

Grammar of the Edit

fourth edition

Christopher J. Bowen

A Focal Press Book



Grammar of the Edit

Tell more effective visual stories by learning the “grammar” of cinematic language with this elegant, accessible reference. The newly revised and updated fourth edition of *Grammar of the Edit* gives you the answers to the all-important questions of when to cut and why, and teaches readers the principles behind transitions, editing for continuity, selecting the best shots, editing sound, color correction, and more. Designed as an easy-to-use guide, *Grammar of the Edit* presents each topic succinctly with clear photographs and diagrams illustrating key concepts, practical exercises, and quiz questions, and is a staple of any filmmaker’s library.

New to the fourth edition:

- an expanded companion website at www.routledge.com/cw/bowen, offering downloadable scenes and editable raw footage so that students can practice the techniques described in the book, and instructional videos showcasing examples of different editing choices and types of shot transitions;
- new and expanded quiz questions and practical exercises at the end of each chapter to help to test readers on their knowledge using real-world scenarios;
- updated topic discussions, explanations, illustrations, and visual examples;
- an all-new chapter on sound resources in filmmaking and audio-editing guidelines.

Together with its companion volume, *Grammar of the Shot*, the core concepts discussed in these books offer concise and practical resources for both experienced and aspiring filmmakers.

Christopher J. Bowen has worked within the motion media industries for over 18 years as a cinematographer, editor, director, and educator. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Film Production and Visual Media Writing at Framingham State University. He is also an Avid Certified Instructor, Creative Director of his own media production company, Fellsway Creatives, and author of the companion text, *Grammar of the Shot*.

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Fourth Edition

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Introduction

Today's world seems to be filled with screens, both large and small, that stream moving images. From the IMAX theater to the billboard near the highway to your UHDTV, laptop, or tablet to the smartphone in your pocket: all are capable of displaying motion pictures. And every moving image that you see on these screens has been edited. Movies, television shows, commercials, music videos, and web videos of all kinds have been cut down, re-ordered, padded out, massaged, sweetened, and tweaked to some degree or another – by an editor.

A writer creates the story, a director coaches the actors, a cinematographer creates the visual style of each shot, and an editor puts all of those pieces together. Being one of the last creative people to touch a motion media project, the editor truly is the final storyteller. That final version may be exactly what the creators set out to make, or it may be very different in mood, tempo, information content, or emotional effect. It is the skill, craft, and gut instinct of the editor that help to form the over-arching visual style, pacing, and coherence of story that are ultimately experienced by the audience. Editing is where you get to figure out how to make it all work together.

This book, *Grammar of the Edit*, Fourth Edition, continues the series' long tradition of introducing a beginner to the world of motion picture editing. The suggested guidelines, and general practices presented herein will provide a new student of this craft with a solid understanding of the established techniques and methodologies associated with the *what*, *how*, and *why* of the video-editing process.

The updated fourth edition has been thoughtfully redesigned, enhanced, and expanded. Many of the figures that illustrate the concepts have been replaced or refreshed. Each chapter begins with an outline of that chapter's contents, and ends with a detailed review section highlighting the main concepts covered by that chapter. Value-added sections called Exercises and Quiz Yourself conclude each chapter. They present ways in which you can immediately put into practice the techniques and guidelines discussed in the chapter, and offer a gauge to see how well you absorbed the information. Many new topics have been added throughout and most recurring topics have been rewritten and restructured for clarity and flow.

Regardless of the career direction in which the fledgling editor wishes to go, everyone needs to learn how to walk before they can run and this book should help to define

the basic terms and clarify the common practices of editing. It does not mention specific video-editing software but it does discuss some issues inherent to the digital video medium. The terms “motion picture” or “motion media piece” may be used liberally to encompass a variety of live-action and animated project types, whether produced for the web, television, or movie theater. A particular genre of film or a specific type of television programming may be called out in an example to help to illustrate a unique point. The goal of this book is to inform a person who is new to editing about the accepted practices of the craft, the reasoning behind those practices, and how the audience interpret meaning, on several levels, from the edited piece. Good technique and not-so-good technique will be discussed and illustrated. In the end, you will find that there is no 100% right and there is no 100% wrong; there is only what works and what does not work – and why.

