

Video & Scriptwriting / Storyboarding

Design visual transitions between shots — post-production workflow for professional editing.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Post-Production, Editing Design

Updated: June 2026

Why This Prompt Exists

Editors discover transitions during editing, not during planning. This leads to inconsistent styles, mismatched pacing, and last-minute creative decisions.

You get:

- same cut type for every transition (boring, predictable)
- fancy transitions that don't fit content (distracting, amateur)
- no planned L-cuts or J-cuts (audio-visual mismatch)
- transitions that break continuity (jarring, confusing)
- no relationship between transition type and emotional beat

But transitions have specific purposes:

- cut: direct change — neutral, standard, invisible
- dissolve/fade: gradual change — time passage, memory, dream
- wipe: line moves across screen — change of location, comic

- match cut: visual similarity — connection, thematic link
- L-cut: audio continues from previous shot — conversation, reaction
- J-cut: audio from next shot begins early — anticipation, scene entry
- fade to black: scene ending — finality, passage of time
- fade from black: scene beginning — start, awakening, arrival

Without transition planning, editing is reactive.

This prompt plans transitions for post-production.

The Prompt

Assume the role of an editing designer who plans transitions.

Your task is to specify transitions between shots based on narrative intent.

Generate:

1. TRANSITION TYPE CLASSIFICATION

Transition	Description	Emotional Signal	Best For	Avoid For
Cut	Direct change	Neutral, standard	Dialogue, action	Time passage
Dissolve	Gradual overlap	Time passage, memory	Flashbacks, montages	Fast action
Fade to black	Screen to black	Finality, ending	Scene ends, chapter ends	Mid-scene
Fade from black	Black to screen	Beginning, awakening	Scene	

starts | Between cuts |
Wipe	Line across screen	Change, comic, stylized	Star Wars style	Serious drama
Match cut	Visual similarity	Connection, theme	Transitions between similar shapes/actions	Random cuts
L-cut	Audio continues	Conversation continuity	Dialogue scenes	Music-only sections
J-cut	Audio begins early	Anticipation	Entering scenes	Abrupt changes
Smash cut	Abrupt, jarring	Shock, humor	Comedy, horror	Gradual scenes
Iris	Circle closing/opening	Stylized, nostalgic	Old films, dream sequences	Modern content

2. SCENE TYPE TO TRANSITION MAP

Scene Change	Primary Transition	Secondary	Duration
Within same scene	Cut	L-cut/J-cut	0-1 frame
Next scene, same location	Cut	Dissolve	0-1 frame
Time passage (hours)	Dissolve	Fade	0.5-1s
Time passage (days/years)	Fade to black, fade from black	Dissolve	1-2s
Location change (distant)	Wipe	Dissolve	0.5-1.5s
Dream/memory	Dissolve	Soft focus	1-2s
Comedic beat	Smash cut	Cut	0-1 frame
Emotional climax	Hold on shot (no cut)	None	N/A

3. TRANSITION PROMPT TEMPLATES

****Cut:****

`Cut directly from [shot A] to [shot B].`

****Dissolve:****

`Dissolve from [shot A] to [shot B] over [X] frames/seconds.`

****Match cut:****

`Match cut from [element in shot A] to [similar element in shot B].`

****L-cut:****

`L-cut: Audio from [shot A] continues over beginning of [shot B].`

****J-cut:****

`J-cut: Audio from [shot B] begins while [shot A] is still on screen.`

****Fade to black:****

`Fade to black over [X] seconds.`

4. MATCH CUT PATTERNS

Pattern	Example	Effect
Shape match	Round object to round object (moon to coin)	Thematic connection
Action match	Action completes in next shot (door closing to door opening)	Continuity
Color match	Red dress to red car	Emotional link
Sound match	Sound bridges visual change	Seamless transition

5. AUDIO TRANSITION RULES

Audio Type	Recommended Transition	Reason
Dialogue	L-cut or J-cut	Natural conversation flow
Music	Cut on beat	Rhythmic, professional
Ambient sound	Crossfade	Smooth environment change
SFX	Cut	Sharp, impactful
Voiceover	Cut or dissolve	Depends on emotional content

6. COMMON TRANSITION MISTAKES

Mistake	Why It Fails	Correct Transition
Dissolve for every transition	Slow, dated	Cut for most transitions
No L-cuts in dialogue	Abrupt, unnatural	L-cut or J-cut
Fancy wipe for drama	Distracting, amateur	Simple cut
Too many match cuts	Loses impact	Use sparingly (1-2 per video)
Abrupt audio cut	Jarring	Crossfade or L-cut

INPUTS:

Shot sequence (from SB-01):

[PASTE SHOT SEQUENCE OR DESCRIBE SHOTS]

Scene transitions between shots:

[DESCRIBE WHAT CHANGES BETWEEN SHOTS]

Narrative intent:

[E.G., "Time passage", "Location change", "Emotional beat"]

Audio description (if any):

[E.G., "Dialogue continues across cut", "Music swells"]

RULES:

- Use cuts for 90%+ of transitions (invisible, professional)
- Dissolves for time passage, memories, dreams (0.5-2 seconds)
- L-cuts and J-cuts for dialogue (audio bridges visual change)
- Match cuts for thematic connections (use sparingly)
- Fades for scene endings and beginnings (not mid-scene)
- Wipes for stylized content only (Star Wars, comedy)
- Smash cuts for shock, humor, abrupt changes (comedic effect)
- Plan transitions during storyboarding, not during editing

How To Use It

- Use cuts for 90%+ of transitions — invisible, professional, standard.
- Dissolves for time passage, memories, dreams — 0.5-2 seconds duration.
- L-cuts and J-cuts for dialogue — audio bridges the visual change.
- Match cuts for thematic connections — use sparingly (1-2 per video).
- Fades for scene endings and beginnings — not mid-scene.
- Wipes for stylized content only — Star Wars, comedy, retro.
- Smash cuts for shock, humor, abrupt changes — comedic or horror effect.
- Plan transitions during storyboarding, not during editing — intentional, not reactive.

Example Input

Shot sequence:

"Shot 1: WS of character at desk working. Shot 2: CU of clock showing midnight. Shot 3:

WS of same desk, now empty, morning light.”

Scene transitions:

“Shot 1 to Shot 2: Within same scene, showing time passing. Shot 2 to Shot 3: Time passage from midnight to morning.”

Narrative intent:

“Time passage — character worked late into the night”

Audio description:

“Typing sounds in Shot 1, clock ticking in Shot 2, birds in Shot 3”

Why It Works

Most editors figure out transitions during post-production — resulting in inconsistent styles and missed storytelling opportunities.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- transition type classification (cut, dissolve, fade, wipe, match cut, L-cut, J-cut, smash cut, iris)
- scene-to-transition mapping (which transition for which change)
- transition prompt templates (ready-to-use descriptions)
- match cut patterns (shape, action, color, sound)
- audio transition rules (dialogue, music, ambient, SFX, voiceover)

Failure modes this prevents:

- Same cut type for every transition (boring, predictable)
- Fancy transitions that don't fit content (distracting, amateur)
- No planned L-cuts or J-cuts (audio-visual mismatch)
- Transitions that break continuity (jarring, confusing)

This improves on: Reactive editing. Planned transitions enable intentional post-production.

Related to: SB-01 (Shot Sequence) for shot order; SB-02 (Movement) for in-shot motion.

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