

Production

5 Basic Lighting

Class level

Third class upwards

Learning Objectives

- The child will be enabled to
- Understand how to light a subject very simply
 - Use lighting to change the mood of your film
 - Be safe using lights

Methodologies

Group work

Resources

Standard desk lamps or other lights
Window or exterior light source
Large White Cardboard to bounce light

Time

Several classes

Curriculum links

English— Reading and responding to text
Visual arts—Looking and responding to light and shade
Drama—Exploring and making drama, creating mood and drama with lighting

Film portfolio

Rules about safe use of lights and electricity



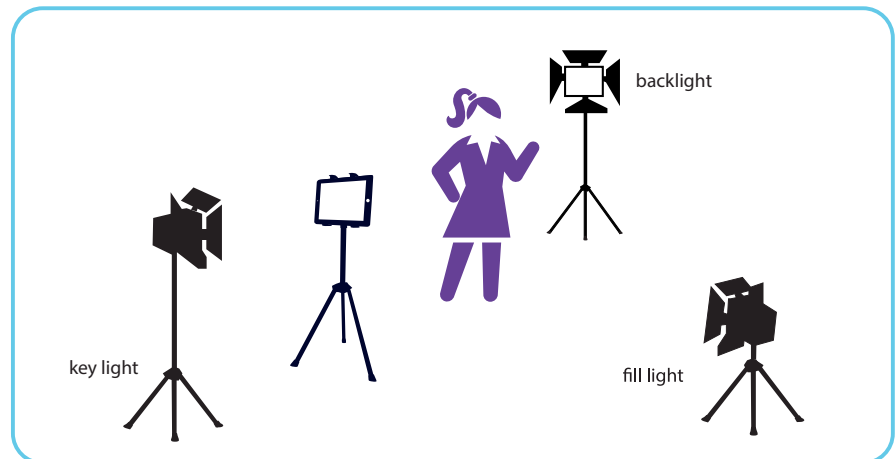
Introduction

The control of light is, in effect, control of the image created on the film or video. Light expresses meaning. The story determines the lighting. It is incredibly important to remember the following fundamentals when it comes to lighting a scene.

- The subject's face is the most important thing to light. An even spread of light with no shadows on his/her face is good lighting.
- Pay more attention to lighting things you want the audience to pay attention to.
- Think about the tone of the scene before you light it. Ask yourself, would you light a funny scene darkly?
- The continuity of lighting in the same scene is important. If you film one shot in the sun, if the shot after it is filmed in the shade, they won't match up.

The Standard three-point Lighting Technique

This technique uses three lights; the key light, fill light, and backlight. Naturally, you will need three lights to do the technique fully, but the principle is important even if you use only one or two lights. If you have only one light, it becomes the key light. If you have two lights, one is the key and the other is either the fill or the backlight.



Different Types of Lighting

Available light—is the light available at the location. It is often necessary to provide fill light when you are trying to shoot with available light. The fill light is a soft light which lights the dark spots.

Key light—is the main light. It is usually the strongest and has most influence on the look of the scene. It is placed to one side of the subject, so that this is well-lit and the other side has some shadow.

Fill light—is the secondary light, and is placed opposite the key light so as to fill the shadows created by the key. The fill will usually be softer and less bright than the key. To achieve this, you could move the light further away, or use some tracing paper.

Backlight—is placed behind the subject, and lights it from the rear. Rather than providing direct lighting (like the key and fill lights), its purpose is to provide definition and subtle highlights around the subject's outline. This helps to separate the subject from the background, and provide a three-dimensional look. If you have a fourth light, you could use it to light the background of the entire scene.

Flat lighting—is when the light is bounced off the ceiling or walls, or off sheets of polystyrene. It gives a general lighting effect.

Effects lighting—This usually means simulating a specific type of light. A candle, for example, might be suggested by hanging a strip of red gel in front of a light and shaking it slightly.



Activity

Observe the changes in light in this classroom. Notice how the mood of the picture can change with the effect of shadows caused by changing the amount of light coming in through the window. By playing around with different sources in your location, you can create different moods to tell your story.

Within the classroom there are many ways to improve the lighting in your film. You can use natural light from windows, or artificial light from various desk lamps, already installed ceiling lights, and bounce existing light sources from a large white sheet of paper or cardboard. Placing your subject beside a window is usually the best way to light it. However shooting against a window will not work very well.



Be Safe

- Use heatproof gloves when handling lighting equipment.
- Turn off a light before replacing the bulb, and never handle the bulb of any lamp without using gloves, cloth, or some similar protection.
- Never use lights without their safety glasses or gauze.
- Switch off lamps before moving them.
- Keep lights at a safe distance from material and sets.
- Switch off lamps and let them cool down before packing them away at the end of the shoot.
- Don't place lights near surfaces; they can become hot.
- Keep all lights away from water.
- The camera person should wear sunglasses.



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