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As an Associate Professor of Film Production and Visual Media Writing at Framingham State University, I benefit from being surrounded by fellow educators and a lively and engaged population of students in the communication arts. The environment fosters much innovation and many new approaches to teaching and learning about our discipline. I wish to acknowledge the support of my colleagues and the helpful contributions from all of my students over the years. The same goes for my experiences when teaching at Boston University and at the Boston University Center for Digital Imaging Arts. A collective thank you to everyone who has added to my growth as an educator and as a motion media producer.

As a media professional, I wish to thank my many collaborators and clients, who have helped me to continue learning and to explore new techniques in telling their unique stories.

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This book is for all people who wish to learn the basics about communicating visually through motion pictures – especially the editing process. I hope you have fun and enjoy the ride. If you would like to learn more about the topic, find additional resources, or contact the author, please visit the author's website: www.fellswaycreatives.com.

For Emily & Jinx & Sparky

Chapter One

Editing Basics

- A Very Brief History of Film Editing
- Basic Factors Affecting Editorial Choices
- Stages of the Editing Process
- The Basic Motion Picture Transitions

When you write something, like a paper for school or a blog post, you typically have a message in mind before you start writing. Then, to do the actual writing, you select words from your vocabulary and put them together in particular ways to construct sentences. If assembled correctly, these accumulated sentences will inform, entertain, or evoke emotional responses within the reader. A very similar process occurs when you edit a motion picture. You have to have a message (or story) in mind as you begin. Then, to do the actual editing, you select shots of visual and aural content and assemble them in a particular **sequence**. If done correctly, this motion media message will inform, entertain, or evoke emotional responses within the viewer. In order for your readers to comprehend your sentences, you must follow the known and accepted rules of grammar for your written language: word order, verb tense, phrase construction, punctuation, etc. There is also a similar grammar for the “language” of motion pictures. It governs how their images are recorded and how they are edited together – and audiences have learned how to “read” them.

In our companion book, *Grammar of the Shot*, the basic practices of structure, movement, and purpose in frame composition are discussed in detail. This text, *Grammar of the Edit*, presents the basic guidelines of motion media construction that will allow you to take those same shots and assemble them together into a meaningful story. As a creative motion media producer, you can choose to edit your visual elements however you wish, but it should be understood that there are certain basic guidelines that are commonly accepted in the entertainment and visual communication fields. The chapters of this book are designed to help you to understand the visual and aural materials that you will be working with and the basic grammar behind the editing process. Our goal is to help to get you set on a path to good editing practices.

A Very Brief History of Film Editing

Long before the existence of digital video and computer editing software, people used emulsion film to create the illusion of movement on a screen. Over 100 years ago, emulsion film strips and hand-cranked moving film cameras were leading-edge technologies, but the actual length of plastic film limited the duration of image recording time. Many of the original movies were merely **real-time** recordings of life's daily events.

Very quickly, the technologies advanced and motion pictures moved from being straight documentary recordings to more elaborately constructed fictional narrative stories. Longer strips of film allowed for longer recording times. As film's visual language began to develop, more shot variety was introduced and motion pictures grew in scope and sophistication. The "cutters" who once just assembled a few short strips of picture film took on a new role in the expanding post-production phase of filmmaking. Story structuring – or sometimes reconstructing – became the full-time job of the film editor.

Within just a few decades, a more complex visual language of motion picture photography and editing had evolved. Films were quickly becoming the largest entertainment and information medium on the planet. They were held in high esteem by many and denounced by others as a novelty at best and a corrupting distraction at worst. Motion pictures and how audiences perceived them became a source of study. Many theories about the social and artistic values of filmmaking, and the visual power of film editing especially, emerged from different cultures around the world.

At what point the editor cut the film and how the various shots were joined together were seen to have an effect on the viewing audience above and beyond the actual story. Editing was no longer just a means to physically trim the excess footage from a series of shots; it had become recognized as a powerful tool in the filmmaker's toolbox. Over time, the machines that took the pictures and performed the cuts evolved, but most of the basic parameters of visual grammar remained the same. Differing editorial styles have come and gone, but the core methods and intent behind the practice of assembling picture and sound elements are unchanged even today.

What Is Editing?

