

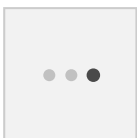
# Two Shot

It's hard to frame characters on screen, while simultaneously showcasing the story's intentions. Never fear, the two shot can solve this problem for you.

Today we're going to go over the two shot. We'll show you how you can use it in your work to subtly get your story's dramatic beats and comedic moments to pop.

## The two shot definition

A shot in which the frames a view of the subjects. The subjects do not have to be next to each other. There are many which have one subject in the foreground and the other subject in the background. The shot is used to show the emotional reactions between the subjects.



Uses: You use this for romance, tension, and action.



*James Cameron using the two shot for Avatar (2009).*

## What is a two shot?

The shot rose to prominence with early soap operas in the 1960's.

The two shot was a cheap and easy way to get both actors inside the frame. That way they wouldn't have to shoot multiple setups.



*The two shot began in Soap Operas.*

This helped directors immensely. They could showcase character reactions, and the scandalous reveals, all in one shot. The shot became more and more commonplace and eventually left television screens for the glitz and glamour of film.



*The shot angles of the two shot in The Graduate accentuate two kids,  
lost and in love.*

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## The two shot in modern cinema

As more directors from TV got feature film jobs, they brought the two shot with them. The two shot gained more fame and more nuance.

Everyone had their specific take on the shot.

For example, the “two shot west” refers to a two shot where one character faces away from the other character. This enables both characters to appear together in a single shot facing the audience.

It helps us identify with what’s going on and most of the time places us at eye-level. It lets us feel like we’re really there with them and standing in the room next to them.



*This is a two shot west from Gangster Squad*

The two shot west is even utilized in poster design. Check out this recent example from *Ant-Man and the Wasp*. They do a gender swap and allow Paul Rudd to look coyly over his shoulder while Evangeline Lily takes center stage.



*This is an American shot, too. Ant-man and the Wasp*