

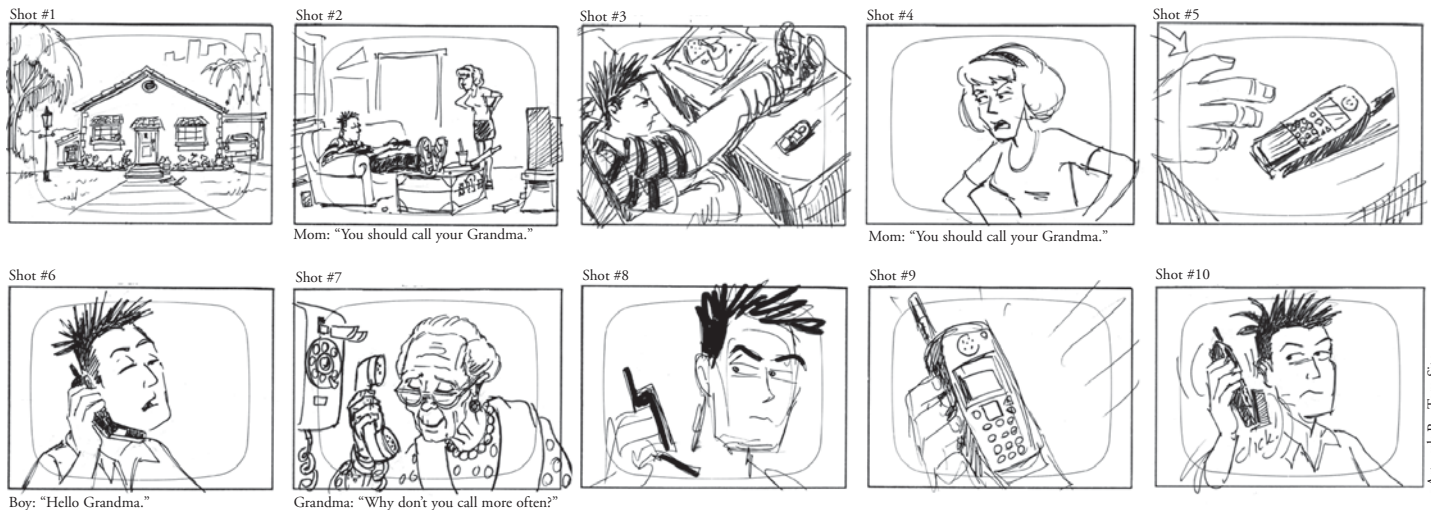
# CREATING MEANING

Unlike most television situation comedies—shot in sequence with several cameras running simultaneously—most films are shot with only one camera. (The exception is in scenes where spectacular or unrepeatable action occurs, such as an explosion.) Because the shots are taken out of sequence, at different times and places, and on different days, the editor then must piece the shots together. Most filmmakers have a good idea how different shots will fit together in the final product.

Shots can be edited in a logical, chronological order to create continuity. The editor can choose to link shots that are graphical-

ly similar. Elements that might be linked include colors, shapes, directional movements and the overall composition of the shots. In most films, the center of interest is in roughly the same position in each shot, the lighting is at about the same level, and strong changes in colors from shot to shot are avoided. That said, the editor can choose to emphasize the collision, or discontinuity between shots to create a sense of discord. Rather than having a clear relationship between shots, the editor can disorient viewers, requiring them to figure out the relationship. This technique is often used to create heightened emotional impact.

**PART A.** The artists who draw the panels you see in newspapers and comic books use many techniques that are similar to those used by film editors. Here is an example of a comic strip:



- Editing shots together can create meaning that is not implicit in the individual shots themselves (as illustrated by the Kuleshov effect). What assumption do we make when shown the exterior of the house followed by the Mom and boy inside the room? \_\_\_\_\_
- What happens when the exterior of the house is placed in front of the shot of the Grandma on the phone? Whose house do we assume it is then? \_\_\_\_\_
- Shots number two and four each have the Mom saying, "You'd better call your Grandma." What effect does this repetition have? \_\_\_\_\_
- What shots can be removed to make it appear that the boy is remembering something his Grandma said previously rather than actually talking to her? \_\_\_\_\_
- Because the Mom is on the right of the screen and the boy is on the left, it creates the effect of them talking to each other as we intercut. Why can't the shots be edited together to make it appear that the Mom is talking to the Grandma? \_\_\_\_\_

- What would the effect be of cutting back and forth between the extreme close-up of the phone and the close-up of the boy looking at the phone? \_\_\_\_\_
- What effect would eliminating shots 3 and 4 have? \_\_\_\_\_

**PART B.** Cut out and rearrange or "edit" the panels into a different order that changes the story being told. On the back of this sheet describe the effect of the editing. How has the meaning, rhythm, or point of view changed?

Find another comic strip or comic book sequence for which you could "edit" the panels, fitting the "shots" together in a different order to create a new final product. On the back of this page, cut out and reorder the frames to show how your comic would change. In this exercise, you are editing a strip that someone else has "directed."

Or you can draw your own comic strip or *storyboard* (a series of drawings, sketches or photographs that illustrate the narrative progression of each shot.) In what ways can you alter the sequence of drawings to have them say different things?