As a transitive verb, "to edit" can mean to review, refine, modify, eliminate, or assemble components into a new, acceptable form. It was first used broadly with the written word

and is now also applied to moving picture and sound creations. For our purposes, the term “editing” (a noun) is the act of assembling individual clips of picture and sound into a coherent story of some kind. So an “editor” is a person who takes a bunch of picture and sound material, and reviews, refines, modifies, eliminates, and assembles those picture and sound components into a new, acceptable form or story.

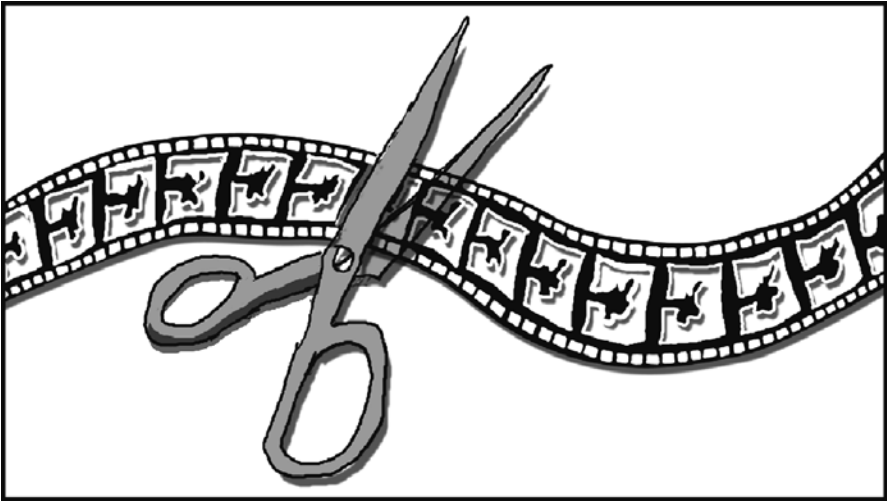


FIGURE 1.1 Initially, editing motion picture film required very basic technologies.

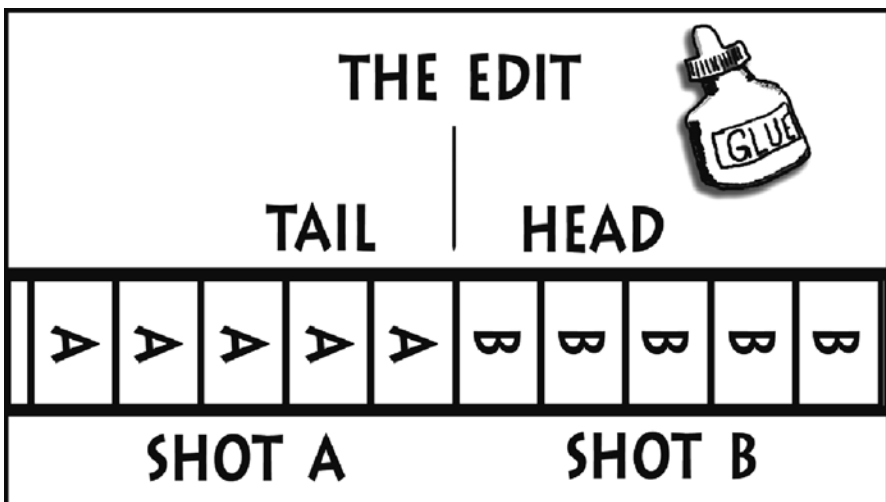


FIGURE 1.2 The head of the film clip for Shot B is edited onto the tail end of Shot A.

An **edit** (also a noun) is the place where you join together those clips, and transition from one shot to the next within that assembly. Put simply, an edit is a cut point: a place where one shot ends and another separate shot begins. The term “cut” stems from the days when motion pictures were shot and edited on very long strips of celluloid plastic emulsion film. Looking at the individual still frames on that strip of film, the editor would determine where to physically cut the film between pictures. A pair of scissors or a razor-blade “splicer” was used to actually cut the film at that point (Figure 1.1). Glue or tape was then used to join the different cut strips of plastic film together again (Figure 1.2). The cut or join becomes the point of transition from one shot to the next. The **straight cut** described here is just one way to move between shots. How, when, and why you choose to transition from one shot to another depends on many variables.

What Basic Factors May Affect Your Editing Choices?

