

## PRODUCTION ELEMENT

### Lighting

Lighting not only allows an audience to see the action in a film, it shapes and frames this action **drawing attention to objects characters and actions** thus illuminating far more than what is on the screen. **The colour and quality of the light positions the audience to read the shot or scene in a particular way.** Lighting works both literally and symbolically employing both visual codes and conventions to suggest interpretation

In the construction of film and television narratives much energy and expense is devoted to making most scenes look natural, that is how we would imagine it would look in real life. This is called **naturalistic lighting.**

**Expressive lighting** is a style of lighting used to represent **greater meaning in relation to characters, settings, mood and themes.** Example- a character is lit from behind making them glow, perhaps they are the angel that will save the situation. When a character is lit from below they may appear aggressive.



The direction that we view a light source from has a profound effect on our perception of it, and on how the objects in a scene will appear. Choosing which direction your main light is coming from is one of the most important decisions you can make since it will have a great deal of impact on how a scene will appear, and also on the emotions your image will convey.



## Lighting Positions

### Frontal Lighting



This is where the light source is directly behind the viewer's point of view. It is most commonly seen in flash photography and is often fairly unappealing if the light source is hard - there are exceptions and in some situations very attractive images can come from soft frontal lighting.

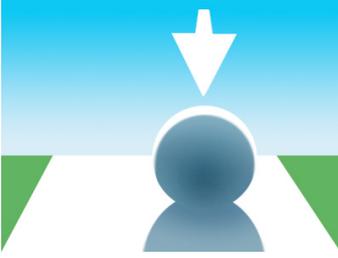
Front lighting does little to reveal form or texture since the shadows are mostly hidden from view; as a result it can make things look flat. **However soft diffused frontal lighting can also be quite flattering to some subjects for this very reason - it can help conceal wrinkles and blemishes and so is quite often used in portrait and product photography.**

## Side Lighting



Side lighting is very good for showing form and texture and lends a three-dimensional quality to objects. Shadows are prominent and contrast can be high as a result. Side lighting can be used **to throw dramatic shadows onto surfaces such as walls and create atmosphere.** Side lighting is generally attractive and is often used to great effect: it is the kind of lighting encountered at the beginning and end of the day and as such is often seen in films and photographs.

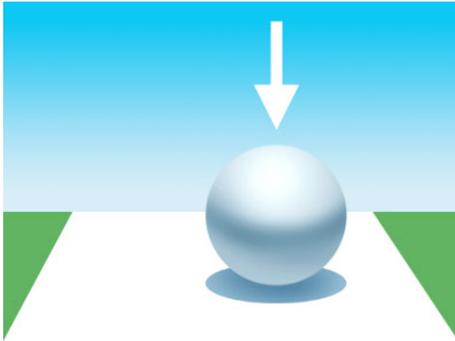
## Backlighting



**Back lighting** is where the viewer is looking into the light source, and objects will have their **lit sides facing away from us to appear either as silhouettes or darkly lit by the fill light**. It is usually a high contrast situation and can often **look very atmospheric and dramatic**. If the light source is at a slight angle relative to our point of view objects will have a rim of light defining one or more of their edges, the harder the light the more pronounced this rim will be.

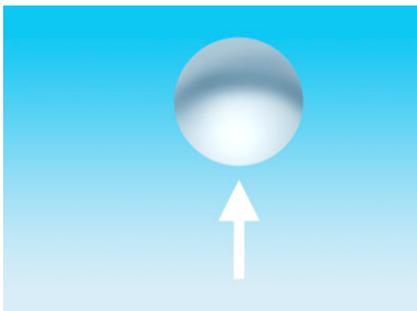
Backlit scenes usually **contain a lot of shadow** unless the light source is very soft. Most of the time the image will be predominantly dark with dramatic pools of light. The rim lighting that occurs in this situation can be very useful for defining forms among the shadows. Another feature of this kind of light is that it reveals transparency, translucency and any fine detail or texture along rim-lit edges. This kind of light is very effective for lending drama to an image.

## Top Lighting



Top lighting is a slightly more unusual situation, although it is common in overcast daylight. It can also be encountered in sunshine at midday, in some interiors and in other situations such as stage lighting. **In soft light it is an effective way of showing form.** Under hard light it can **lend an air of mystery by casting dramatic shadows which conceal most of the forms beneath them: for instance people directly underneath hard lights will have black holes for eyes since their eye sockets will be in total shadow.**

## Below Lighting



If lighting from directly above is rare, then doing so from directly below is even more unusual. In a natural context this might happen if someone is standing over a campfire, or holding a torch. Reflected light can also come from below, from water for instance. **It would definitely lend a strange appearance to even the most familiar things since what is usually seen in light and shade would be reversed (think of a person shining a torch onto their face from below: the shadows appear to be upside down).**

Again, the very rarity of this kind of lighting can be used to creative effect. We instinctively recognise things that don't seem right, and this can be used to create specific moods by manipulating the lighting to convey emotions and responses.

