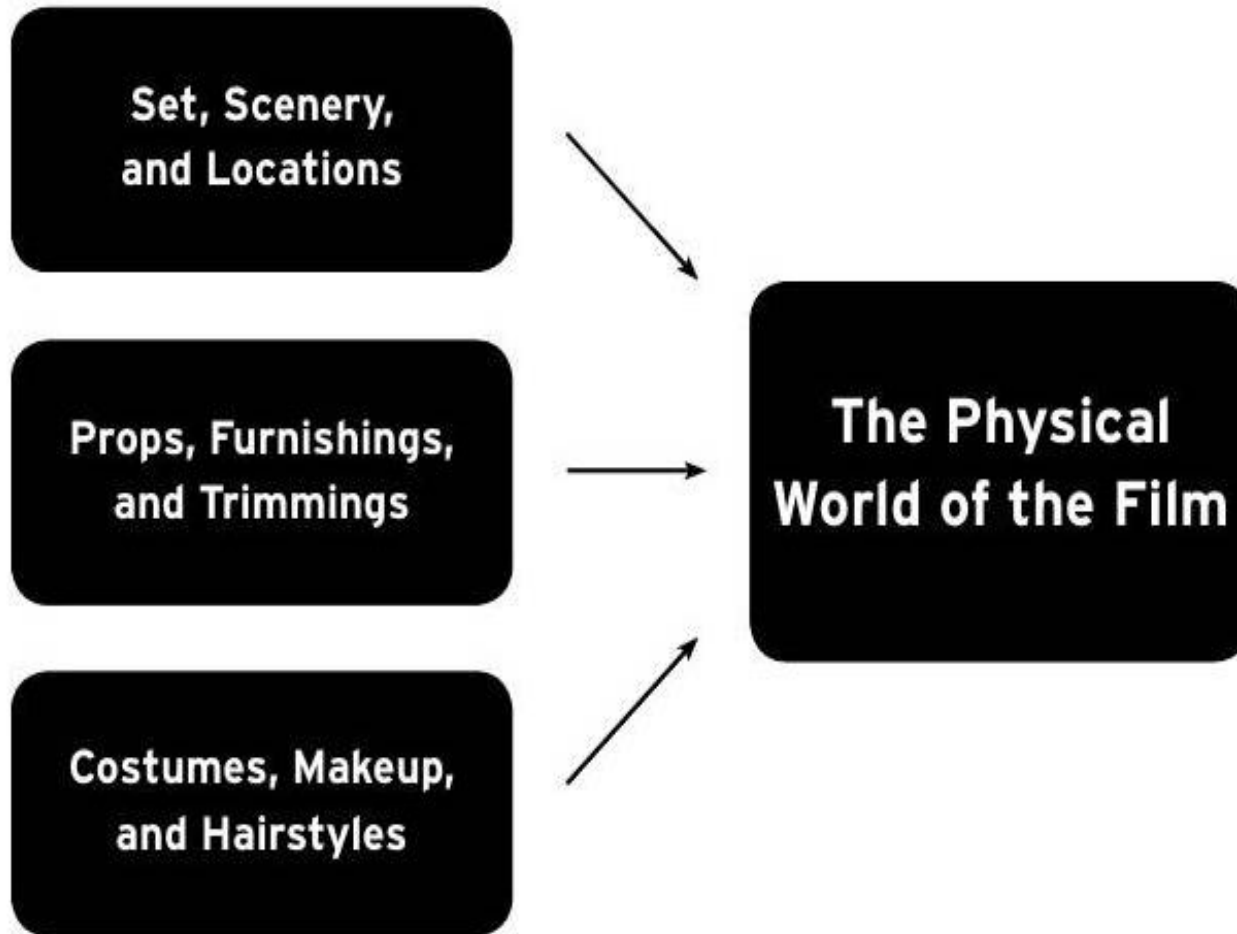
The literally incredible domain of CHARLES FOSTER KANE.

