

# Lighting

Different types of light (the bright stuff):

**Hard Light** - Hard light is light which creates hard shadows. Hard shadows are very dark and sharp. This happens when the light source is smaller than the subject or far away.

eg. Sun light in the middle of a clear day. The flash from a compact camera.

**Soft Light** - Soft light is light which creates soft shadows. Soft shadows are less dark and blurred. This happens when the light source is larger than the subject.

eg. Completely cloud covered day - light coming from the clouds. Office lighting ( long strip lights all across the room)

**Colour** - To achieve different coloured lighting, gels are used. These are semi-transparent plastic sheets which are put in front of the light fixtures.

Different types of lighting:

**Hi-Key** - Lighting set up which consists of many (usually soft) light sources. Almost no shadows. Very little contrast (brightness change within the scene) everything looks evenly lit. Quicker to use as you don't need to change anything between shots.

**Low-Key** - Lighting set up which uses only one hard light. (sometimes with one very dim soft light as well) Large amount of darkness in the scene. Very dark shadows, high contrast. Takes longer to set up.

Different designs of light fixture:

**Fresnel** - Tungsten/Halogen lamp with a lens in front of it. The lens can be adjusted to give a spotlight/wide wash of light. Ridiculously expensive.

**Softbox** - Either a tungsten lamp with a diffuser cover over it, or a set of fluorescent lights all parallel to each other. Either way - the large un-point-like surface acts as a soft light source. The larger the diffusing panel, the softer the light will be. Fairly expensive for the fluorescent ones.

**Floodlight** - Things they use to light up entire buildings. They are usually tungsten/halogen and use reflectors to shine their light all in one rough direction. Cheap!

### Three point lighting system:

The standard lighting configuration used in filmmaking.

**Key Light** - Brightest of the three, creates the shadow. Usually a Hard light. about 30-45 degrees off centre from camera, both up and to one side.

**Fill Light** - Dimmest of the three, lightens the shadow created by the Key Light thus lowering the contrast. Usually a soft light as to stop there being a second shadow created. Again about 30-45 degrees off centre from camera, both up and to the opposite side.

**Back Light** - Creates a ring of light round the top of the subject's head and shoulders. This separates them from the background, bringing them forward into their own layer if you like. Positioned 30-45 degrees off centre upwards, and other wise opposite the key light.

All these methods are just guidelines which will give you very little artistic expression. But you can't "break the rules", if you don't know them to begin with, right?