Tools

The first factor you may wish to consider is what medium you are using to perform the actual edits: film, tape-to-tape video, or digital video-editing software. Each medium, and the devices that are used in the editing processes, can often dictate physical, time-related, or, certainly, financial limitations. At the time of writing, you would be hard pressed to find anyone who, on a large and consistent scale, still splices emulsion film prints or runs linear tape edit suites. The majority of editing, for all kinds of motion media projects, is now done almost exclusively on computers (desktops, laptops, tables, or even mobile smartphones).

If you only have access to very basic editing software, then do not worry; you are still able to effectively edit picture and sound elements to create a good story. More advanced tools can allow new editors to play with more bells and whistles, but at the core, you need to maintain good storytelling (or story-showing) methods, regardless of the type of project you are making. Don't believe the hype: the “latest and greatest” technologies do not automatically enhance the quality or value of your project. You may find, however, that it is necessary to have a recent operating system and a recent version of editing software in order to actually decode and play the video files generated by the many different digital video cameras in use today.

However, having some access to a decent computer and the video-editing software of your choice is actually very important to anyone's progression as a practicing video editor. If you do not have the tools, you cannot practice, and you cannot do the work; therefore

your skills will not improve. Luckily, several of the major apps do allow for free trials or “limited-use” free versions of their fully functioning software. Certain apps, with rudimentary features, are free or relatively inexpensive for download and do a fine job at providing you the tools you will need to complete basic and intermediate video projects. Audio-editing applications are similarly available.

In this book, we will purposefully keep the discussions of editing grammar as generic as possible. We will do very little in the way of mentioning specific hardware or software, tool names, buttons, menu items, or keyboard shortcuts. There are, quite frankly, too many, and they are being modified or removed with each new version of each device or app. The general working practices presented here should apply to any medium or genre and to most editing devices or applications. Just be aware that certain terminology used in one medium may have its origins rooted in another and may vary from one software application to another and even from one country to another.

Project Type and Genre

A second factor that may affect your editing choices can be the kind of project that you are editing. Are you assembling picture and sound media for a documentary, a fictional narrative short film, a news package, a website’s how-to video, a music video, a television commercial, a cousin’s wedding video, or even an animated cartoon? Each type of motion media project may have a differing duration, call for certain editing styles, and use particular visual elements, transitions, etc. For instance, you may wish to use long, slow dissolves from one shot to the next in a moody music video, but you may not find it very beneficial to use them in a hard-hitting, factual news package. We will discuss dissolves in more detail later, but the example illustrates the importance of understanding the traditionally accepted guidelines of style for differing program types and for genres within those distinct kinds of programs.

The project’s budget, scope, purpose, quality of resources, and turnaround time also play into the approach an editor can take. Personal or “no-budget” productions may require that you own your own computer and software and have access to a large number of available media file storage hard drives. Larger shows are edited in more professional editing facilities with very complex signal flow and shared network storage. Often, a project’s budget also affects the scope (the length of the desired final edit), the quality of resources, and the time frame for completion. Short news pieces with only a few images and soundbites need to be cut together quickly to get to air. A feature film, especially a grand epic saga, may have tens or hundreds of hours of footage to comb through and assemble into a rather complex, multi-character storyline. This kind of project may take months of your life to finish.

The particular type of project you are editing can also demand and/or influence many of the nitty-gritty editing choices you get to make. If you are cutting for an established TV show, it probably already has a template or formula to be followed. Watch enough “reality” and non-fiction TV and you’ll quickly see the sections, patterns, and timings of each episode. A slow-moving drama may call for uninterrupted long takes of really strong performances by the actors. A promotional video for a motocross racing team may benefit from very fast cutting of short, action-filled clips accompanied by hard driving music and many visual effects (sometimes called **VFX** or **DVE**). Your own experimental film or a music video project could allow you total freedom when it comes to how you treat the visual and aural elements. For the purposes of clarity and simplicity, we will often focus on the grammar and practices associated with fictional narrative motion picture storytelling, but the general guidelines may apply to all forms of motion media.

Degree of Audience Manipulation

It is safe to say that almost all edited motion media projects are destined to be viewed by some kind of audience, whether on a social media stream, in a large movie theater, or along the aisles of a “big-box” store. The editor is the person who crafts that particular viewing experience for the intended audience. Often tied directly to the purpose of the project, the level of manipulation (and we mean this in a good way) invoked by the editor is variable. It’s like taking the audience on a ride at an amusement park. Are you going to create an adrenaline rush like the corkscrew coaster? Is your project calm like the “kiddie karz?” Do you want to construct a mysterious and complex story full of false leads like the hall of mirrors or frightening jump scares like the spooky haunted house?