Its right flank resting for nearly forty miles on the Gulf Coast, it truly extends in all directions farther than the eye can see. Designed by nature to be almost completely bare and flat - it was, as will develop, practically all marshland with





# **What Is Production Design?**



## Designing the Sets

**CONCEPT:** A set may be any interior location, such as a dining room (bottom left). A set may also be constructed to suggest an exterior location. Attention to detail is critical in set design, as it transports the audience into the physical world of the movie.



## Designing the Sets— Props and Trimmings

**CONCEPT:** A *prop* is a movable object that is part of a set. *Trimmings* are the decorative elements on the set.



# What Does the Production Designer Do?

## Director's Vision

How the director  
imagines the final  
film will look



## Production Designer's Tasks

- Creates the physical world of the film
- Works with the director to plan and design all sets
- Finds exterior locations when they are needed
- Sketches set designs; builds models of sets
- Makes a list of props for all scenes
- Oversees set construction
- Works with the costume designer and makeup artists

## Costuming and Make-up

**CONCEPT:** Costuming and make-up are critical elements in transporting the audience into the world of the movie. Both can help to establish the setting of the story, and both contribute to character development.





## Aging Charles Foster Kane

**CONCEPT:** A character's physical appearance contributes to how audiences read and respond to the character. Since *Citizen Kane* is the story of Kane's life, aging him in a realistic way was critical.



# What Happens During Production?

The director works with the cinematographer and the actors on the set to photograph the story.



# What Is Cinematography?

Use of Light  
and Shadow

Use of Color Palette

Use of Movement

A visual language  
that tells the audience

- where to look
- what to pay close attention to
- how to respond

# What Does the Cinematographer Do?

## Director's Vision

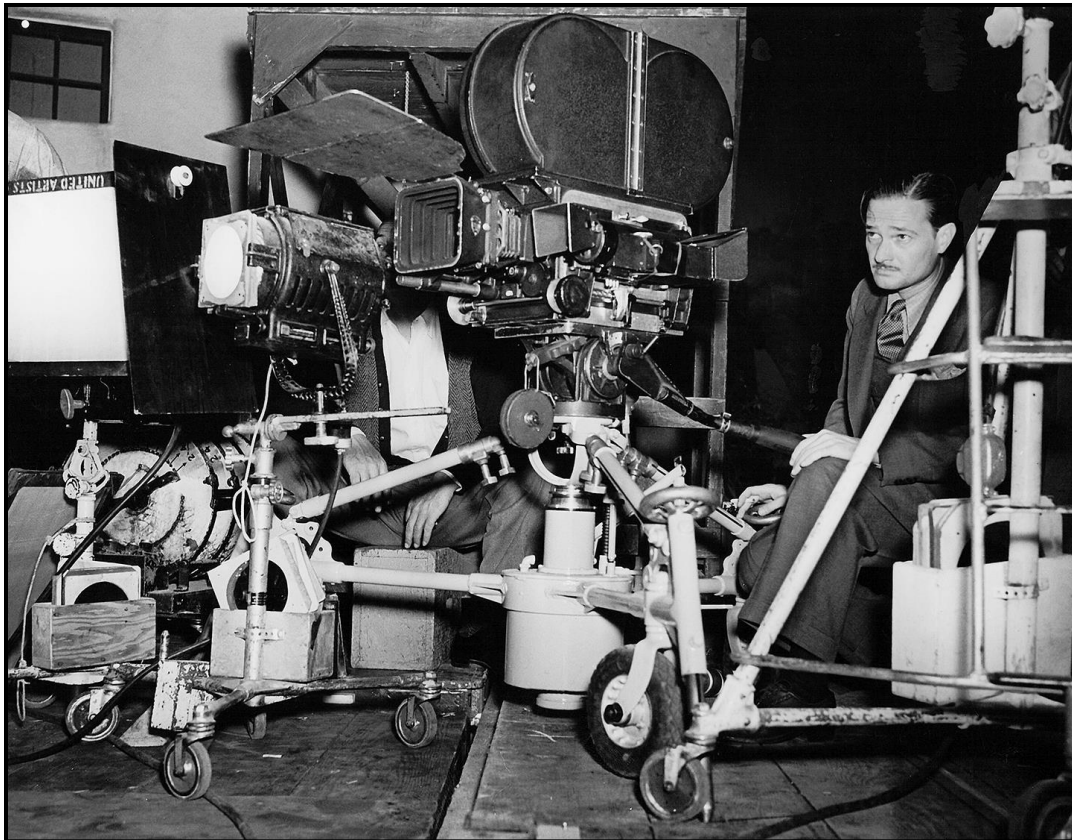
How the director imagines the final film will look



