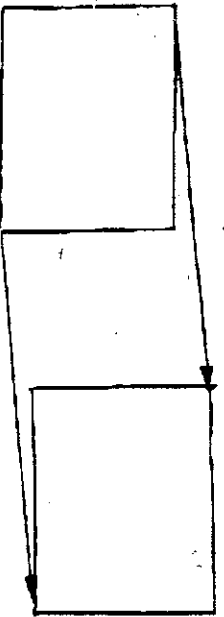# Showing Camera Moves on a Simpsons Board

Remove all the top labels of the frames except the one on the stop point
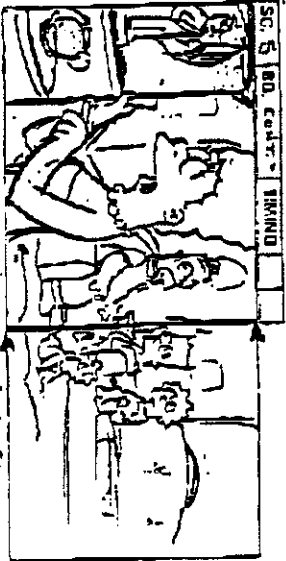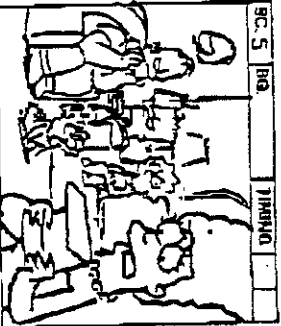
PAN: Arrows from one frame to another...
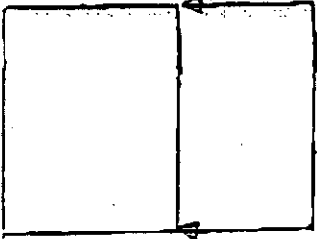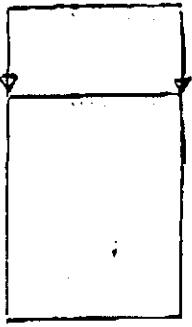the clearer the better!

Show the stop point;
box it to clearly make it different from the start point
If the acting changes through the pan, show a few of the poses

Show the direction of the pan

Show the start point

Adj. Left

Camera Adjust: the camera moves less than one full frame in any direction; arrows drawn from one frame to the other.

Only show the entire frame of the stop point

Using moves in combination -

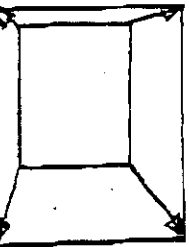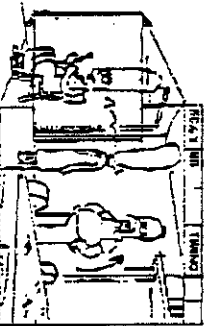Push In/ Cam. Adj. Left with Morge   Slight Adj. Right with Liso
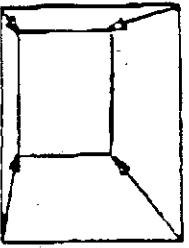
Push In / Truck In
Slow In/ Smash in
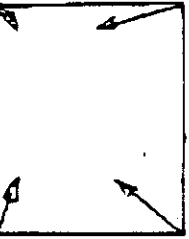
Drift In
if the cut to the next shot comes before the camera stops

Push Out / Truck Out
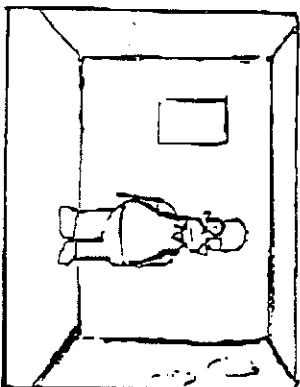Slow Out / Smash Out
WIDEN

CAMERA MOVES WITHIN THE FRAME

Angles are our friends!

or

Springfield is NOT a two dimensional world

BORING! FLAT! UNINSPIRED!
Unless that's what you WANT,
don't draw it!
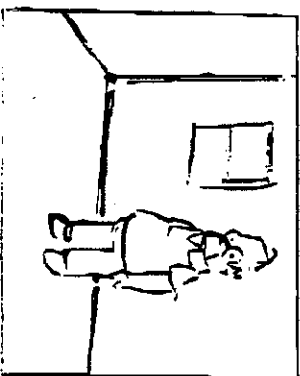
Better!
Show at LEAST 3 PLANES
in a room!
Try to avoid having floor lines
exactly parallel to the bottom
of the frame!

