

Three-Point Lighting

Communications & Media

Key, fill and back: the interview setup that works in almost any room.

Build it in this order, one light at a time.

1

Key light

Main source, roughly 30 to 45 degrees off the lens, slightly above eye line.

2

Judge the shadow

Look at the shadow side of the face before adding anything else.

3

Fill light

Opposite side, weaker, to lift the shadow. A reflector often does it.

4

Back light

Behind and above, separating hair and shoulders from the background.

5

Background

Light it separately. An unlit background makes the subject look pasted on.

Contrast between key and fill sets the mood: a small difference reads as soft and safe, a large one as dramatic.