## Cinematographer's Tasks

- Works with the director to plan how to photograph the scenes
- Decides where to place the camera for each shot
- Decides how to light each shot and scene. The use of light depends on the story and the director's vision of how the film should look.
- Often, though not always, operates the camera

**CONCEPT:** The primary responsibility of the *cinematographer* is to translate the director's vision to the screen through moving images. As a result, the cinematographer works closely with the director in both the pre-production and production stages.



Photographing *Citizen Kane* was indeed the most exciting professional adventure of my career.

—Gregg Toland



## Lighting the Shot

**CONCEPT:** *Light* is a critical element in composition. Light draws attention to key, or principal, areas within a frame. High intensity light can make important details more visible within the frame and suggest realism. Lower intensity light can produce shadows that conceal details and create mood.



## Camera Angles

**CONCEPT:** The cinematographer works with the director to determine where to place the camera in relation to the subject. Camera distances and angles suggest meaning by controlling how an audience views the characters and objects within the frame.



## From Set to Screen—The Dolly Shot

**CONCEPT:** The *dolly shot* is a type of camera movement. “Dolly” refers to a wheeled platform or cart that moves on a rail track. The camera is positioned on the platform. The platform and therefore the camera can move along the track towards or alongside or away from the subject. The movement is generally smooth, without any shakiness.



## From Set to Screen—The Crane Shot

**CONCEPT:** In a *crane shot*, the camera is mounted on a crane or jib that can move up and down. This type of high angle shot gives the audience an overhead perspective of the setting and/or the subject. Crane shots are often used to create a sense of space, to highlight a setting, and/or to suggest a sense of awe.





## From Set to Screen



Shown at left is the set of Mrs. Kane's boardinghouse. The camera is positioned close to the window to capture Mrs. Kane (right) looking outside at her son playing in the snow.



## From Set to Screen



For this exterior shot of Mrs. Kane and her son Charles, the camera is positioned close to the actors. In addition to the camera, the production shot shows how the special effect of falling snow is created. The “snow” is inside the bundle and is blown upwards over the characters.

## From Set to Screen



In this production shot, the camera is positioned close to and slightly above Susan Alexander, Kane's second wife, who aspires to become an opera star. Director Orson Welles watches the action from where he sits in a wheelchair, having injured his ankle earlier during production.

# What Happens During Post-Production?

The director works with the film editor to assemble the raw footage into a final film, and with the sound editor and music composer to create the soundtrack.



