Get into Filmmaking

MOVING MINDS through MOVIES

Project No. 2016-1-RO01-KA219-024626_1

ERASMUS+ Programme, Key Action 2
Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices.
Strategic Partnerships for Schools

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This e-book was made in collaboration by the Erasmus+ project partners:

- Colegiul National "Vasile Alecsandri", Bacau – ROMANIA (ccordinator);
- I Liceum Ogolnoksztalcace im. Leona Kruczkowskiego, Tychy – POLAND;
- Polo Liceale Statale "R.Mattioli", Vasto – ITALY;
- Kauno Jono Basanaviciaus gimnazija, Kaunas – LITHUANIA;
- Ozel Sultangazi Ugur Temel Lisesi, Sultangazi – TURKEY.

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First steps...

Teenagers love films. Most of them are hooked to the screen all day long as it is far easier and more pleasant than reading or just because they resonate with the characters of a film and its message. Watching a film feels like entertainment and education combined. It doesn't burden the teenager, but at the same time it bears an important educational value.

The object of this guide is represented by *short films and how to use them in developing teenagers' creativity, critical thinking, artistic sensitivity and practical film-making skills, at the same time providing them with a new opportunity for self-expression*. There are several reasons that indicate short films as a good basis for a high school film club.

First of all, films provide a perfect stemming point for discussion. We can use evidence from a film to understand what a character's thoughts and actions are or what they may do next. We also have endless opportunities to use films as a stimulus for any writing genre. Therefore, students can develop their language skills on the way.

With short films, activities may be conducted before watching, while watching or after watching them. Children are on the edge of the seats when a film is paused at a crucial moment. This inspires them to persuade, predict, describe in the tasks that follow.

As well as this, we should also consider that short films make an immediate impact on the audience. The aim of a short film is to convey the film-maker's thoughts and opinions, delivering a strong message that causes the audience to engage with it. They generally produce strong emotions in the audience. Whether it be anger, sadness or laughter, such emotions do not give the audience time to think about the film or make their minds up. There will also be a strong connection with the characters in the film, as they are the main focus throughout.

Another important advantage is that, unlike feature films, short ones can be played and discussed over the span of one club meeting, which makes them more appealing to watch and more effective for the attainment of our objectives. It is quite unlikely that the students will have the chance to get bored, as it may happen with a 100-minute film.

Finally, we need to take into consideration the cultural aspect. Short films are generally made for international film festivals, which means that they bear a cultural mark that enriches the students' intercultural experience, beyond the Hollywood mould they are accustomed to.

BEFORE YOU START…

Measure the interest of students

Once you have coined the decision of starting a film club for students in your high school, you should make sure that it is going to be appealing to them. Therefore, the first thing to do is to measure the level of students' interest in your idea. The simplest way to find it out is by using Google forms.

The form should contain some basic questions related to students' interest in becoming club members, previous experience with films/short films, what they think they could bring to the club in terms of personal contribution, when the club meetings should be held and what their expectations are. Of course it is tricky to ask them about their expectations as this might turn your plans upside down, but in the end it all comes down to serving the interest of our students.

Find Members

After the collection of data from questionnaires, you can move on to the second step. Now, it is important to identify some more experienced students who will play an instrumental role in deciding the club's direction and focus. To organize a first meeting, you could advertise it through a school announcement, social media, posters, or the school newspaper, so that all interested students will know about it in advance.

At the meeting, brainstorm the club's format, the frequency of meetings and the rough planning of the contents and format of the meetings. In order to make sure that the members attend the meetings consistently, you might want to make them sig a membership agreement. It is also advisable to discuss the expectations about student involvement clearly from the start, so that everyone knows what this membership entails.

⬥ *Assign roles*

Once the rough pool of members has been decided, you need to organize them, by giving some of them clear duties in the management of the club. For instance, one of them could be the technician, who will ensure that all the proper equipment is installed on the days of the meetings. Another one could be your PR, a student who will manage the online page of the club, organizing campaigns, recruitment sessions etc. These roles may vary according to the needs and possibilities you identify at the school level.

Another key role is that of conducting the meetings. Depending on the experience and desire of your students, you may delegate some of them as responsible for the planned meetings. In case they don't feel comfortable doing it, you can take on this role or resort to other colleagues to support you with some of the activities. You may find the contents of this guide useful or, if you still feel at a loss, you can try talking to local professionals who will support you with materials or even run some of the meetings for you.

⬥ *Plan and identify resources*

A regular film club is not very costly to maintain. You will, of course, use the school premises mostly, the equipment and so on. However, for a short film/film-making club you need to focus on devices for the production and projection of short films – OHP, cameras, tripods, memory cards, laptops, microphones, speakers etc. Also, you should not forget about some stationery – paper, cardboard etc. and costs for special activities, trips, shooting on location.

Unless the school can provide you with the needed items, you may want to discuss these with the students right from the start. Some of them will probably be provided by the students when the time comes, but it is safer to start with some basic equipment. The partner schools in this Erasmus+ project were able to purchase some equipment – cameras (all partners), whiteboard, laptops (the coordinator).

Time is another resource that needs careful planning. You have to decide whether the activities will be covered on the course of one or two academic years. Depending on that and on the frequency of meetings, you will be able to come up with an annual planning of the club activities.