The **spacing** and **rhythm** you provide to the edited shots, scenes, and sequences help to control the audience’s experience and their mental, physical, and emotional reactions to the story. If you present certain information in a certain order for particular durations on screen, you will get certain kinds of responses from the viewer. The need for and degree of audience manipulation comes from the **content** and **purpose** of the motion media project.

Are you editing an informational process or how-to video? Not so much direct manipulation of emotions needed there. Are you editing a short, funny video for a website? You might construct a set-up/pay-off scenario with comedic timing. A dramatic, action adventure story has all of the ups and downs of a roller coaster ride. Sustained tension needs a release. Suspense must end to feel completed. The script, the direction, and the performances (whatever the project might be) all add to the degree of audience

manipulation that the editor constructs while assembling the picture and sound elements. Whether the goal of the project is to inform or to entertain, or a combination of both, the quality of the edited content allows the audience to engage with the material during the viewing experience – to think and to feel – in ways that you, the editor, want them to think and feel, when you want them to think and feel in those ways.

Other Factors

Another factor involved with over-arching editorial choices is your own level of creativity. Experience can help to give you speed of execution and some well-developed problem-solving skills, but any editor, regardless of age or time in the editor's chair, can come up with bold, fresh, and innovative approaches to stitching together a very effective final product. The right editor can breathe new life into almost any old, tired, or boring content, but an editor, no matter how skilled, may still have to deal with those potential limiting factors discussed above.

Additionally, if the project is not your own, then you may have to consider the viewpoints and input of other parties. The vision of the director and the not-so-subtle suggestions of a producer can (and will) influence the direction in which a project, or certainly portions of projects, may go. Yes, an editor performs the task of editing, but she or he does not always have control over the many variables that are at play during the post-production process. The goal, however, should always be to create the best and most genre-appropriate viewing experience for the audience, regardless of any limiting factors or challenges that may present themselves. Getting your next job may depend on it.

Stages of the Editing Process

As an editor, you will be tasked with creating motion media presentations that show coherent, meaningful, emotional, and/or informational stories to certain audiences. To achieve repeated successes with these finished sequences, you will, most likely, need to work through several stages of story development.

The editing process, more generally referred to as **post-production** (or sometimes just **post**), can range from being rather simple to extremely complex. The post-production period really encompasses any and all work on the project that comes after the shooting period (also known as **production**) is completed. Picture and sound tracks are edited together to show and tell the story, special visual effects are generated, titles/graphics/

credits are added, sound effects are created, and music is scored and mixed – all during post-production. On smaller projects, one person may have to do all of this work, but on larger productions, several teams of creators and technicians work in various departments to complete each element and join each phase of the post-production **workflow**.

In the world of broadcast television editing, there are two main phases of post-production: the **offline edit** and the **online edit**. The offline phase builds out the show completely but is traditionally done at a lower image resolution so that the editing system can work faster. The online phase turns the completed sequence into a high-resolution/best-audio-mix program ready for television broadcasting. It looks and sounds as best as it can for the viewing audience and conforms to the technical specifications of delivery. Today, computer processors, graphics cards, RAM, and media drives can be very powerful; this, combined with tapeless video capture and more capable video-editing software, lessens the need for rigid offline-to-online conforming. Most professional and many amateur editors can work on high-definition media all of the way through the editing process, although large amounts of data storage hard-drive space are eaten up quickly.

The following is a list of the major steps involved in a post-production workflow that stresses the editing process for the basic picture and sound elements of a project (consider the acquisition to picture lock stages as the offline phase, and the finishing and mastering and delivery stages as the online phase):

- acquisition
- organization
- review and selection
- assembly
- rough cut
- fine cut
- picture lock
- finishing
- mastering and delivery.

