

# Bourne toWrite...

creative writing  
workshops

## The Word Camera

“Before there was cinema,” Roy Peter Clark reminds us, “writers wrote cinematically. Influenced by the visual arts - by portraits and tapestries, authors have long understood how to shift their focus in order to capture both character and landscape.”

These basic descriptions of standard camera shots should help you imagine how to use your ‘word camera’ for a variety of effects.

### Aerial View

This one is obvious. Here the writer looks down on the world they are creating, as if sitting on a cloud or the top of a high building.

### Establishing Shot

The writer stands back to capture the setting in which the action takes place, describing the world that the reader is about to enter.

### Middle Distance

The writer moves their point of view closer to the action, close enough to see key players and their interaction. This is the common distance for most stories written for the newspaper.

## Close-Up

Speaks for itself. In cinema terminology this is known as 'big people, close up'. The close-up is not just a visual effect, it can also be emotional. We can get close enough to detect the slightest hint of anger or surprise or envy.

## Extreme close-up

Again this speaks for itself. Here the writer focuses on an important detail, a piece of jewelry, a scar etc.

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There are of course other types of cinematic shots, like panning and tracking but these are not so easy to apply to the written word.

The next time you read one of your pieces back try and look for these shots and if they're not there consider using them. They'll make your work more dynamic, more alive and compelling.