Whoa! This is dynamic...but the
angle draws TOO much attention
away from the scene.
Unless it's a really dramatic
moment, keep it simple!
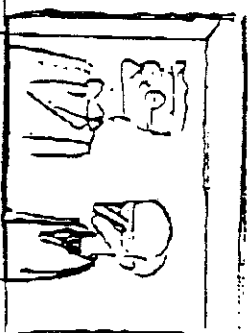
Ok, there are three planes in
the Background, but Smithers
and Burns are standing exactly
next to one another...which
flattens the scene out.
BORING!

BETTER! MORE DYNAMIC!
3 planes of the room, Burns is
closer creating depth. He
is placed higher in the frame
than Smithers, subconsciously
making Burns more important!

Whoa! Burns is almost on TOP
of us. Very dynamic, but again,
save it for the scenes that
call for it!

THE BRAD BIRD PEARL OF WISDOM

HORIZON LINE

When in doubt...

Lower the HORIZON!

A mundane shot...Burns has no power here, and the lawyers seem to be standing the same distance from the camera as Burns is in his seat!
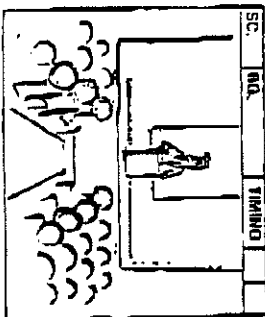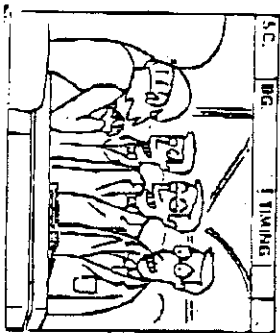

A more dramatic shot. The difference is subtle. But now Burns holds more power, and the distance between the lawyers and Burns is emphasized. All thanks to LOWERING THE HORIZON!
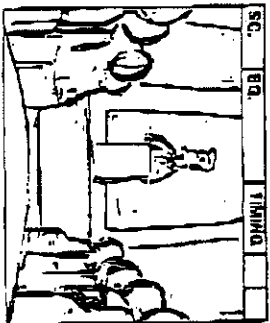

This is a 'STOCK' shot of Rev.Lovejoy speaking to the congregation. Since it's been used in shows before, it'll be easy to layout...but...the Rev. better not be saying anything too important, cause it's a fairly boring shot.

Better! Lovejoy must be saying something important, because he's above us and all the 'lines' of the shot draw the eye to him. And it still shows us where we are AND that the congregation is there...but easier to draw since you only see those people on the aisle!

If what Lovejoy's saying is more important, you could even START on a low shot of him...then later cut to a wide shot showing the congragation...maybe an 'over the Rev.'s shoulder' shot.

Don't cut off heads in the frame.

Cutting off heads is bad.

I hate people who cut off heads.

| SC.	BG.	TIMING		

Homer! Is that you? By only showing half of an already abstracted character, it's harder subconsciously to recognize that it's Homer.

SC.	BG.	TIMING		

Ahhh! It IS Homer. Even though his head takes up almost half of the frame, it feels more comfortable than when it was cut in half. Also, he doesn't draw focus from Marge because you can't SEE HIS FACE.

Of course, this isn't set in stone...some directors don't have a problem cutting off heads on 'over the shoulder' shots. And sometimes, the scene may even call for it...you may want the viewer to feel boxed in or slightly confused.