Stage 1 – Input

1.1. Introductory lesson – types of short films, genres, sample films

A short film is any motion picture not long enough to be considered a feature film. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines a short film as "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits".

Originally coined in the North American film industry, early short films were typically intended to precede feature subjects, and were often comedic in nature.

The term *featurette* originally applied to a film longer than a short subject, but shorter than a standard feature film. The increasingly rare term short subject means approximately the same thing. An industry term, it carries more of an assumption that the film is shown as part of a presentation along with a feature film. Short is an abbreviation for either term.

Short films are often documentaries on subjects that may be controversial or politically sensitive. Social and environmental themes are popular topics in short films. Older films, or nostalgia film, often fall in the realm of "short film" by virtue of their length.

North American short films are often character-driven in nature, and focus on topics that more commercially viable feature-length films will tend to avoid. They can be thought of as derived from the longer feature film format, in the same way that a short story might be considered a condensed relative of the novel. They typically require much smaller budgets, and are released to festivals and art house theater audiences. Because of the smaller budgets and limited risk in short film release, they are often used as a showcase for young directing talent.

Outside of North America, the term short film often encompasses projects much shorter than the typical American short. In some cases European shorts will last for only a few minutes. As such, they often lack the focus on character and story typical of American short films, and will instead be used to showcase unique directorial styles or cinematography.

Short films are often screened at local, national, or international film festivals. Short films are often made by independent filmmakers for non profit, either with

a low budget, no budget at all, and in rare cases big budgets. Short films are usually funded by film grants, non-profit organizations, sponsor, or out of pocket funds. These films are used by indie filmmakers to prove their talent in order to gain funding for future films from private investors, entertainment companies, or film. Short films can be *professional* or *amateur productions*.

With a partner

Work together to produce a list of either!

Reasons why you have made a film before:

Reasons why you have not made a film before:

Watch the following film!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXI79v0l-

Strain - anti-bullying short film 2013
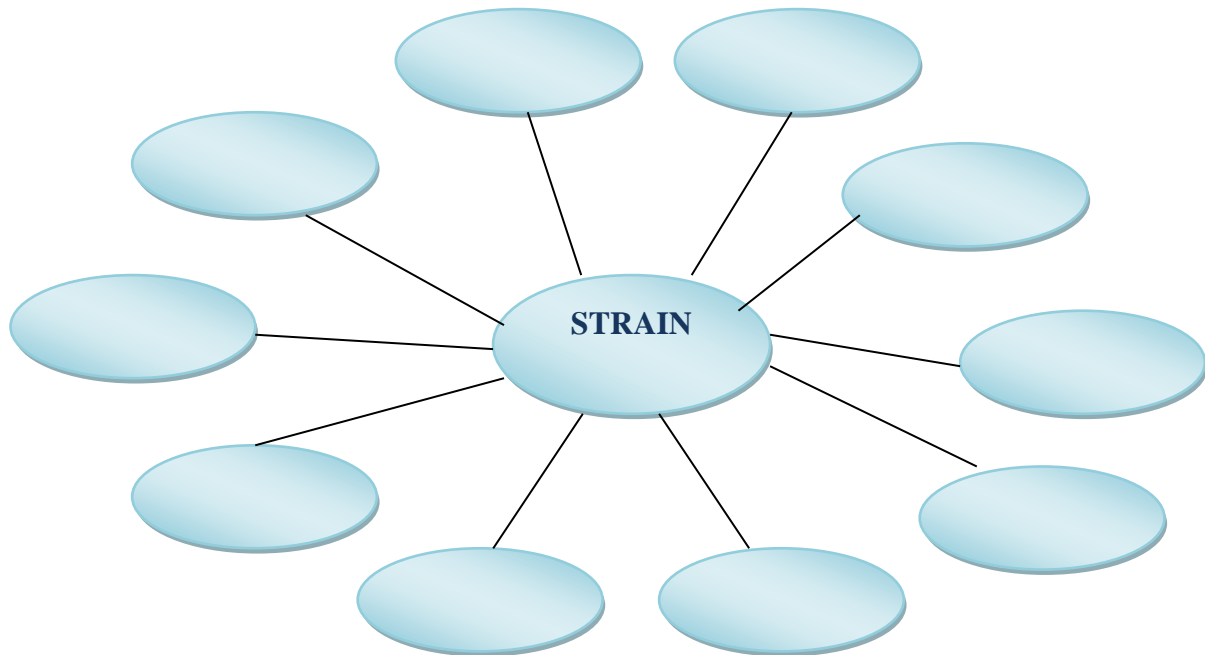
WHAT TYPE OF SHORT FILMS DO WE PREFER? WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

The concept of the film. They don't need always to have a plot. It's the concept that matters when it comes to a short film. Is it about the message you are spreading out;

- *Quality:* So what do we mean by quality? We like short films in which the cinematography has been well thought out, where effort and time has been put into the photography and motion, as well as in audio and editing.

- Shorts with *captivating scripts*. You don't have to explain everything. Leave some ideas to be understood. Unspoken words matter as much as the words said

- *Short films*, between 5 and 10 minutes. The first 30 seconds matter the most. It will make the viewer decide whether to watch it or not. If it's good, interesting, intriguing and manages to get the attention, great! Otherwise people will get bored of waiting for the video to buffer.

