

Some Common Screenwriting Terms

INT. = means Interior. The scene takes place inside.

EXT. = Exterior. The scene is happening outside.

INT./EXT. = Interior/Exterior. The scene takes place inside something that's outside (like inside a car that's driving down the street).

POV = Point of View, as in SALLY'S POV (we see things through Sally's eyes).

ANGLE ON = A shot in the same location as the previous shot, but emphasizing a specific item. In Excerpt 1 above, the Creep is making notes about how to make a bomb, ANGLE ON NOTEBOOK indicates a shot of the notebook page, so we can see what he's writing down.

BEAT = a pause by the actor (maybe they're thinking what to say next, for example). Sometimes a beat is also indicated by using ... ellipses.

CUT TO: A shift of scene without a fade between scenes.

ESTABLISHING SHOT: A shot, often of a location, from a distance, to let the audience know where we are (the exterior of the Jeffersonian Institute in the TV series, Bones, to let you know we're about to have a scene back at the lab; the Golden Gate Bridge, so you know - without having to tell you - that we're in San Francisco).

INSERT: A close-up, held for a moment, often of an object that is important to the scene (hands on a clock, someone putting keys in a car's ignition, a tattoo to identify someone, etc).

O.C. or O.S.: Instructions next to a bit of dialogue, telling the reader that the speaker won't be seen in the shot. The sound will come from Off Camera or Off Screen.