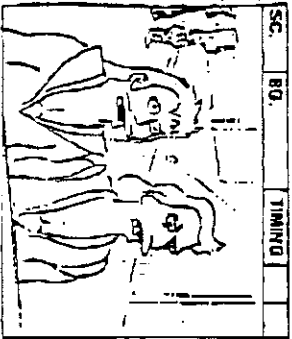But, just keep in mind...BRAD HATES IT!

TRANSITIONS

One of the most important jobs of a good storyboard artist is to create smooth transitions between scenes! Don't just cut to the next scene, or to a new establishing shot...try and be creative!
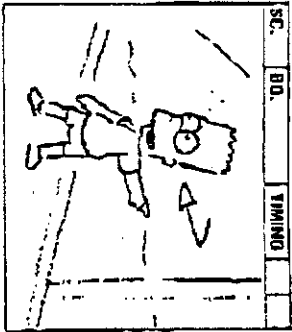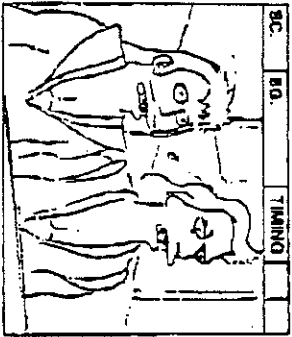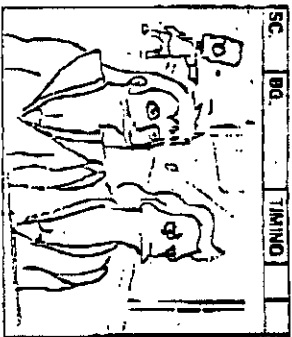
These two scenes happen in the same locale. Why break it up?

Again, these two scenes happen in the same locale. Why break it up? By cutting to an EXT. PLAYHOUSE shot, it breaks up the flow of the story.
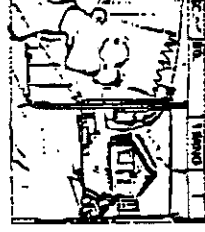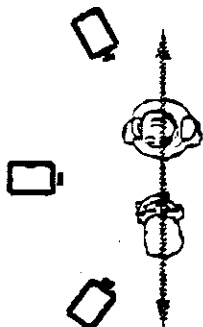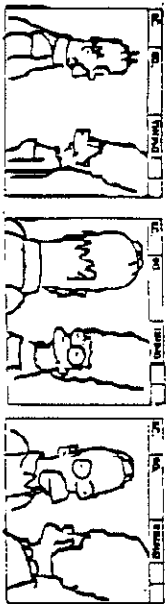
But by PUSHING IN past Bart the flow is maintained, and yet we move into a new scene.

SCREEN DIRECTION

PART ONE: STAYING ON THE GOOD SIDE OF THE CAMERA LINE

Keeping the 'camera' from jumping the 'camera line is the easiest thing to learn, easiest mistake to spot, but is still the most common mistake board artists make!

Whichever direction the characters are FACING at the beginning of a scene...the invisible eyeline between them is the CAMERA LINE. Crossing over that and seeing the characters from the opposite side is a JUMP CUT (a bad thing).
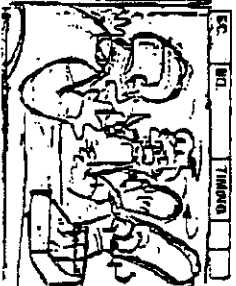
In live action...this line can be formed just by the directions the person's eyes are looking... but because animation deals with abstract two dimensional characters, the direction they FACE is the key factor.
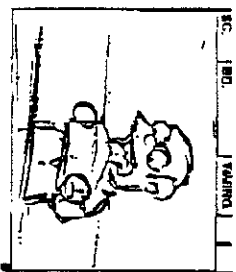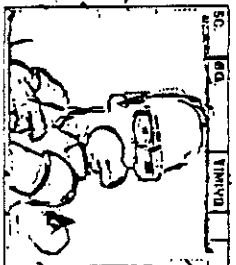
This scene starts with the man behind the counter facing LEFT.