Acquisition

Simply put, you must acquire the visual and audio media recorded by the production team and any other sources required for completing the edited project (i.e., still photos, music, graphics, etc.). Motion picture and sound elements, whether on emulsion film, analog

tape, or digital tape, or as digital media files, must be gathered together for the duration of the post-production editing process. As almost all editing is done on computers, any source material not already in a digital format must be converted. If you are using a digital non-linear editing system to perform the edit, then you will have to import, capture, or “digitize” all materials as media on your storage drives. These media files must be protected and remain accessible by your editing software for the life of the project.

Organization

All of the minutes, hours, feet, reels, or gigabytes of picture, graphics, and sound elements should be organized in some way. If you do not have a clear system of labeling, grouping, or sorting all of the material needed for your project, you will eventually have a difficult time finding that particular videoclip or that special sound effect, etc. when you really need it. Having unique bins or folders for material arranged by date, subject, scene, etc. is wise on both short-term and long-term projects. Organization of source materials is not the most glamorous part of the editing process, but it can certainly make the difference between a smooth post-production workflow and a slower and more frustrating one. Many of the better editors and **assistant editors** are also highly prized for their organizational skills. Tame the chaos into order and craft the order into a motion picture.

Review and Selection

Once you have acquired and organized all of your elements, it will be necessary to review all of this material and pick out the best pieces that will work for your project. You will “pull the selects” and set aside the good stuff while weeding out the junk that you hope you will not have to use. Some editors place the “selects” (or copies of the good stuff) in their “working” bins or folders, while others might color code their clips according to usability. Labeling, in some way, the shots you would like to use will be important as you proceed with the edit. You would also be wise to not actually throw anything away (trash or delete) because you never know what might come in handy a day or a few weeks into the editing process. That one shot of the flag waving in the breeze may just save the entire edit, so keep it readily available even though you know it is not one of your original selections. Some editors create “master footage” sequences out of all of the good material so that they have a single source through which they can more easily scrub. This is faster than loading each individual clip in the source viewer.

Assembly

This process calls for assembling all of the major pieces of the project into a logical sequence of picture and sound elements. If you are editing a scripted story, you may initially try to follow that script as a blueprint for assembling the best selections of the various shots of the scenes that make up the motion picture. Some editors start off by following scripts with production notes or storyboards. If you are creating a documentary or even a music video, there is always some story that needs to be shown to an audience; assemble those raw parts into this skeleton version. Some editors even string together all of the good takes of a performance at the appropriate point of the assembly sequence in order to get a better feel for which take may work best, eventually keeping just the chosen one. No matter what genre the project, the story, in its longest and most rough-hewn form, takes shape now.

Rough Cut

This is the stage of the project's development where the majority of the "visual fat" has been trimmed and you are left with a presentation that is a long but functional version of the narrative, with many rough edges. Not every cut is perfectly timed; there are no finalized titles or graphics; effects, if any, are more or less placeholders; and the **audio mix** certainly has not been completed. You do have the timing of the main elements down to a good pace, however, and you, and others to whom you show the developing work, like how the story unfolds, although major restructuring of scenes may still occur if the flow does not feel right.

Fine Cut

You have worked, re-worked, and massaged the material of your project into a tight and finely tuned presentation. You like the order and timing of shots in each scene, the overall pacing fits the story, and the various elements work together as best as they can. There will be no major renovations from this point forward. You, and the majority of the people to whom you show the piece, all agree that only minor tweaks are required. This cut is fine.

Picture Lock

You have reached picture lock when you are absolutely certain that you will not make any more changes to the picture track(s) of your edited sequence. The timing of all

