



# Your time on set: a Cheat Sheet

Congratulations! You booked! You'll be arriving to a production that works like a well-oiled machine. Everyone knows each other and knows how to work together. But don't worry! They are expecting you and they wouldn't have hired you if they didn't think you could handle this.

You've got this!

## **First things First: here is what you need to do upon arrival**

- Find your contact, usually a PA, who will direct you to your honey wagon or holding area.
- The PA will also show you where crafty and the restrooms are.
- Be **on time**, which means **early**. Think about this way: if 7:30 is your call time, that is the time you ought to be in hair & makeup. If you're working background, they might ask you to come "camera ready" so they can do touchups. Either way, aim to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your actual call time.
- If you didn't fill out your employment documents online prior to coming on set, have your ID and any other documents they will need because you may have paperwork to fill out.
- When you book a speaking role, you get **mini sides** – they are half the size of a letter sheet of paper. You also get – and are on(!!) – the **call sheet**, which is a spreadsheet with information and players for that day's shoot. It includes scenes scheduled, locations, weather forecast and the name of the nearest hospital.

**A link to a comprehensive list of the most heard terms on set can be found [here](#).**

## **On Set Terms - Highlights**

**Abby Singer** - Named after production manager Abby Singer, this term refers to the is the penultimate (second to last) shot of a day of shooting, and, at the end of a production. The Abby Singer label can also be applied to the penultimate setup, rather than precisely the penultimate shot if a production plans to capture multiple shots from the same camera and lighting setup. The Abby Singer shot is traditionally followed by what is known as the Martini shot, which is the final shot of a day's worth of shooting.

**Apple or Apple Box** - A solid wooden box that comes in standard sizes - full, half, quarter, pancake Used to correct height differentials between actors or for camera

**Action** - Just about everybody knows what this one means. This is what the director yells out after the set is quieted and the events of the shot need to take place. It signals the talent to start acting and for everyone else on the set to be completely quiet except those doing roles that support the actor's performance.

**Back In Lunch** - break is over and work is beginning again

**Best Boy** - The best boy is usually the gaffer's main assistant, in charge of scheduling the crew and equipment needed for each day's work. Gender and age don't make any difference here - it's a title from the old days that has stuck.

**Cheat** - Cheat or cheat-cut refers to a cut in the editing process that shows continuity from shot to shot, when in reality the shots being edited together come from different sources. Sometimes a shot is "borrowed" from one scene and edited into another. This provides a flow to the scene giving the audience the feeling of continuity. The second meaning of this word is a blocking term one might hear on the set when a person is facing a camera, a prop or another actor and is told to cheat to the camera, prop or fellow actor. It means to orient a bit towards the camera. Cheat to the chair or cheat to Sally might mean to face that prop or person.

**Coverage** - This term refers to the shooting of a particular scene from different angles. This way, extra footage will be available during the editing process. When a variety of angles are available, the scene can be edited in a way that will provide depth and can even infuse meaning or emotion into it.

**Crafty** - Food or craft services or person in charge of food service.

**Cut** - This is another common movie-making term that most people are familiar with. It has several meanings. One is to stop the talent's acting then is followed by stopping the camera's recording. It does not always mean that the scene was a good one and/or a keeper. Another meaning for Cut is to change from one scene to another. And yet another way it is used is when referring to the editing process, when scenes are cut in a way that will tell a story.

**Day Player** - A crew member or actor hired for one day or a handful of days.

**Dressing** - A set dressing is an object on the set that is not a prop. Film talent can talk about and touch set dressings. A telephone can be a dressing. However, once an actor uses the dressing in a scene, such as picking up the phone and talking on it, the dressing then becomes a prop and shouldn't be moved again.

**From the Top** - This term refers to starting again from the very beginning. Sometimes a scene might be re-shot from the last line or a midway point. "From the top" refers to shooting the scene again from the very beginning.

**Gaffer** - The gaffer on a film crew is the head of the electrical unit. He or she is responsible for overseeing the lighting plans on a film.

**Hot Set** - A hot set refers to when crew members have completed preparing a set for the filming of a scene. All furniture and props in the scene have been set into place and the set should not be disturbed or altered in any way.

**Last Looks** - this is when they call in hair and make up to give a final touch up before filming.

**Last man** - Last person to get their food at lunch; lunch does not officially begin until last man.

**Martini Shot** - Martini shot is the very last shot (set up) of the day, theoretically followed by a shot in a martini glass (ha ha!!).

**Picture's Up** - All cameras are about to begin rolling

**Print** - When the director yells print after the shooting of a particular scene, this means that the scene is good and it is to be kept. Another word for the term print is "**Hold.**"

**Pickup** - Pickup shots may be shots that are pre-planned. They are shot after the main shooting has ended. For example, a scene with principal actors is shot one day. Then the next day is

dedicated to shooting pickup shots, quick shots to fill in detail for a scene. Closeups of props and cutaway shots can be pickups.

**Scripty** - this is the Script supervisor.

**Sides** - A half sized script containing only the scenes being shot that day. Make sure to check them to see if there are updates or changes in your scene(s)!

**Striking** - Striking refers to removing an object from the set or scene, as in striking equipment from the set at the end of a day or striking a lamp from a particular scene.

## **What are they talking about?**

Film crew members have been doing this a long time and they have their own jargon and language. Here are some terms you might hear and what they mean.

**Video Village** - this is an area of viewing monitors for the director and other production personnel to watch the work as it's going on.

**Boom** - This is a large fuzzy microphone on the end of a pole, floating around and above actors to pick up dialogue.

**Change Pages** - If and when the script is altered while filming, changes are emailed ahead of time or handed out on set in the form of "change pages." These are always a different color than the original script and are referred to as paper colors such as "Yellow," "Blue," "Pink," "Goldenrod," and so on.

**Clapper Board** - this display keeps information about the scene being filmed (number, take, film name). It's used for audio and visual syncing and is aka "**clapboard**."

**Clean Speech or Clean Take** - where there were no errors in dialog recording

**Continuity Report** - this is a list of specific actions and what happened in each take (weather, camera settings, left hand/right hand). AKA "**Continuity Script**."

**First Unit/Second Unit** - these are two sets of film crews shooting primary and secondary footage.

**First Team/Second Team** - This is when Stand ins for all the actors in the scene (including co-stars) block and rehearse the scene and stand on set while lights and other parts of the shot are set up.

**Stand Ins** - All the series regulars have stand-ins – these are steady jobs on the show and often the actors may get co-stars written for them so they have a chance to be on camera because their main job is just to get the camera prepped for the star they cover. For co-stars and guest stars, stand-ins are picked out of the crop of background actors on set that day (or week in the case of a guest star). They are picked based on height and coloring because the lighting is set up on them will be lighting the actual cast.

**Walla or Rhubarb** - Background conversation by extras. During the shoot, background actors typically do not speak out loud during takes. They may do so in rehearsal and then mime the rehearsed conversations for the takes.

If you get confused, refer to this [link](#) – it's from a site called [Studio Binder](#) and it's comprehensive. There are others all over the internet as well, so you will be OK.

**Now, go get it!!**