Then SUDDENLY he's facing RIGHT!?!

Jailbird comes in, making Homer turn to the LEFT,

But we cut to him SUDDENLY facing RIGHT!

In this sequence, the camera's jumping all over the place! Even though no one actually moves anywhere in the room, it's harder for the viewer subconsciously to keep everything straight with the camera randomly jumping around.
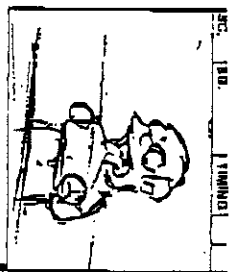
By simply flopping the two middle panels, we keep the man behind the counter and Homer facing the right way...and it makes the scene much more comprehensible.
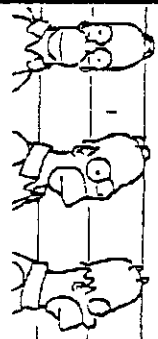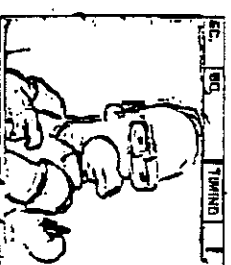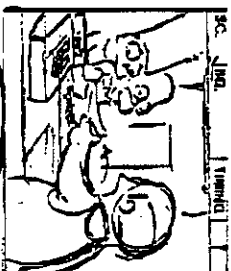
AN EASIER WAY TO REMEMBER THIS: If the character is facing one direction in one shot, keep them facing that way in EVERY SHOT (unless you see them turn).

SCREEN DIRECTION

PART TWO: STAYING ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE SCREEN

This isn't as much a rule as crossing the CAMERA LINE, but it's just as helpful in keeping things CLEAR in your staging and storytelling.

As you can see, my original idea was to cut from this shot with Homer and Marge in the background, to a shot where the Security Salesman stands between them. IN theory, this would put him psychologically between them as well... **BUT**
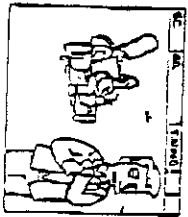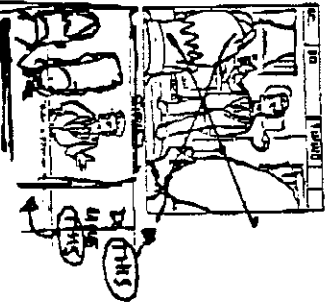
The scene would be better served by keeping the Homer and Marge TOGETHER, since the Sec. Salesman is playing against BOTH of them.
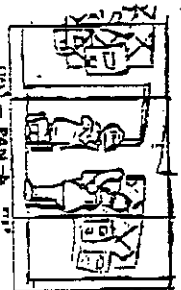
This scene starts out with Moe on the left and Homer on the right...and the next shot DOES work in the context of the scene. Homer is still facing left, and Moe doesn't start out in the scene. This allows for him to enter the frame now facing screen left... **BUT**
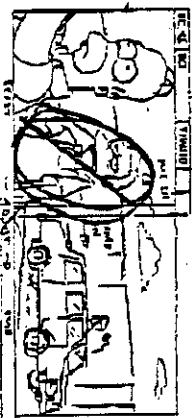
The cutting is smoother if we STAY on both Moe and Homer, keeping them both in the same spots in the frame relative to one another.

KEEP THE CUTTING CLEAN BY KEEPING THE CHARACTERS IN THE SAME RELATIVE SPACE IN SEQUENTIAL SHOTS... (NOT THE SAME SIZE (WHICH WOULD CREATE JUMP CUTS)).

