

Glossary for TV and Video Production

Banner - A few words at the bottom of the screen describing the story, video, or what's being said.

B-roll - Any video in a story other than interviews or graphics.

BTS - Stands for 'behind the scenes,' usually of a production.

Bug - A way for TV stations to brand their shows/newscasts with a graphic, usually in the lower right corner of the screen.

Bump - A way to start or end a section of a show with video and/or sound.

CG - This stands for 'character generator' and is the name of a person or a place located on the lower third of the screen. Each person needs a two-line CG name and title:

CAROL FOLT

USC President

Video locations should include a CG indicating where it was shot. Be specific about Los Angeles communities. For example: Downtown Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, or Watts instead of Los Angeles.

Chromakey - The green screen used in weather and other reports in a newscast that can be replaced by graphics and/or video.

Close-up (CU) - A tight shot.

Cold open - A technique of using video and/or sound at the very top of a newscast before anchor introductions to capture viewer attention.

Copy - A story an anchor or reporter reads with no visuals or sound, also known as a reader.

Cutaway - A video shot away from the main action. Examples: the reporters at a news conference or a listening shot of a reporter in an interview. These shots provide transitions in editing and cover jump cuts.

File - Video from an earlier news story that is often used to provide context.

Incue - The first few words--generally three or four--of a taped report or interview.

Intro - The introduction, usually on camera, to a story such as a voice over (VO), soundbite (SOT), or package (Pkg).

Jump cut - Two different but very similar shots edited together that seem to jump from one to the other. Example: two shots from different parts of the same interview. How to avoid them: insert a cutaway or add an editing effect like a white flash or a wipe.

Live on tape/Live to tape - A recorded live shot that is broadcast subsequently and therefore not really live.

Live shot - A reporter who is on location to present the story while the show is on the air. Usually the reporter will toss to video, sound, or a package that was shot, written, and edited prior to the live shot. In the event of breaking news, the reporter may not have any video but may have a live interview.

Log - The process of watching and listening to video, taking notes of any footage or sound you might use and their location, and noting the time code. (See time code definition below.)

Lower third - The bottom third of the screen, where identifications and other captions, often referred to as CGs, are displayed.

Medium shot (MS) - A camera position between a close-up and a wide shot.

Natural sound (nat sound) - The actual sound heard at the scene of a story. Examples: honking, protesters chanting, singing, sirens, etc.

Outcue - The last three or four words at the end of a soundbite or package.

Package (pkg) - A reporter's recorded story that usually includes video, sound, and voice track of the reporter and usually runs between 1:30 and 2:00.

Pad - Extra video at the end of a story, usually about :10, to ensure there is enough.

Pan - A shot that's good for following action or showing the relationship between two places.

Phoner - An interview conducted via telephone.

Preshow - A selection of videos used before the start of a newscast to engage viewers as the anchors 'tease' the stories that are coming up.

Reader - A story read by a reporter or anchor on camera without video, also known as a copy story.

Rollcue - The three or four words a reporter says, often at the end of a live shot, that is the signal for the director to play the video.

Rundown - A story by story breakdown of a newscast or show that provides the order, the length of stories, the videos and sound, the anchor reads, and information for the director.

Runs - The actual length of a video, soundbite or package from start to finish, not including any pad.

Sigout - The reporter's final words in a package or live shot, usually identifying him/herself by name, location, and news organization. Example: For Annenberg Media, I'm Jill Smith in Hollywood.

SOT, sound, soundbite - The 'sound on tape,' (an old TV term), describes what someone says during an interview, like a quote in a text story. For TV newscasts, they usually run about :15 to :20.

Standup - A short video of a reporter on camera that's edited into a package. It can place the reporter at the scene, transition to another part of the story, demonstrate or show something, etc.

Tag - The closing line or two of a story that's usually read on camera.

Tease - A brief but catchy sentence or two, usually accompanied by video, to get viewers to watch or stay watching a newscast.

Teleprompter - The device that shows the scripts, in all CAPS, for newscast anchors and reporters who are in the studio or Media Center.

Time code - The time on recorded video, as it is being shot (minutes:seconds:frames), to assist in editing and record keeping.

Toss - One or more words used as a transition between an anchor and a reporter or between two anchors. Example: Reporter Susan Hill joins us from the newsroom with more on the massive fire in downtown L.A.

Track - A reporter's narration of a story that is covered with video or graphics and leads into and out of recorded interviews.

TRT - The 'total running time' of a story, including the pad that's added at the end.

VO, voiceover - A news story read by an anchor or reporter as video is playing.

VOSOT - A voiceover followed by a soundbite; it's usually best to follow a VOSOT with a tag.

VSV - A voiceover followed by a sound bite (SOT) and then more voiceover.

Wallpaper video - Generic visuals that do not add much to the story.

Wide shot (WS) - A broad area of a scene, often used to "establish" a scene.

Zoom - The technique of zeroing in on a scene or subject without changing shots. (During the pandemic, Zoom has become a lifeline and is used to interview and record people virtually.)