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# 4:2 Basic Shots Tips for Better Shooting

Using good composition or framing your shot well doesn't just happen…**It takes practice!**
A good camera person (or videographer) carefully chooses what the audience will see.

Some important things to remember when framing your shot are:

LIGHTING
Never shoot directly into a light source. The subject will appear blackened much like the person in the Kellogg's commercials that we cannot recognize. (It is important to remember this tip when entering a classroom to get footage because most of the time windows are on the opposite side of the room.

When shooting outdoors the angle of the sun should be just behind or to the side of the videographer. On the same note---don't use a low light situation unless you adjust the camera's iris.

SYMMETRY
Use a sense of symmetry. Balance your objects in your frame. Use the grid of thirds to help you balance   This is an imaginary "tic-tac-toe" grid in your viewfinder. The screen center (middle grid) is one of the most stable spots within the screen (but NOT everything should be centered!)

Your subject's eyes should be placed right above the top line.
If it is necessary to center your subject obviously they would be place in the middle grid.
Using the grid of thirds comes in handy when you are getting a profile of a person or getting an over the shoulder shot. Your subject should typically be in 1/3 of the grid leaving 2/3 space "empty" used as noseroom (or leadroom if the subject is moving).

DEPTH
Use depth in your shots. Close camera-to-object position reduces the depth of field.
Never shoot someone or something backed up against the background.

PROPS
Props are considered anything in your frame. Use props if needed. Move props if needed. Rearrange props if needed. Things should not be cluttered in your frame. This detracts from the subject.
Be cautious of what is behind the subject---especially a person…bushes & plants can appear to look like "horns".

Be aware of colors, shapes & sizes. Do you want things to clash or blend?
Blue and green are camera friendly. Bright red tends to look like the shot is bleeding around the edges.

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CREATIVITY IN SHOTS
Most shots are taken at "eye level".

Use angular shots, tilted shots or a combination if it would make the shot more creative or for effect.
Sometimes it is more creative to shoot at an angle left or right of the subject instead of "straight on".

*CREATIVITY is a good thing! However, good creativity takes good composition.*

MOVEMENT & DIRECTION
Use movements (pans, tilts, zooms) wisely.  Every shot does not need to MOVE.
Use the stagnate—move---stagnate tip when shooting a movement.  Press record, hold the shot stagnate for about 5 seconds, perform your movement and hold the shot stagnate again before pushing pause.

Use an axis line when shooting.  Do not cross the axis line or your subject will appear to have changed direction.



Imaginary axis line!
Do not cross!
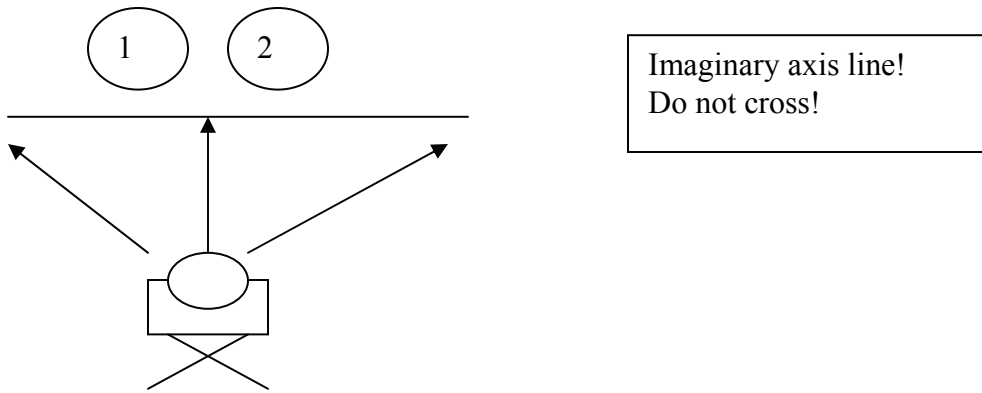
Using this rough (and I mean rough) diagram…
Person #1 is to the left of the videographer; person #2 to the right.  If the axis line is crossed…are they still in that position?

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<u>OTHER TIPS TO USE WHILE SHOOTING:</u>
If the camera has a manual focus function on it---USE IT!

When shooting multiple sound bites change backgrounds and change sides you are shooting. (noseroom on left side---noseroom on right side)

Shoot to edit:
Always shoot more footage than you will need.
Always shoot longer shots than you will need. The average length of a shot after being edited is between 5-10 seconds. Use a 5-1 ratio. If you know you need 5 seconds…shoot at least 25 seconds! Tape is cheap!
Tape an entire scene. For example, if you want the shot to be of someone walking into a classroom, shoot it with the door closed, opening, the person walking through and then the door closing.

For handheld stability---because unfortunately tripods will not always be available--- imagine that your camcorder is a very full, hot cup of coffee (or maybe hot chocolate)!