

The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing

Directions: Take out paper and pencil/pen to complete this assignment. The total run time for this documentary is 1:39:21, so you will not finish it in class. Your goal, in addition to completing the questions below, is to view 1 hour of this documentary.

1. [3:30] Edwin Porter discovered that cutting separate shots together could create a story. How did Porter edit "Life of an American Fireman" that made it so unique? Describe his arrangement of shots to tell a story with film.
2. [5:05] "The invention of editing gave birth to a new art and a new language." A list of the things that editing can do follows this line. List four.
3. [8:20] Verna Fields was referred to by the production staff of Jaws as Mother Cutter. According to Steven Spielberg, the editing disagreements he and Fields would share, "always happened with that darn shark." Describe the disagreement and the eventual solution.
4. [9:35] James Cameron states that "I got so desperate on Terminator 2" to shorten the length of the film that he tried what editing technique? Did it work?
5. [10:30] D.W. Griffiths advanced the story telling tools that Porter had invented. He was the first to use the close-up in a big way. Why did some people think using close-ups was a bad idea?
6. [11:27] What techniques did Griffiths use in Birth of a Nation?
7. [12:00] Griffiths is credited with inventing the "invisible cut." What is the invisible cut? Describe.
8. [18:03] Describe the \$75 payment Editor Kevin Tent made to Director Alexander Payne in the scene from Election. What did each person want in the edit? Which method won out in the end?
9. [22:30] Use a dictionary to look up the word "juxtaposition." Write the definition below. Next, describe how the juxtaposition of the male actor with the bowl of soup, the woman at the coffin, and the little girl each produce a different reaction in the audience.
10. [31:15] If you don't want to see scenes from two slasher films, skip ahead to 34:50.