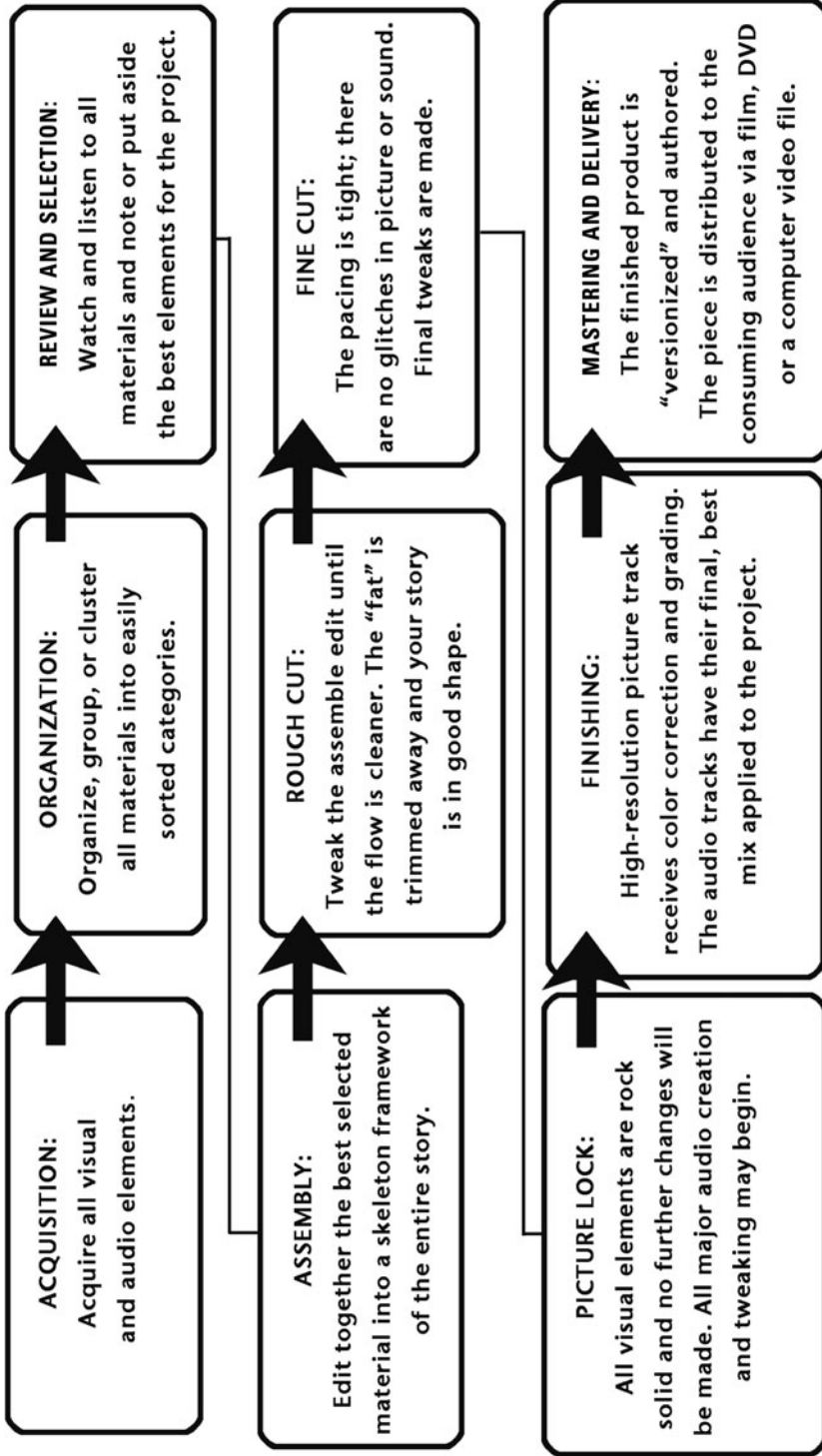


FIGURE 1.3 The common stages of the editing process.

picture elements (shots, titles, black pauses, etc.) is set. Once you have locked the picture tracks (sometimes literally but mostly figuratively), you are then free to address your audio-mixing needs: final sound effects (SFX), level/panning tweaks, music scoring, etc. In the olden days of actual emulsion film “work print” editing, the picture track had to be locked at a precise duration so that each separately constructed audio track would **sync** up from the start frame. All computer editing software is so much more flexible that there is no longer an absolute need for picture lock, but keep in mind that any alteration to overall duration of picture tracks must still be altered on *all* corresponding audio tracks as well.

Finishing

This stage is sometimes called the online edit. If the offline edit has been done with low-resolution or proxy files, then these are swapped out for the highest-resolution video clips possible. Finishing is the stage where the color correction (also known as timing or grading) of the image is accomplished. Every clip of video is made to look as good as necessary according to the needs of the project (i.e., appropriate colors, saturation and **contrast** levels, etc.). The final mixed audio tracks are also in place in your timeline along with these “finished” video tracks.