- *Music* sets the mood…

- *Frames and cinematography*. The frames should be shot carefully to make the movie as interesting as possible. This will not mean anything to a casual viewer. But they will feel more intrigued when the cinematography is good (and they won't be able to explain why);

- *Acting*. This matters the least in a short film. But it still matters. So the actors should be chosen wisely.

- *Genre.*

FILM GENRES

Film genres are various forms or identifiable types, categories, classifications or groups of films. *Genres* refers to recurring, repeating and similar, familiar or instantly-recognizable patterns, styles, themes, syntax, templates, paradigms, motifs, rules or generic conventions that include one or more of the following:

- a *characteristic setting or period* (modern day, historical or fictional, urban/rural, etc.), e.g., the frontier in Westerns, outer space or the future in Sci-Fi, dark and isolated foreboding places (forests or woods, graveyards, spooky castles, abandoned buildings or structures) in Horror films, battlefields in War films, sports arenas or other venues in Sport films

- the *recurring use of stock characters* (or characterizations), e.g., the detective in a Crime film, the nerd, the jock, or token minority in Comedies or Horror, aliens in Sci-Fi, stereotypical 'heroic saviors' or 'good guys, monsters/killers, etc.

- the *use of stereotypes*, props or icons, e.g., six-shooters and ten-gallon hats in Westerns, laser blasters in Sci-Fi, killing instruments and locked doors in Horror films

- *representative content and subject matter* (the storyline, narrative or plot) resonant with other films in the genre category, e.g. the chase sequence or extended fight scene and gun violence in Action films, the 'final girl' survivor in Horror films, the self-sacrificial figure in Melodramas, stages of 'falling in love' and the subsequent break-up and reconciliation in Romances

- technical (*filmic techniques*), e.g., including the camera angles (use of low and high angles) and shooting style (hand-held or stationary, POV, or 'found footage'), the lighting (high-key, or low/dark lighting), the style of editing (length of edits, use of

jump cuts), colour schemes, make-up and costuming (use of blood, masks, special effects), etc.

- ***music and audio to enhance or emphasize various characteristics***, to advance the plot, or to create a mood (danger, adventure, laughter, fear, sensual, excitement), e.g., upbeat for Romance or Comedy, eerie for Horror, depressing for Drama.

Genre does not just refer to the type of film or its category; spectator expectations about a film, and institutional discourses that create generic structures also play a key role. Films are rarely purely from one genre; many films cross into multiple genres, taking from one genre and place them into the conventions of a second genre. As you can see, genres are not fixed; they change and evolve over the years, and some genres may largely disappear (for example, the melodrama).

However, a film's genre influences the use of filmmaking styles and techniques. Genres provide a within a manageable, well-defined framework (to speak a common 'language'). Genres also offer the studios an easily 'marketable' product, and give audiences satisfying, expected and predictable choices.

MUSICAL	These films include dance routines which are the highlight of the story.
HORROR	These films are designed to frighten and thrill. The film may feature monsters, ghosts or witches, and is intended to keep the audience on the edge of its seat.
SCIENCE FICTION	These films are usually set in space or the future. They may include characters like aliens or scientists, and are designed to amaze characters with other worlds and what might be possible in the future.
WESTERN	These films are usually set in the 'Wild West' and feature cowboys, saloons, horses and heroes.
ACTION	These films are high-energy and can include fight scenes, car chases and explosions. The characters may be everyday heroes, bad guys or superheroes.
ADVENTURE	These films often have a story that involves a journey or a quest, and may include the theme of time travel, treasure hunting or the past.
COMEDY	These films are designed to make people laugh. The story is usually light-hearted and the focus is on actors and their ability to amuse audiences.
ROMANCE	These films are romantic love stories and normally involve the main character's journey through dating, courtship or marriage. Romance films make the romantic love story or the search for love and romance the main plot focus.

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

Watch the following films!

There are four film clips below. See if you can guess the genre of each one.

The Lunch Date

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epuTZigxUY8

Toyland | Oscar - Best Live Action Short Film | A Short Film by Jochen Alexander Freydank

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwrySjp4J9Q

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGZLM0FrcwE

Way of Life of Maasai Tribe

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Itt_BYdoSTo

Un cartuș de Kent și un pachet de cafea | Cigarettes and Coffee | Short Film | CINEPUB

Activity sheet – short film

CHARACTERS	SETTING
COLOURS	PROPS
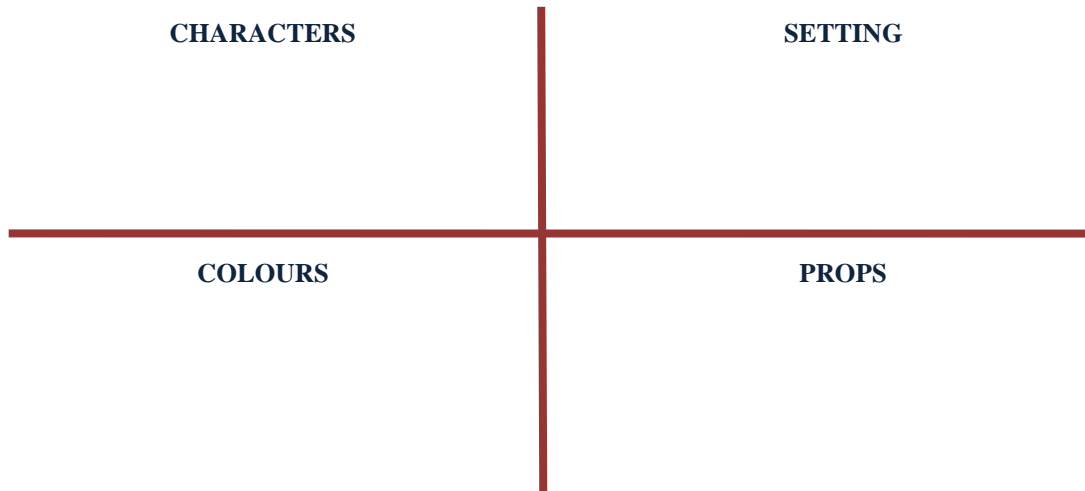
1.2. Elements of a short film – the 3 Cs and 3 Ss

