

Angle of view? What's that?

Essentially, the angle of view is the amount of a scene that a lens can take in, measured in degrees. For instance, a fisheye lens may offer an extremely wide 180° angle of view, meaning that it can capture everything in front of it (and to each side). A 200mm lens, on the other hand, will offer a much narrower angle of view of 12.3°. This allows you to fill the frame with a considerably smaller amount of the scene that you're trying to photograph.

You mentioned a 'full frame' sensor earlier. Why is that relevant?

Full-frame sensors get their name because, at 36x24mm, they have similar dimensions to a frame of 35mm film. This means that they capture the full angle of view offered by a lens that's been designed for a film or full-frame camera.

So a 75-300mm zoom lens mounted on a [full-frame DSLR](#) like the Canon EOS 5D Mark III or Nikon D800 offers a true focal length of 75-300mm.

However, the majority of cameras have sensors that are significantly smaller than full-frame.

Consequently, they're exposed to a smaller area of the image projected by the lens, and it's for this reason that they're known as 'cropped' sensors – although they're not really cropping the image, they're just capturing a smaller area of the scene at the centre the lens.

Does this make a difference to how I take pictures?

Yes it does. Using the same lens at the same distance from the subject, a cropped sensor camera will capture a narrower angle of view than a full-frame camera.

This can be a problem when photographing landscapes with a wide-angle lens, as you won't be able to get as much of the scene in the picture (at least, not without moving further away and making everything smaller in the picture).

On the other hand, it's good news for wildlife photographers, with animals and birds appearing larger in the frame thanks to the increased effective focal length.