Mastering and Delivery

All of your efforts in creating a well-edited piece will mean very little if you cannot deliver the show to the audience that need to see it. These days, this process may mean **rendering** everything and recording your finished sequence onto a master HD videotape, creating a cut list for an optical film print for projection in a movie theater, exporting and converting your story into a computer video file, or authoring onto a DVD or Blu-ray disc. Each medium would require a unique process and supporting hardware, software, and media. The end result is that you have a fully mastered original version of your show that you can then convert into other media formats and upload and/or **distribute** to various viewing outlets for audiences to enjoy.

You should now have a pretty good idea of what the basic editing or post-production workflow is for any project, whether large or small. You certainly may encounter projects that do not call for all of these stages of editing to be executed in a clearly delineated manner, but, for the most part, you will touch upon some combination of each of these stages as you work toward your finished sequence.

The Basic Motion Picture Transitions

The last topic for us to touch on in this introductory chapter on editing will be the edit point itself: the place where the two clips are joined together. Getting a handle on these terms now will help us to understand them better as they appear throughout this book. Chapter Six is dedicated to a more expansive exploration of these traditional editing practices.

In an edited sequence, there are four basic ways to transition from one shot or visual element into another:

1. **Cut** – An instantaneous change from one shot to the next. The last full frame of picture for a clip is immediately followed by the first full frame of picture for the next clip.
2. **Dissolve** – A gradual change from the ending pictures of one shot into the beginning pictures of the next shot. This is traditionally achieved via a momentary **superimposition** of the two shots where the opacity of the outgoing shot fades down and that of the incoming shot fades up simultaneously. As the end of the first shot “dissolves” away, the beginning of the next shot “resolves” onto the screen at the same time. Both images appear to be blended together on the screen for a very brief period.
3. **Wipe** – A line, progressing at some angle, or a geometric shape, moves across the screen removing the image of the shot just ending while simultaneously revealing the next shot behind the moving line or shape. The wiping shot replaces the previous shot on the screen over a brief duration where segments of both shots are partially visible.
4. **Fade** – (1) A gradual change from a solid color-filled screen (typically black) into a fully visible image, also known as a **fade-from-black** or **fade-in**; (2) a gradual change from a fully visible image into a solid color-filled screen (typically black), also known as a **fade-to-black** or **fade-out**.

The grammar of the edit has evolved in some ways since the early days of cinema, but these four basic transitions have remained the same. No matter what type of motion media project you are editing or what tool you are using to make it, a cut is still a cut. A dissolve is still a dissolve no matter what pictures you dissolve from and to. A wipe will literally wipe a new shot over the old shot. A fade-in still comes out of black and a fade-out still goes into black. The transitions have remained the same because their individual purposes have remained the same, and almost everyone around the world understands their grammar – or what it means when they see one being used at a transition point.

Later in this book, you will be able to explore a more in-depth analysis of these basic picture transitions and learn about audio transitions as well. For now, let us review the topics presented in this chapter, practice a few exercises, and quiz ourselves on some of the pertinent information. These concluding sections exist at the end of each chapter, so if you want to jump ahead and scan over these pages, you will have a solid understanding of the types of editing topics that we discuss, illustrate, and encourage you to think about and play with.

Chapter One – Final Thoughts: Editing Purpose and Process

Editing is required of almost every motion media project. Regardless of whether the “job” of the video is to inform, influence, or entertain, the greater or lesser effect of the overall messaging received by the viewing audience hinges upon the solidity and efficacy of the pictorial and aural presentation. Although several agents contribute important elements to the motion media piece, it is the editor who truly constructs the story and manages the final experience for the chosen audience.

Proven pathways in the post-production process exist to aid in this construction of the story. Organization is paramount. Moving the picture and sound assets through these steps helps the editor (and other post-production team members) to realize the precise story they have to tell, no matter how close or far that story may be from the original intentions of the project’s initiators. When it all works well together, the editor forms a motion media piece that is a sort of waking dream for the audience. When the elements do not combine well, it can often feel more like a nightmare.

Related Material Found in Chapter Eight – Working Practices

At the end of each chapter in this book, you will find a concluding section like this that lists the numbers for corresponding working practices that are relevant to the chapter that you are just completing. The working practices are discussed and illustrated in Chapter Eight with a practical application in mind for the working filmmaker. You *do not* have to skip forward to read these elaborations now. You may cover them as you get to Chapter Eight or at any point you wish. We simply list these working practices now for your convenience.

#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 40, 41, 42, 59, 60