In this section we outline and explain a number of key concepts that are useful in bringing short films into literacy and language learning. You will know about the 'Cs and Ss': a way of categorizing and analyzing techniques in film that either share features with other modes of storytelling or which are distinctive to film.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE 3Cs AND THE 3 Ss MEAN?

The original 'family' of **Cs** and **Ss** comprised:

COLOURS	SOUNDS
CHARACTER	SETTING
CAMERA	STORY

• **Character**, **Story**, and **Setting** (categories that could be applied across film, print, and other fiction media);

• **Camera**, **Colour** and **Sound** (categories specific to film). Here we describe some approaches to the films in the pack using these categories, as well as some new ones;

• **Symbol** can be applied to films, books, oral stories, and pictures;

• **Sequencing** – the order of events and ideas in a text – is a subset of 'Story';

• **Composition** (called 'mise en scène' in film studies) refers to the ways in which objects, people, light are arranged in a single shot or frame;

• **Cutting** refers to one aspect of 'editing' – how shots are juxtaposed against each other, their length, and the type of transition which links them;

• **Category** refers to the genre or format in which we might position a film.

Watch the following film!
Have a discussion on the topic of the 3Cs and the 3 Ss, answering to the next

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffqp6f0_rzw

NADIA (2017) | Short Film

COLOURS

- ✓ What colours do you see?
- ✓ How do the colours make you feel?
- ✓ When do the colours change and why?
- ✓ What do the colours tell you about the time of day that the story took place?
- ✓ Why do you think certain colours are used?
- ✓ What colours would you have chosen?
- ✓ Do the colours change when the story is in a different setting?
- ✓ Are any colours associated with particular characters?
- ✓ How important do you think the colours are in the film?
- ✓ What would the film have been like in black and white or in just one colour?
- ✓ What mood do you think the colours create?

CAMERA

- ✓ What shots have been used? Can you name them?
- ✓ When do you see a long shot or a close-up shot?
- ✓ What are the different shots used for?
- ✓ Through whose eyes do we see the story?
- ✓ When do we see different characters' point of view?
- ✓ When does the camera move and when does it stay still?
- ✓ How does the camera help to tell the story?
- ✓ What do the first shots tell us about the story, the setting etc?
- ✓ Why do certain shots follow each other e.g. a long shot followed by a close-up?
- ✓ How can you tell what the characters are thinking or how they are feeling through what the camera does?
- ✓ How quickly do the shots change? Does this change indifferent parts of the story?

CHARACTER

- ✓ Is there a main character?
- ✓ Is there more than one main character?
- ✓ Is the story really about this character or about someone else?
- ✓ Who is telling the story?
- ✓ What do the main characters look like?
- ✓ What might the way they look like tell us about them
- ✓ as a character?
- ✓ How do they speak and what do they say?
- ✓ How do they behave?
- ✓ How do they behave towards other characters?
- ✓ Do any of the characters have particular music or sounds?
- ✓ Which character interests you the most?
- ✓ Is there anyone else you would like to see in the story?
- ✓ How would the story be different with another character added or taken away?

3
C's

SOUNDS

- How many different sounds do you hear? What are they?
- Is there music in the film?
- How does the music make you feel?
- When do you hear the music or sounds change?
- What is happening on screen when the sounds or music change?
- If you listen to the sounds without the pictures, can you tell what is happening on the screen?
- Are there any moments of silence?
- Do any of the characters speak? What do they sound like?
- If you added your own voiceover to the film, who would speak and what would they say?
- Can you hear any sound effects?
- Do you think any sounds have been made louder than they would be in real life? What are they? Why do you think they are louder in the film?

STORY

- What happens in the beginning, middle and at the end of the story?
- What are the most important things (events) that happen in the story?
- How would the story change if events happened in a different order?
- How do we know where the story takes place?
- Who or what is the story about?
- How can we tell?
- How long does the story take in 'real' time?
- What do you think happened before the story began?
- What might happen next, after the end of the story?
- How does this story remind you of other

SETTING

- Where does the action take place?
- Why is the story set in a particular place?
- When and how does the setting change?
- How does the setting affect the characters and the way they behave?
- When the story began, where did you think we were?
- How could you tell where the story was taking place?
- Could the same story have happened in a different place?
- How do you think the story would have changed if it had happened in a different place or setting?
- Can you tell when the story is taking place?
- What clues might there be to tell us

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

1.2.1. Sound – analysis of short film soundtrack, noise, paraverbal elements

Sound helps to tell the story in a film in two ways:

• Sounds within the world of the story (often referred to as diegetic sound);

• Sounds outside the world of the story (often referred to as non-diegetic sound).

