


Editing


Events



One of the primary goals of editing is to find *events* within a piece of footage. An event is a moment of focus like the change of an expression on a face, a camera move, or the turn of a head. A single piece of footage can contain many different events.

Static edits


When a shot does not contain an event it looks static. In this example, four relatively static shots are sequenced together creating a slide show-like effect. This is a  **STATIC EDIT**. Note that the shot of drips is an interesting anomaly. It has movement which creates interest but the repetitious nature of the shot does not carry our interest for long.

Editing on events


Creating an edit in which each shot contains an event achieves a much more active result. In this example, the first shot now shows the woman leaning into the camera. In the second shot, a mask falls into frame. In the third shot, there is a drip. In the last shot, the woman pulls away from the camera. The edit shown here is called a  **TIGHT EDIT** because all of the non-event portions of each shot have been cut out. This has an intensifying effect. Note that the shots have not been speeded up. The sequence looks fast because each shot contains only the event and nothing more. Keep in mind that an event can be any number of things: a gesture, a change in expression, a camera move, or the focusing of a lens.

- Example of a tight edit in the movie  **REQUIEM FOR A DREAM** (2000). Note how each shot contains a discrete event with no extra footage before and after the event. [more>](#)
- Example of a tight edit in  **DAREDEVIL** (2003). This tight edit creates intensity in a getting-ready-for-battle shot sequence.

Loose edits

In a  **LOOSE EDIT**, there is more time before and after the events. This makes the shot sequence look like it is occurring in real time. Note that you can combine various kinds of edits. For example, you might incorporate tight and loose edits with non-event shots to create a shot sequence with rhythm and variety.

Splitting an event



When a cut occurs, a viewer can easily become disoriented because the subsequent shot introduces new information. To prevent this momentary confusion and to create a sense of continuous action, editors sometimes do not cut around the event, but on the event itself. In this approach, the beginning of the event occurs in one shot and the rest of the event occurs in another. This kind of edit is called a “match cut” or “cutting on action.” In this example from  **WHAT DREAMS MAY COME** (1998), the editor cuts on action to seamlessly connect a full shot to an extremely wide shot.



Continuous events

Some events are not discrete but occur over a period of time. These continuous events include waves, clouds, running water, and plants rustling in the wind. Editing a continuous event relies primarily on your sense of judgement and timing.

Creating an event by manipulating time

Editors sometimes create events from seemingly insignificant bits of footage. By slowing down time, an editor can isolate a fleeting glance or a moment just long enough to create a meaningful shot.

-  **MOULIN ROUGE** (2001) contains many shots that are created by slowing down short pieces of footage. Here, a shot of a dancer falling into the arms of another dancer is slowed down to emphasize the event. In another sequence, Nicole Kidman's  **FLEETING GLANCE** is isolated by slowing it down.

- In this example from  **Z IS FOR ZEMETSU**, footage is time-remapped to turn a single shot into three shots. The unimportant segments of footage are sped up and the important sections are slowed down to create this effect. Note that instead of one continuous shot, we now have the equivalent of three separate shots. The sped up sections essentially become a transition from shot to shot. A similar sequence can be found in  **PLANES** (2013).

Natural transitions

In some shots, there is movement that occludes the frame. This could be anything from a passing car to a walking person, to an unintentional camera movement or a defocused moment in the footage. This creates a “wipe” effect that can be used to begin or end an edit.

- Note the use of natural wipes to cut from shot to shot in this sequence from  **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III** (2006).


- In this well-known use of natural wipes from the film ▶ **JAWS** (1975), editor Verna Fields cuts when beachgoers cross the frame.
- In this ▶ **ABSTRACT EDIT**, the cut occurs immediately after the large white shape fills the frame. Notice that the cut occurs before the white shape exits the frame.


Forced transitions

For certain kinds of sequences, transitions are created when a visual element is added to fill the frame. In ▶ **SPONGE BOB**, for example, bubbles are used to create transitions from scene to scene. A more subtle example can be found at the beginning of the title sequence for ▶ **NOVEMBER** (2004). Notice how the editor causes the shot to flicker before cutting, signifying that an edit will take place. Kyle Cooper's title for ▶ **SE7EN** (1995) also contains forced transitions; throughout the sequence, the editor uses flashes of type and other elements to fill the frame briefly before cutting to another shot. There are a variety of techniques used to force transitions including:

defocusing footage, cutting to a few frames of enlarged footage, creating a flash effect, or applying superimposed elements.

Dynamic vs. smooth edits

The position of a figure within the frame and the direction of its motion affects editing decisions. The following example of a  **SMOOTH EDIT** uses handheld footage. We associate hand held footage with spontaneous action. However, for our purposes, this shot sequence is relatively smooth. As the edit starts, the woman moves toward the left of the frame. The next shot picks up where the first shot left off—the pan creates the illusion that the woman is moving to the left of the frame continuing the right to left motion; we say that there is continuity of motion. In the rest of the sequence, notice that each shot picks up where the previous shot left off creating continuity from shot to shot.

The  **DYNAMIC EDIT** intentionally confounds the relationships between shots. Note that in this case, the woman seems to jump in position from one shot to the next. Further the direction of movement in one shot is not necessarily connected to the movement in another shot.

TEMPO

Example of even tempo [view].

Example of syncopated tempo [view].

ASSIGNMENT

Create a video (could be separate videos or one video) that shows examples of the following—

1. Static edit
2. Tight edit
3. Loose edit
4. Splitting an event (match cut/cut on action)
5. Create an event by slowing down footage
6. Cut on a natural wipe
7. Create a forced transition by flickering video at the frame level
8. Smooth edit
9. Dynamic edit

* Find more detail on Project brief.