“Montage is a technique in film editing in which a series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information.”

When we think of montage we usually think of films like ‘Rocky’, this is because we most associate the term montage with a sequence of training shots. However this has turned more into a cliché and is vulnerable to the attack of spoofs. If we draw away from what we think about when we hear the word montage and what we know about it, we will see that the meaning has been somewhat lost through time.

Montage can be used for many reasons; the main reason that it is commonly known for is the passage of time. This shows a characters most interesting points over a certain amount of time, however like ‘Rocky’ it can be used to show somebody training and getting progressively better and better. The reason for this type of montage is for there to be something successful at the end of it. For example in Rocky 4, rocky is training in snowy mountains and the montage cuts between him and his competitor and the differences between them. Rocky is using his surroundings and basic resources in order to train, whereas his competitor is in a high tech gym with proper weights and treadmills. This is also another affect that montage can have, juxtaposition, showing 2 completely different things and putting them together to tell a story.

Another type of montage that is used a lot in films today is the break up montage, you will find this in most romances where the main man and woman break up with each other and there is a sequence showing how each character is dealing with it. There may be a split screen used to show the 2 characters in different places altogether but set out so that it looks like they are facing each other. Many people can mix up parallel editing with montage. Montage is more based around ideas and a story that comes out the end of it; however, parallel editing is used more for suspense and tension.
Eisenstein’s five methods of montage

A German man named Eisenstein believed in 5 methods of montage, each method suggested something different and another reason and affect. The five methods are:

- Metric
- Tonal
- Rhythmic
- Overtonal
- Intellectual

I will list each one and explain what is different about them.

Metric editing

Metric editing is all about the timing, there will always be a specific amount of frames before the shot cuts to something else, this is based on the nature of time, it can be used to show 2 people meeting with each other and cutting between what each people are doing, no matter what they are doing it will always cut to the other person, this gives a ‘real-time’ effect.

Rhythmic editing

Rhythmic editing is very story based and shows progression, ‘Run Fatboy Run’ uses this technique to show the character progressively improving on his running abilities, at the start of the sequence he gets out of breath very easily and cannot run very far. By the end of the sequence he manages to run up hills with enough breath left to do it again.

Tonal editing

Tonal editing is all about the emotions of what we are seeing, this is based around the camera shots that are used, and the aim is to make the audience almost feel how the character on screen feels. For example if we were to see 2
people arguing with each other we wouldn't normally get involved, but tonal editing is done in such a way where we want to scream at the television and get our own point across. I believe that trainspotting gave off this effect when the main character was coming off of heroin and he was hallucinating seeing a baby on the roof, the emotions in this scene is very high and makes you want to scream yourself. Tonal editing doesn’t really have a rhythmic feel to it and that it is just traveling through time and space.

**Overtonal editing**

Overtonal editing is the same principle as tonal editing, however, overtonal has a rhythmic story behind it. A good example of this is the film ‘Up’ in the starting scene we see 2 lovers getting married and living their life. This scene is travelling through time, however it tells a story along the way. Firstly they get a house and then they plan to have a baby, we know this because we see baby clouds in the sky and a woman painting a room a baby blue color. Unfortunately she has a miscarriage but they carry on living their life. In the end the woman dies and the man is left on his own, this scene alone tells a better love story than most films do in 90 minutes, I believe that overtonal editing is mainly used to give a quick story about what someone has been through to help the audience understand them better.

**Intellectual Editing**

Intellectual editing is basically used as a metaphor, for example, say there was a scene to do with a boss shouting at a group of workers and being hard on them, a clip of cattle could be shown to show how they are all being controlled and can't escape. It is basically showing a real life situation with an everyday thing to show a meaning behind it like a kettle boiling to show anger, a lion eating a gazelle to show every man for himself. The list goes on and on and it is how you perceive it.