In animated films, the sound effects, dialogue and music are recorded separately. Exactly when the dialogue is linked to the images depends on the animators, whether the movements and expressions of the characters are animated to fit pre-recorded dialogue, or the voice cast use the images as a starting point for their characterization. In live-action, most of the sound and dialogue are recorded, in sync, with the camera as it films the action; the music is added later. The procedure in which the picture and all elements of the soundtrack come together to produce the finished film, is called the sound mix.

Just as visually the camera, colour and setting all contribute to telling the story, the soundtrack may contain several elements, each of which constitutes a 'layer'. It is possible for each of these layers to be used simultaneously:

• *Sound effects* are often added sounds, not recorded in sync with the picture. They are either related directly to the action of a particular scene (called 'spot effects'), or for a general atmosphere (called 'atmos effects'). The acoustics, timbre and volume of sound effects can all give us clues and cues about setting.

• *Music* may be specially composed, or exist already and be chosen for its appropriateness. Music can be broken down further into instrumentation, tempo, key and orchestration.

Listening!

Listen to a movie soundtrack – what type of film is it? What is the atmosphere? Opinion?

☐ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNSsv86lsok (Schindler's List Soundtrack)

☐ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3KlvqI9FKU (Game of Thrones Main Theme - Epic Orchestra Remix).

• **Silence** can be used as a space between sounds to create a 'pause for thought' between actions or dialogue, or to add emphasis to the emotional content of the action within a scene.

• **Dialogue and voice-over** is the final category of sound, and for learners of another language, this is obviously an important category. Beneath the direct communication, it is necessary to understand the importance of **paraverbal and non-verbal language**. *Paraverbal communication* is how individuals use different voice qualities to communicate; it includes aspects such as volume, intonation, speed, and pitch. *Nonverbal communication* refers to the communicative use of body language, including proximities (the distance between speakers), haptics (touching), oculesics (eye contact), and kinesics (body movement and gestures). Silent viewing is a suitable technique to study nonverbal communication.

Film, as a rich audio-visual medium, can scaffold children's engagement with spoken language, offering narrative context and cues for hearing and understanding gest and detail.

Activity sheet

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

Challenge 1: In which country is this scene taking place?

Challenge 2: What is the atmosphere of the short film?

Challenge 3: In your opinion, what music type could be appropriate for this short film?

1.2.2. Image – colour and camera

⊕ Colour

Colour is an important part of the filmmaker's toolkit. You can use it for mood and emotion, to tell the audience when the scene is set, or to provide information about characters and settings.

A sunny, hopeful yellow. An introspective turquoise. An arresting, violent red. When you see a colour in a film, what you see is no accident — filmmakers carefully compose each frame and make colour decisions that affect your experience of watching, even if you don't realize it. Here are the ways in which filmmakers use colour to deepen narrative.

Colour simplifies complex stories. We think of early films as black-and-white, but colour has been around since the start — it lent authenticity to the travelogues of the 1890s and made works like Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) feel fantastical. Filmmakers realized that different tones could help viewers follow stories that jumped between characters and locations.

Colour makes the audience feel. Lighting and colour are part of the backbone of emotion. For each film, is created a "colour script" that maps out the hues for all scenes so they fit within the larger story arc. The goal: to make key moments feel appropriately vibrant or somber, to amplify an important moment, which cerebrally makes a difference.

Colour shows a character's journey.

Colour communicates a film's ideas. Colours reveal a film's meaning. According to Lewis Bond "when a colour repeats, it's associated with an idea, when the colour changes, it shows you this concept has changed."

As Roger Deakins said: "It's easier to make colour look good, but harder to make it service the story." Just because you can do something with the colours in the scene doesn't necessarily mean you should, but if you can enhance a scene by utilizing colour to your advantage, the film is going to benefit.

The choice of colour contributes to how the film looks and helps to tell the story. You can use colour by:

- featuring specific colours in your **props, costumes** or **settings;**
- choosing **lighting** with the colour balance you want;
- adding **gels** to change the colour of the lighting;
- **correcting** and '**grading**' the colour at the editing stage;

Colour meanings

Colours have different meanings depending on context: blue can mean technology or alienation, but it can also suggest winter or night, while warm, orangey colours usually suggest autumn, nostalgia or sunset.

Colour intensity is important:
- Strong, **saturated** colours seem hyper-real or cartoonish;
- Weak colours can suggest poverty or depression.

You can also use **monochrome** images: brown or sepia makes people think of old photographs, so you can use it to show that part of your film is a flashback; black and white can show that a scene is in the past or in a character's imagination or memory.

Colour balance

You could choose to film with lighting that has a particular colour balance. Some filmmakers choose to shoot in the golden hour after dawn or before sunset, or the blue hour at dawn or dusk. For quick and dirty colour casts, you can deliberately set your camera to the wrong white balance. For a blue hue, set your camera's white balance to 'tungsten' when you're filming outdoors; for a warm tone, film under tungsten light with the balance set to daylight.

But it's better to shoot with a natural/neutral colour balance and adjust the colour afterwards.