TYPES OF SHOTS

WIDE SHOT (also LONG or ESTABLISHING)

Composition showing WHERE we are, WHO is there, and where they are IN RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER. Simply staged to allow the viewer easy comprehension and acclimation. This shot is the most important shot of any sequ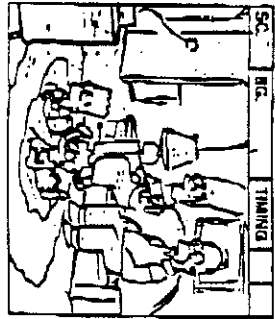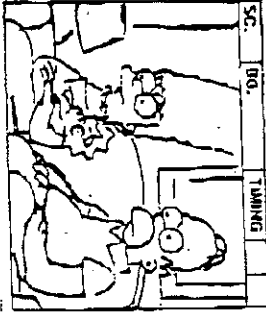ence...all shots afterwards are based around it. It doesn't have to be the first shot of a scene, but it MUST happen at some point, otherwise the viewer will be disoriented.

MEDIUM SHOT

Used when the characters become more important than the surroundings. Shows facial expressions AND gestures while continuing the relationships between one or two other characters.
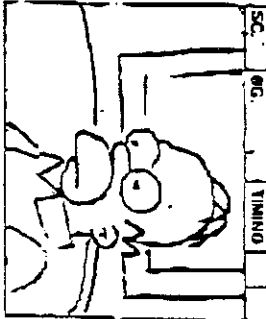
CLOSE UP

This shot involves the viewer more, focusing on a particular character or object. Subtle facial acting is used, or there is text to be read, small details to be noticed. Close-ups involve minimal animation while being powerful images...just don't overuse them.

Extreme Close Up (Choker) - Mouth/eyes only

Close Up - Shoulder to Head

Medium Shot - about waist length

Medium Long Shot - cuts the figure just above the knees

Long Shot - any shot that holds a full length figure or figures
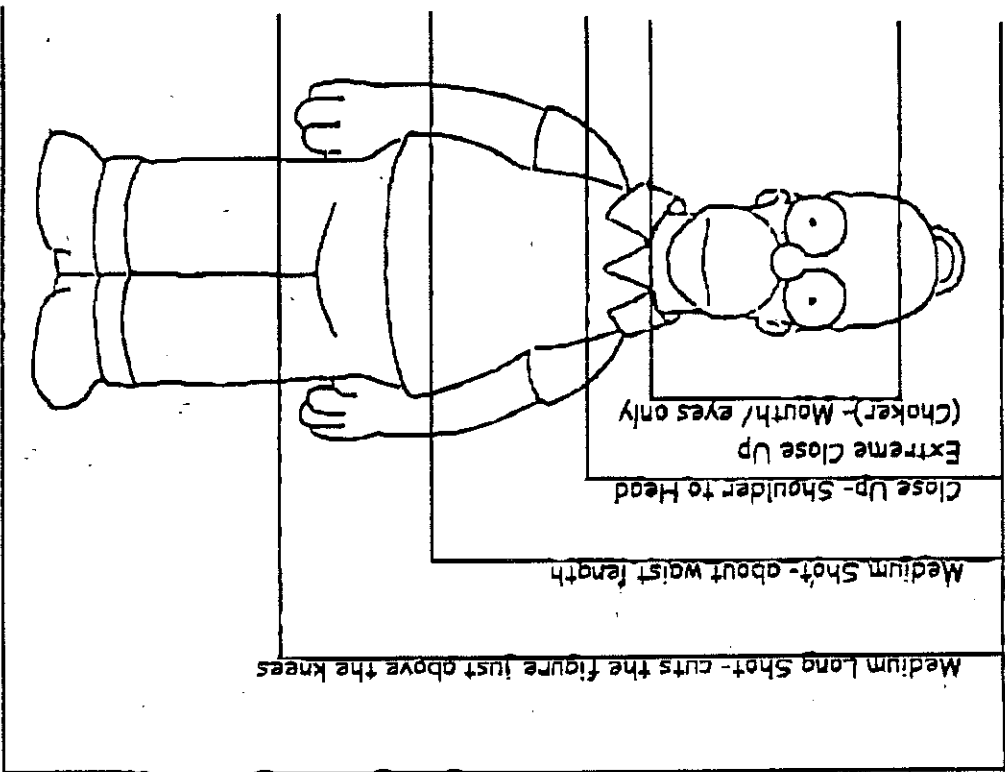
SCREEN DIRECTION

PART THREE: CONTINUITY IN MOVING DIRECTIONS
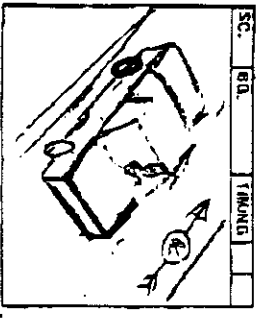
Psychologically speaking... LEFT TO RIGHT is more natural to the eye (we read that way).

