

## Video & Scriptwriting / Storyboarding

Map shot sizes to storytelling intent — visual grammar for professional shot selection.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Visual Grammar, Shot Selection

Updated: June 2026

Why This Prompt Exists

Shot size determines what the audience feels. Extreme wide says “insignificant.” Close-up says “intimate.” Most creators use the same few shot sizes for everything.

You get:

- close-ups for action scenes (can't see movement, disorienting)
- wide shots for emotional moments (no connection, distant)
- medium shots for everything (safe, boring, no variety)
- no extreme close-ups for detail (missed intensity)
- inconsistent shot sizes within same scene type

But shot sizes have specific emotional jobs:

- extreme wide (EWS): subject tiny in frame — isolation, scale, awe
- wide/establishing (WS): full body + environment — context, location
- medium (MS): waist up — conversation, connection
- medium close-up (MCU): chest up — engagement, warmth

- close-up (CU): face only — emotion, intimacy, intensity
- extreme close-up (ECU): eyes, hands, detail — threat, reveal, texture
- cut-in: detail of object — emphasis, information
- over-shoulder (OS): behind one character — dialogue, perspective

Without shot size variety, videos feel flat.

This prompt classifies shot sizes by storytelling intent.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a visual grammar specialist who classifies shot sizes.

Your task is to recommend shot sizes based on narrative intent.

Generate:

### 1. SHOT SIZE CLASSIFICATION

Shot Size	Abbreviation	Frame	Emotional Signal	Best For	Avoid For
Extreme wide	EWS	Tiny subject	Isolation, awe, scale	Landscapes, establishing	Emotion, dialogue
Wide / Establishing	WS	Full body + env	Context, location	Action, group scenes	Intimate moments
Medium	MS	Waist up	Connection, conversation	Dialogue, interviews	High action

| Medium close-up | MCU | Chest up | Warmth, engagement | News, vlogs, emotion | Action sequences |

| Close-up | CU | Face only | Emotion, intimacy | Reactions, emotional beats | Context, environment |

| Extreme close-up | ECU | Eyes, hands, detail | Threat, intensity, texture | Suspense, reveals, details | Full scenes |

| Cut-in | CI | Object detail | Emphasis, information | Props, text, features | People (use CU instead) |

| Over-shoulder | OS | Behind one character | Perspective, dialogue | Conversations | Action, movement |

## 2. EMOTION TO SHOT SIZE MAP

Emotion	Primary Shot Size	Secondary	Reason
Isolation/Loneliness	EWS	WS	Shows subject alone in environment
Connection/Warmth	MCU	MS	Close enough for engagement
Tension/Suspense	ECU	CU	Intensity, detail
Joy/Celebration	WS	MS	Group, movement, energy
Sadness/Grief	CU	ECU	Focus on face, eyes
Surprise/Revelation	CU (reaction)	ECU (detail)	Captures expression
Power/Dominance	Low angle WS	EWS	Subject larger than environment
Fear/Vulnerability	CU	ECU	Vulnerable, exposed

## 3. SCENE TYPE TO SHOT SIZE MAP

Scene Type	Primary Size	Secondary	Sequence Pattern
Establishing location	EWS	WS	EWS → WS → MS
Two-person dialogue	MS or OS	CU (reactions)	OS A → OS B → CU A → CU B
Emotional revelation	CU	ECU	MS → CU → ECU
Action sequence	WS	MS	WS for movement, CU for impact
Horror/suspense	ECU	CU	ECU (detail) → CU (reaction)
Romantic moment	MCU	CU	MCU (both) → CU (each)
Comedy	MS	CU	MS for setup, CU for punchline
Product detail	CI	ECU	WS (context) → CI (detail)

#### 4. SHOT SIZE TRANSITIONS

Transition	Effect	Example
WS → CU	Reveals emotion from context	Character in crowd → character's face
CU → WS	Reveals scale of situation	Shocked face → explosion behind
MS → ECU	Intensifies detail	Hand reaching → hand touching object
EWS → WS → MS	Gradually increases intimacy	Far landscape → closer → character

#### 5. SHOT SIZE HIERARCHY BY IMPORTANCE

Character Importance	Shot Size	Reason

Protagonist	CU, MCU	Audience connects emotionally
Antagonist	MS, WS (often)	Maintains distance, mystery
Sidekick	MS, MCU	Important but secondary
Background	WS, EWS	Minimal connection

## 6. COMMON SHOT SIZE MISTAKES

Mistake	Why It Fails	Correct Shot Size
CU for action scene	Can't see movement	WS or MS
WS for emotional moment	No connection	CU or MCU
MS for everything	Boring, no variety	Vary sizes by beat
No ECU for detail	Missed intensity	ECU for objects, reactions
Inconsistent sizes	Visual confusion	Establish pattern, then
break intentionally |

### INPUTS:

Scene description:

[E.G., "A character receives bad news"]

Emotional intent:

[E.G., "Sadness, shock, devastation"]

Character importance:

[PROTAGONIST / ANTAGONIST / SIDEKICK / BACKGROUND]

Action taking place:

[E.G., "Standing still, reading, reacting"]

## RULES:

- EWS for isolation and scale (shows subject tiny in environment)
- WS for action and context (shows full body and surroundings)
- MS for conversation and connection (waist up, engages viewer)
- MCU for warmth and engagement (chest up, intimate but not intense)
- CU for emotion and intimacy (face only, shows feeling)
- ECU for threat, detail, intensity (eyes, hands, objects)
- CI for product, text, prop emphasis (object only)
- OS for dialogue perspective (behind one character)
- Vary shot sizes every 2-4 shots (prevents visual monotony)

## How To Use It

- EWS for isolation and scale — shows the subject tiny in the environment.
- WS for action and context — shows full body and surroundings.
- MS for conversation and connection — waist up, engages the viewer.
- MCU for warmth and engagement — chest up, intimate but not intense.
- CU for emotion and intimacy — face only, shows feeling.
- ECU for threat, detail, intensity — eyes, hands, objects.
- CI for product, text, or prop emphasis — object only.
- OS for dialogue perspective — behind one character, over the shoulder.
- Vary shot sizes every 2-4 shots — prevents visual monotony.

## Example Input

### **Scene description:**

“A protagonist learns that their loved one is safe after believing they were lost”

### **Emotional intent:**

“Relief, joy, overwhelming emotion”

**Character importance:**

“PROTAGONIST”

**Action taking place:**

“Receiving news, reacting, embracing”

**Why It Works**

Most creators default to medium shots for everything — safe, boring, and emotionally flat.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- shot size classification (EWS, WS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU, CI, OS)
- emotion-to-shot-size mapping (which size for which feeling)
- scene-to-shot-size mapping (what size for dialogue, action, emotion)
- shot size transitions (how to move between sizes for effect)
- hierarchy by importance (protagonist gets more close-ups)

**Failure modes this prevents:**

- Close-ups for action scenes (can't see movement, disorienting)
- Wide shots for emotional moments (no connection, distant)
- Medium shots for everything (safe, boring, no variety)
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**This improves on:** Single-shot-size videos. Strategic shot size variation adds emotional depth.

**Related to:** SB-01 (Shot Sequence) for ordering; SB-02 (Movement) for camera motion.

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