To get the colour balance right when you're filming, use a colour meter or set the white balance manually. With most cameras, you can do this by using a white card.

*With the Camera app on iPhone/iPad, locking exposure also sets white balance. Position a **grey card** immediately in front of your main subject and touch on the screen until AE/AF lock appears.*

Correction and grading

You can adjust and correct colour at the editing stage. Pro packages like Final Cut Pro X and Adobe Premiere Pro give you more control. Start by getting the exposure and contrast right, then adjust the saturation, before adjusting the hue or tint. For precise corrections use the vectorscopes, rather than relying on your eye, to adjust skin tones.

Once you've corrected the colour, you can 'grade' the clips: making adjustments so that clips shot at different times match each other, or applying an overall 'look' to change the mood.

Listen and learn!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=aXgFcNUWqX0

Colour In Storytelling

⬥ Camera

In a film, the camera acts almost as a 'narrator', leading the viewer through the story via sequences of camera shots.

There are many ways in which you can frame your subject, from seeing their entire body to only their eyes. Generally speaking, we can break this down into three main shot sizes: **_Long, Medium, and Close:_** _long shots_ (also commonly called _Wide shots_) show the subject from a distance, emphasizing place and location, while _Close shots_ reveal details of the subject and highlight emotions of a character. _Medium shots_ fall somewhere in between, putting emphasis on the subject while still showing some of the surrounding environment.

It's important to note that the following **shot types** only relate to subject size within the frame, and don't directly indicate what type of lens is used to capture the scene. The choice of lens—and, thus, the distance of the camera from the subject—remains an artistic decision for the Director and/or Director of Photography. With that in mind, on to the list!

✓ **Extreme Long Shot** (aka Extreme Wide Shot) -Used to show the subject from a distance, or the area in which the scene is taking place. This type of shot is particularly useful for establishing a scene in terms of time and place, as well as a character's physical or emotional relationship to the environment and elements within it. The character doesn't necessarily have to be viewable in this shot.

Extreme long

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

✓ **Long Shot** (aka Wide Shot) Shows the subject from top to bottom; for a person, this would be head to toes, though not necessarily filling the frame. The character becomes more of a focus than an Extreme Long Shot, but the shot tends to still be dominated by the scenery. This shot often sets the scene and our character's place in it. This can also serve as an Establishing Shot, in lieu of an Extreme Long Shot.

Long Shot

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

✓ **Full Shot** - Frames character from head to toes, with the subject roughly filling the frame. The emphasis tends to be more on action and movement rather than a character's emotional state.

Full Shot

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

✓ **Medium Long Shot** (aka 3/4 Shot) Intermediate between Full Shot and Medium Shot. Shows subject from the knees up.

Medium Long Shot

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

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✓ **Cowboy Shot** (aka American Shot) A variation of a Medium Shot, this gets its name from Western films from the 1930s and 1940s, which would frame the subject from mid-thighs up to fit the character's gun holsters into the shot.

Cowboy Shot

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

Medium

✓ **Medium Shot** Shows part of the subject in more detail. For a person, a medium shot typically frames them from about waist up. This is one of the most common shots seen in films, as it focuses on a character (or characters) in a scene while still showing some environment.

✓ **Medium Close-Up** Falls between a Medium Shot and a Close-Up, generally framing the subject from chest or shoulder up.

Medium Close-Up

Source:
https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

Close-Up

✓ **Close-Up** Fills the screen with part of the subject, such as a person's head/face. Framed this tightly, the emotions and reaction of a character dominate the scene.

✓ **Choker -** A variant of a Close-Up, this shot frames the subject's face from above the eyebrows to below the mouth.
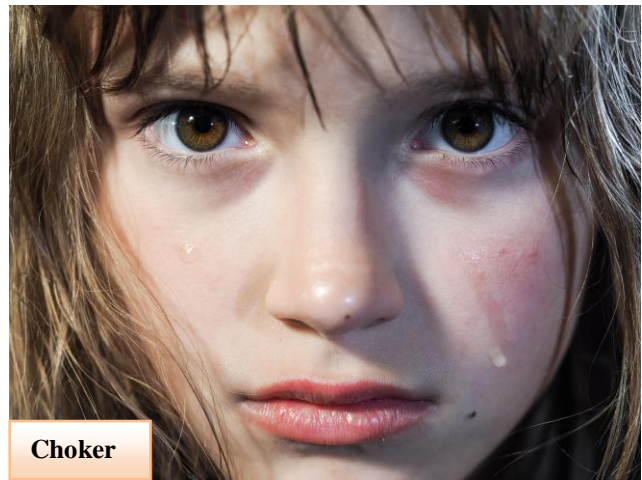
Choker

Extreme Close Up

✓ **Extreme Close Up** - Emphasizes a small area or detail of the subject, such as the eye(s) or mouth. An Extreme Close Up of just the eyes is sometimes called an Italian Shot, getting its name from Sergio Leone's Italian-Western films that popularized it.

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

Shots indicating camera angle/placement

In addition to subject size within a frame, shot types can also indicate where a camera is placed in relation to the subject. Here are some commonly used terms:

- **Eye Level** - Shot taken with the camera approximately at human eye level, resulting in a neutral effect on the audience. (a)

- **High Angle** - Subject is photographed from above eye level. This can have the effect of making the subject seem vulnerable, weak, or frightened. (b)

- **Low Angle** -Subject is photographed from below eye level. This can have the effect of making the subject look powerful, heroic, or dangerous.