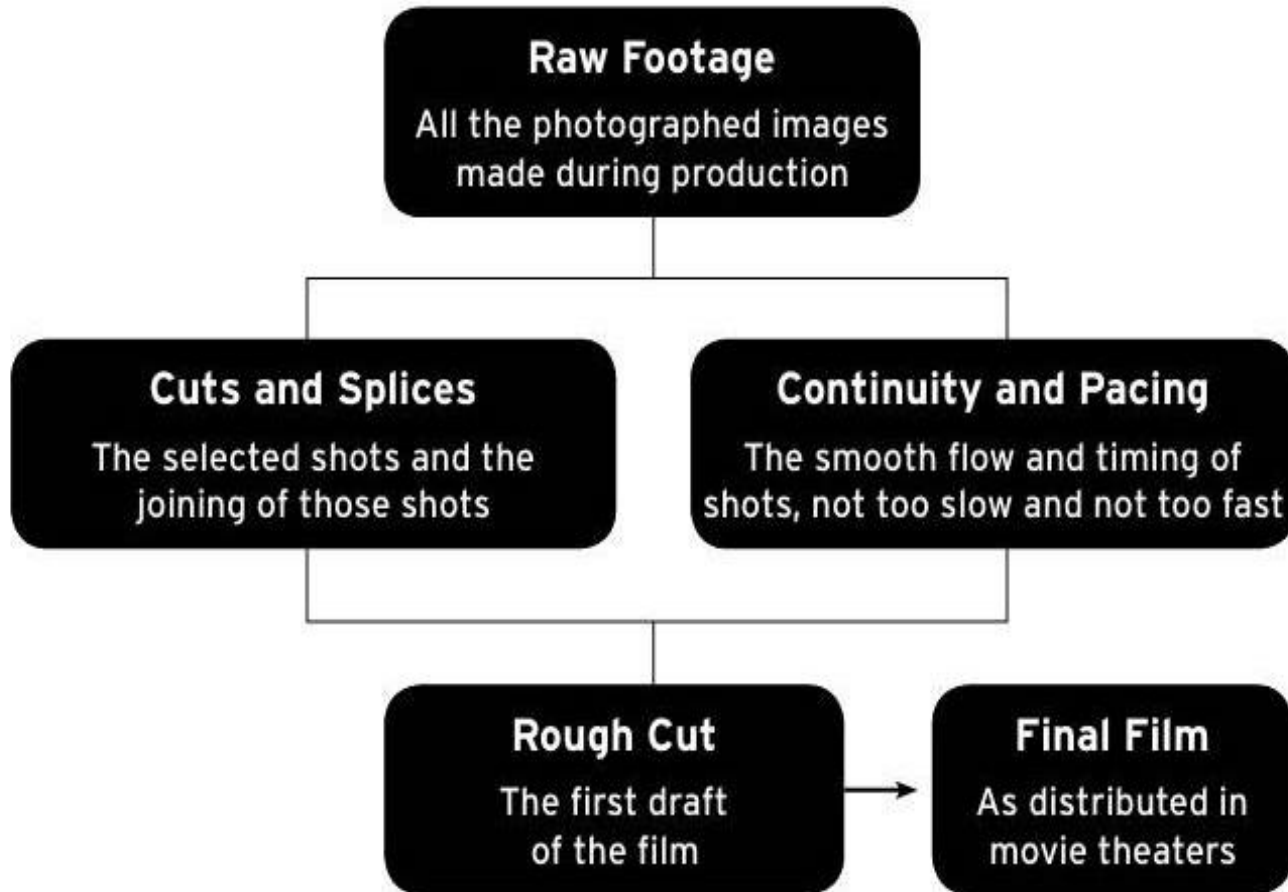


*I can't help but believe that editing is the essential thing for a director, the only moment when he completely controls the form of his film . . .*

*That's when the director is, potentially, a true artist.*

—Orson Welles

# What Is Film Editing?





# What Does the Film Editor Do?

## Director's Vision

How the director  
imagines the story  
will unfold



## Film Editor's Tasks

- Decides which shots to keep and which to cut
- Determines where shots should begin and end so that the story flows smoothly and the pacing, or timing, is neither too slow nor too fast
- Determines the best order in which to arrange the shots according to the film's three-act structure
- Determines the type of transition between shots or scenes so that the shots and scenes flow smoothly one to the other

*Very often, an editor will sit in the projection room, he'll see the thing and think he'll know how it's going to go, what the rhythm will be. And you'll try it that way and start playing around with it and experimenting. That's one of the great things about editing—that it's something you can play with, try to perfect, try one thing then another. It's a great, marvelous plastic toy.*

—Robert Wise  
Editor, *Citizen Kane*



## Editing Decisions—Scene Transitions

Technique	What does it look like?	Timing	What meaning does it suggest?
Fade (in or out)	One image appear out of or into darkness	Slow	Passage of time or change of location
Dissolve	One image melts or overlaps into another	Slower	A link between two characters and/or objects
Wipe	A vertical bar moves horizontally across the screen replacing one image with another	Quick	A passage of time or a change of location
Cut	An abrupt change from one image to another	Quicker	A short passage of time or change of location

## Editing—Juxtaposition of Shots

**CONCEPT:** A juxtaposition is an association, placing one thing alongside or after another. *Juxtaposition of images* is one way a filmmaker can communicate with an audience. The two images on this slide come one after the other in the film. Decisions about which shots to use, and in what sequence, happen in post-production.



