

Lower thirds

Lower thirds is television industry slang for graphics that take up the lower area of the screen, though not necessarily the lower third portion of the screen as the name implies.

Lower thirds are most commonly found in television news production, though they also appear in documentaries and even have begun to make appearances, thanks to home video editing, in amateur videos.

In video and television, the lower third refers to the lower portion of the frame which contains graphical information such as station ID, name/title keys, etc.

In a talking head shot like the one pictured right, the lower third graphics sit somewhere below the presenter's shoulders.

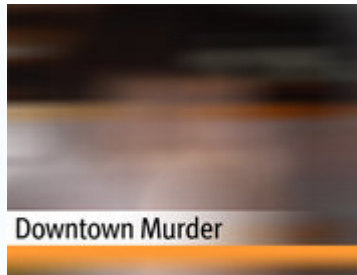
In most cases the graphics don't actually take up a full third of the picture. If the only requirement is a name/title key, not much space needs to be used. On the other hand, for programs which need to include a lot of information, the full third may not be enough and a side panel is added.

At their simplest form, lower thirds can just be text overlaid over the video. Frequently this text is white with a drop shadow to make the words easier to read. Lower thirds can also contain graphical elements such as boxes, images or shading. Some lower thirds have animated backgrounds and text.

Lower thirds can be created using basic home video editing software or professional level equipment. This equipment makes use of video's alpha channel to determine what parts of the graphic or text should be transparent, allowing the video in the background to show through. Lower thirds are usually arranged in "tiers," or lines.

One tier lower thirds

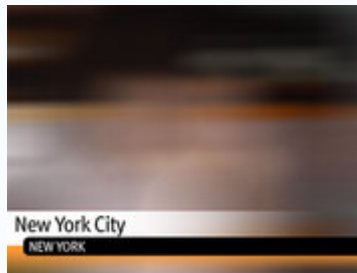
One tier lower thirds are usually used to identify a story that's being shown.



A one tier lower third

Two tier lower thirds

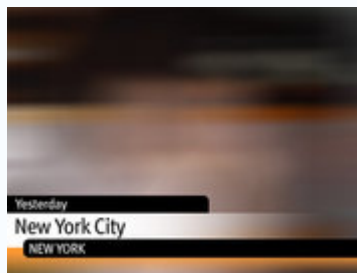
A two tier graphic is used most often to identify a person on screen. Often the person's name will appear on the first line with his or her place of residence or a description below it. Two tier lower thirds may also be used as "locators" to tell where a story is taking place.



Two tier locator lower third

Three tier lower thirds

Three tier lower thirds add more information. Commonly the first tier is used to tell when the video was shot, if it was not shot the day the newscast is airing.



Three tier lower third