- **Dutch Angle/Tilt-**Shot in which the camera is set at an angle on its roll axis so that the horizon line is not level. It is often used to show a disoriented or uneasy psychological state. (d)

a

b

c

d
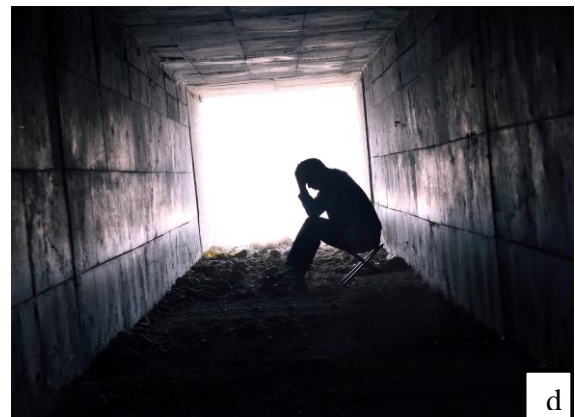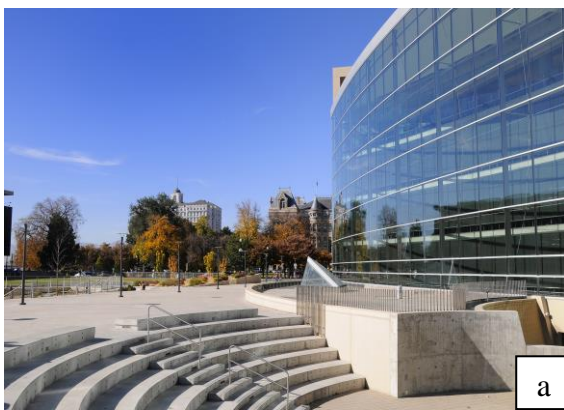
- **Over-the-Shoulder Shot -** A popular shot where a subject is shot from behind the shoulder of another, framing the subject anywhere from a Medium to Close-Up. The shoulder, neck, and/or

e

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back of the head of the subject facing away from the camera remains viewable, making the shot useful for showing reactions during conversations. It tends to place more of an emphasis on the connection between two speakers rather than the detachment or isolation that results from single shots.(e)

- **Bird's-Eye View** (aka Top Shot) - A high-angle shot that's taken from directly overhead and from a distance. The shot gives the audience a wider view and is useful

for showing direction and that the subject is moving, to highlight special relations, or reveal to the audience elements outside the boundaries of the character's awareness. The shot is often taken from on a crane or helicopter.(f)

Source: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/video/tips-and-solutions/filmmaking-101-camera-shot-types

Other common shot types

✓ **Cut-In -** Similar to a Cutaway, but shows a Close-Up shot of something visible in the main scene.

✓ **Cutaway -** A shot of something other than the subject and away from the main scene. It is usually followed by a cut back to the first shot and is useful for avoiding a jump cut when editing down a section of dialogue, or editing together two separate takes.

✓ **Establishing Shot -** Usually the first shot of a scene, this is used to establish the location and environment. It can also be used to establish mood and give the audience visual clues regarding the time (night/day, year) and the general situation. Because they need to provide a great deal of information, Establishing Shots are usually Extreme Long Shots or Long Shots.
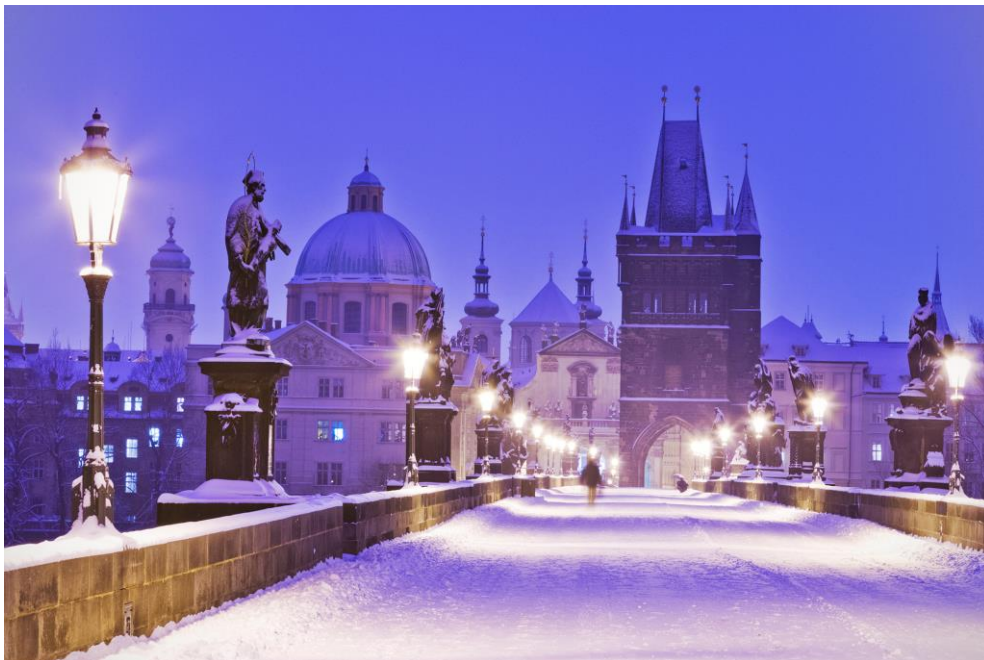
✓ **Master Shot -** Term given to a single, uninterrupted shot of a scene. This shot can be the only shot used by a director to cover a scene, or edited together with additional shots. While it's commonly a Long or Full Shot, a Master Shot can be a closer shot, or consist of multiple shot types if the camera is moving throughout the scene.