Compositionally, keep some space in FRONT of the car — or character in the direction they're moving; the viewer subconsciously needs to feel the character has someplace to go.

IN THIS SHOT, the car is moving left to right shown by the ARROW CALLING FOR THE BACKGROUND (BG) TO PAN BEHIND THE CAR FROM RIGHT TO LEFT.

We cut to inside the car. The BG continues in the same direction- Right to Left...keeping Homer travelling LEFT TO RIGHT.

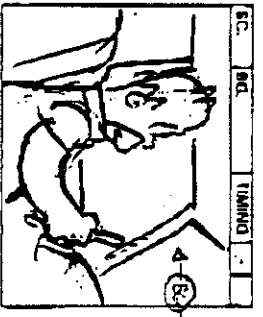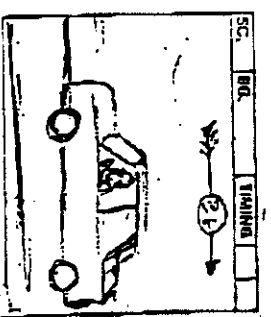After a few scenes, Homer's on his way home. To emphasize that he's going home, the OPPOSITE of where he was going, he should now be travelling RIGHT TO LEFT.
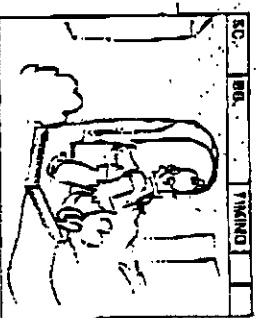
Homer's back, and he's outside his house going in. He's STILL moving LEFT TO RIGHT, continuing the emphasis that he's going AWAY from wherever he'd been.
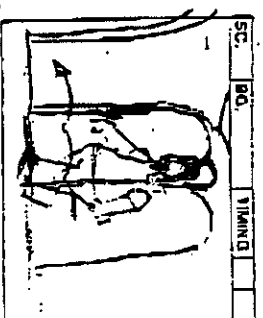
Inside, you keep Homer going LEFT TO RIGHT ...not just to continue the 'going home' feel, but also because Homer creates a CAMERA LINE ALONG THE DIRECTION HE'S TRAVELLING!

MORE TYPES OF SHOTS

INSERTS

Full screen close-ups of actions, objects, text, or character's reactions placed as if inserted over a longer scene, or over another character's dialogue.

Inserted close-up of important action within a wider shot scene.

Inserted close-up of important object linking two seperate shots in the same location.

Inserted close-up of important object with text to be read.

Inserted close-up of Bart's reaction to what Homer is saying.

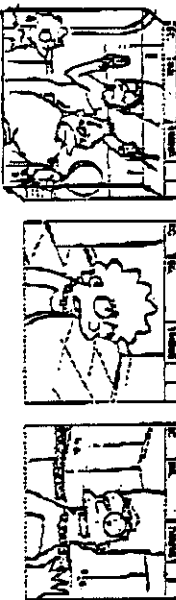(Homer's dialogue continues over shot of Bart)

UPSHOTS and DOWNSHOTS

Upshots place the viewer beneath the focus and downshots place the viewer above, physically AND psychologically. Since most shots are straight on, upshots and downshots add variety and drama to scenes.

From the med. long shot we cut to a DOWNSHOT of Lisa, Marge's POV, which sets up the UPSHOT of Marge, Lisa's POV.