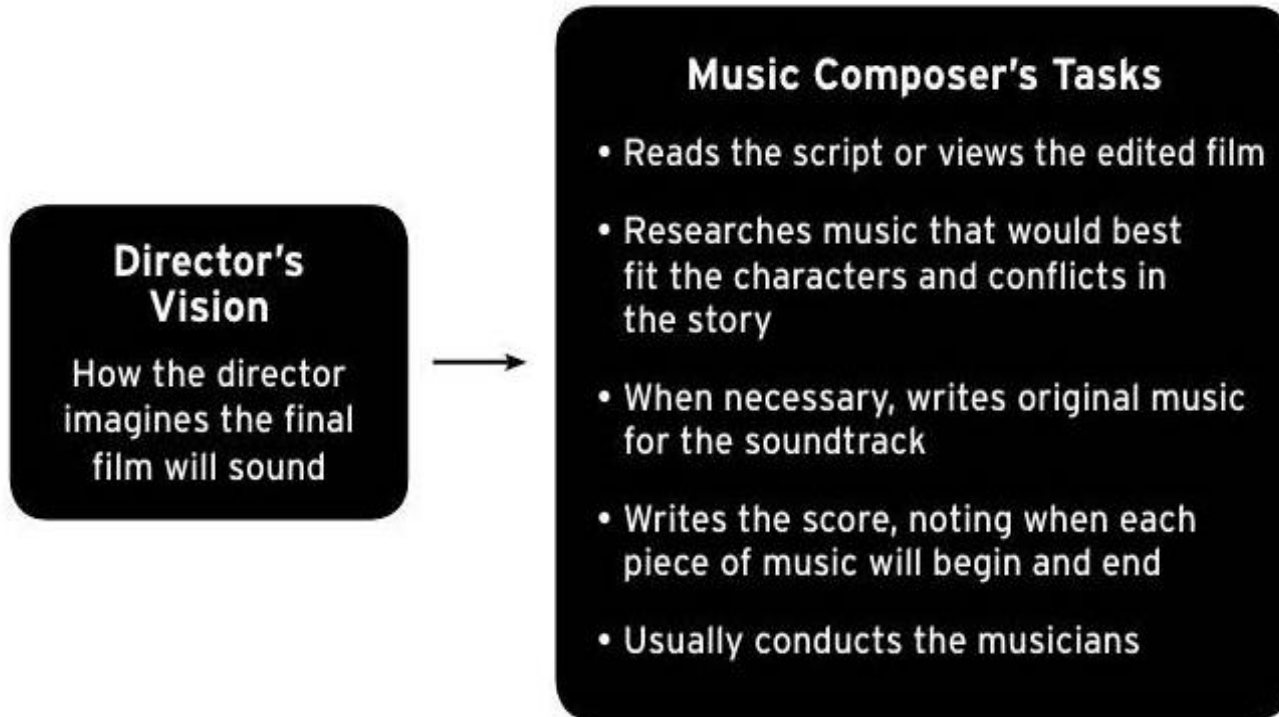
## Editing Transition—The Dissolve

**CONCEPT:** A *dissolve* is a type of transition from one shot or scene to another. As one image fades out, another one fades in to replace it. For a brief time, the two images overlap. In this way, the dissolve communicates to the viewer a connection between two things—people, places, actions—and/or the passage of time.





# What Does the Music Composer Do?



# The Music Composer

**CONCEPT:** The music composer works with the director to determine where and how music might enhance the visual storytelling. To do this, the composer keeps two goals in mind: Music can convey information, and music can trigger an emotional reaction in the audience.

*The camera can only do so much; the actors and the direction can only do so much. But the music can tell you what people are thinking and feeling—that is the real function of music.*

—Bernard Herrmann

Music composer, *Citizen Kane*



## Putting It All Together—Three Stages of Production