### High key

High key images have a predominance of white or very light tones and tend to look light and airy. High key lighting is often (but not always) soft, and detail is generally low. In nature high key lighting is found in fog and snow, where even shadows are light due to the amount of reflected light bouncing around.



### Low key

Low-key images have by their very nature very little light in them. Contrast is usually high and the lighting hard. Low-key lighting can create a **very moody atmosphere and is often used to this effect.** The most obvious setting for low-key lighting is nighttime, but it can also be found in other situations such as storms and in interiors. Exaggerated use of low-key lighting can be found in horror films, where underlighting (placing a light under a face or an object) gives a dramatic, often-distorting effect. Low-key lighting is often seen as expressive



## Lighting in Film Noir



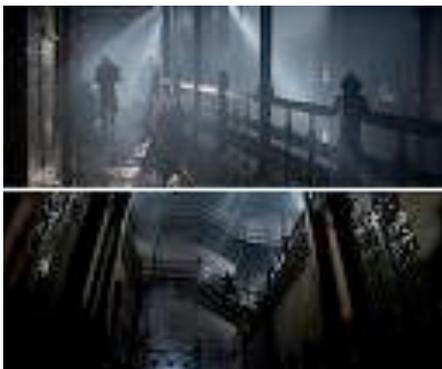
Film noir is characterised by a visual style in which dark and dangerous rain washed city streets provide the setting for crime and corruption... Camera techniques suggest tension through unbalanced framing and extreme angles. The lighting in film noir reflects its themes. Chiaroscuro low-key lighting creates deep shadows in which characters can physically and metaphorically hide, their motivations and actions thus obscured

Lighting is the most distinctive feature of film noir with highly contrasted areas of light and shade. Dramatic patterns of light and shade are created

by light filtering through a blind or a latticed window. The shadows cast across the characters' faces suggest a hidden, darker side of their personality. Film noir is also associated with an urban context, cities and low life areas such as bars, nightclubs, motels and back streets in the dark. The male characters are dressed in trench coats, suits and hats with women dressed in glamorous evening wear.



Dark shadows seem to dominate Blade Runner and at certain points Ridley Scott makes it deliberately difficult for the viewer to see the action within the frame.



## **STORY ELEMENT**

### **Character Development**

We are normally introduced to the main protagonist at the start of the narrative. From this point onwards we learn more about who they are. It is important for the audience to relate to the main characters and to understand why characters act in the way they do. There are 3 aspects to character in narrative

Establishment

Development

Motivation

Through the use of a range of story and production elements characters in narratives come to life. The way in which a main character is introduced to the audience is very important.

In many narratives characters are established as stock or common characters. This is particularly the case in genre texts. Audiences recognise character types, the good guy, the loner, the femme fatale, the innocent abroad, the geek- the tough guy- the list goes on. Stock characters mean that a director can assume that the audience has some pre existing knowledge and experience of character types and can use this knowledge to cut straight to the action without having to explain each character in detail

The way in which a character is further developed in the film is the aspect that engages an audience. Characters are often created with a blend of familiar types and character traits with new features to intrigue an audience.

Character development will usually be based on motivation. Motivations may revolve around the thoughts and actions of a character or it may involve the way the character is positioned with the scene. Production elements will be used to highlight aspects of motivation; lighting for example can highlight the choice of which prop a character may pick up

In Blade Runner how is the audience first introduced to Deckard?

Is there anything significant or interesting about the camera shot used or the way he is positioned in the camera frame? What location or setting is our character in?

Does this suggest anything further about him? What is he doing? How is he lit? What about costume? Is any dialogue or music used?

Harrison Ford plays the retired Super-cop in 2019 Los Angeles whose job is hunting mutinous androids that have escaped from the off world colonies. He is a specialist in identifying and destroying androids and is pressed back into service when a group of replicants illegally return to Earth.



Question:

Look closely at the sequence where we are first introduced to Deckard. How from the way he is positioned within the frame is his sense of alienation conveyed? Sum up the film viewer's first impression of him. How much does Deckard conform to the central male film noir character that is usually a disillusioned loner, a tough guy at odds with himself?