This UPSHOT accentuates the height of the World Trade Center, and the distance Homer must go. The DOWNSHOT can, however, be the virtual POV of the tower, top of the tower, belittles Homer and makes him even more pathetic.

TILT/ DUTCH ANGLE

Used when weird, violent, unstable, impressionistic or other novel views are needed.

TWIST IN to a tilt over-dramatizes a reaction to someone or something.

REVERSE SHOT

Normally, it's a bad idea to cross the CAMERA LINE...but sometimes rules can be broken, like in this scene. Here, we cut to a REVERSE ANGLE to see Homer & Marge's reactions. We can do this, because their locations in relation to Rev.Lovejoy were strongly established in the first shot.

When you choose your shots, think in terms of both the

DRAMATIC IMPACT
on the audience, and
VISUAL VARIETY!
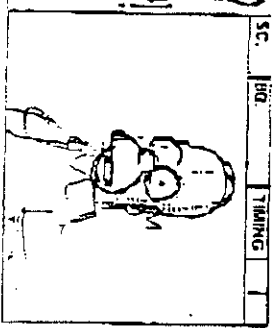
EVEN MORE TYPES OF SHOTS
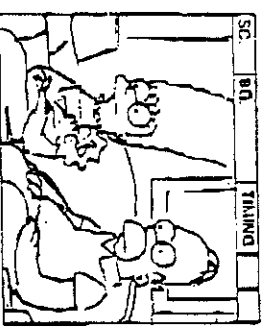
ONE SHOT

How basic can you get?

- One person in the shot!
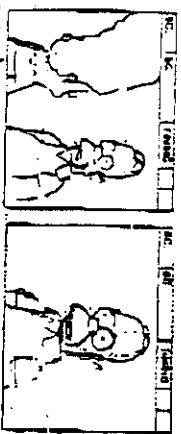- They're the focus!

TWO SHOT

Two people, usually with dialogue relating to one another.

OVER THE SHOULDER (OTS)

Two shot which puts focus on the character facing camera, yet still subconsciously includes the other character. This shot sets up for the ONE SHOT, as if the viewer has assumed the other character's POV.

THREE SHOT

Three characters in a shot...duh!

STAGING IN DEPTH

As in this THREE SHOT, not every composition needs to be viewed from straight on! Move the camera to angles which create depth, placing one or more of the characters closer in the foreground, or back into the background.

THIS THREE SHOT makes Bart the focus by being face front, but also closest to us. But, because of the triangular shape created, Skinner is in power in the scene standing at the top of the triangle.

USING THE AUX. PEGS TO CREATE 3 DIMENSIONS

Take advantage of auxiliary pegs to create multi-plane effects when you think it might enhance the flow! Use it to PAN IN characters during a truck out (see example) or PAN OUT a character the viewer is looking over to truck into the character being spoken to (OTS example- PAN OUT Marge as camera TRUCKS IN to a ONE SHOT of HOMER)
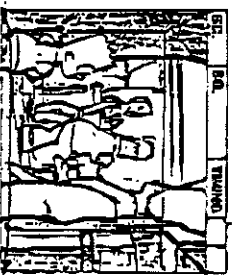
PAN IN Bart   PAN IN Marge/Lisa
TRUCK OUT

Notes On Story Sketching

DEVICES, VICES & THINGS TO AVOID IN THE MAKING OF STORY SKETCHES

"One of the greatest things Disney has to offer an artist is the discipline of having to sell his stuff by making definite and difficult statements, in simple and uncomplicated language, pictorially speaking."

--Phil Dike

All the clichés about story sketching are true.

1. Things should read as a silhouette.

2 views of Jiminy Cricket eating an ice cream cone

2. The important idea of the sketch should be featured and all else in the sketch sublimated.

3. The most obvious and common staging is the best.

4. Originality often leads to obscurity.

5. A successful story sketch communicates its idea instantly.

6. The slightest shadow of a question in the viewer's mind means the story sketch needs reworking.

See *Comic Strip Artist's Kit*, Carson Van Osten's treatise on this subject as applied to comic books.