✓ **Point of View Shot (POV**) - Shot intended to mimic what a particular character in a scene is seeing. This puts the audience directly into the head of the character, letting them experience their emotional state. Common examples are of a character waking up, drifting into unconsciousness, or looking through a scope or binoculars.

✓ **Reaction Shot -** Shows a character's reaction to the shot that has preceded it.

✓ **Reverse Angle Shot -** A shot taken from an angle roughly 180 degrees opposite of the previous shot. The term is commonly used during conversation, indicating a reverse Over-the-Shoulder Shot, for example.

✓ **Two Shot -** A shot in which two subjects appear in the frame.

Different kinds of cameras are used for animation and live-action filming, but generally types of shots are referred to as if they are the same for both formats. In reality there are no 'close-ups' in animation; the effect is achieved by drawing or designing in different scales.

Different types of camera shots are used for different purposes. For example, extreme close up (ECU) is used for moments of high drama; mid shot (MS) allows us to see more of a character in his/her setting, performing actions.

SHOT SIZES

Extreme long/Wide shot

The terms long shot and wide shot are used interchangeably. Also known as an establishing shot when used at the start of a film or scene. Shows the full body in relation to their surroundings, contextualising the character with where they are.
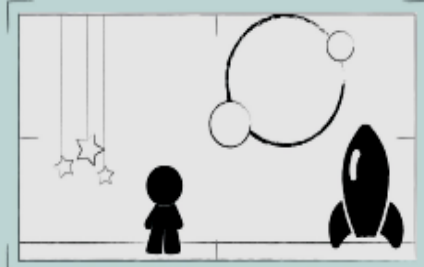
Long shot

Shows the full length of the body from feet to top of head. Used to show a character in relation to their surroundings.
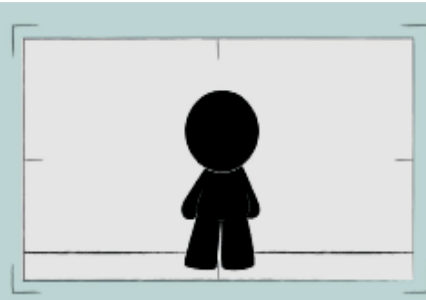
Medium long shot

Shows the body from mid thigh to top of the head. Used for facial expression and showing the character in relation to their surroundings.

Mid shot

Shows the character from waist to the top of the head. Used for facial expressions in combination with body language.
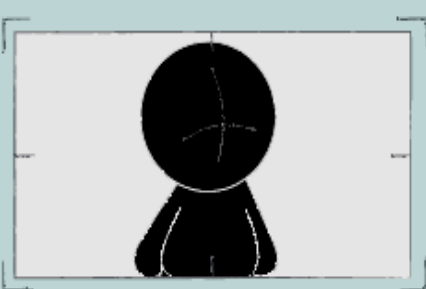
Close up

Shows the character from the shoulders to the top of the head. Used for capturing the character's facial expressions.

Extreme close up

Where an object, item or body part fills the frame. Used for heightening emotion.

Source: **https://www.intofilm.org/**

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CAMERA ANGLES

Top shot/Bird's eye view

A bird's eye view shot is filmed from above the characters. Filming from this angle can give the audience an overview of setting.
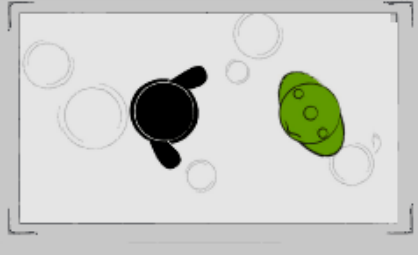
Eye level

An eye level shot is filmed at the character's eye level. Filming from this angle is usually a neutral position and allows the audience to become comfortable with the characters.
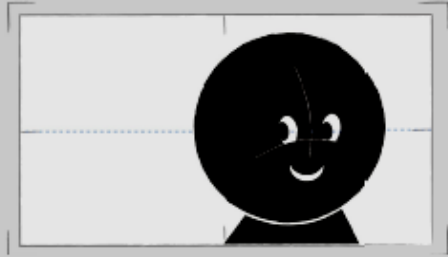
High angle

A high angle shot is filmed from above eye level. Filming from this angle may make your character appear smaller or more vulnerable.
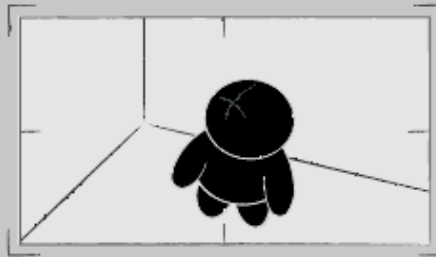
Low angle

A low angle shot is filmed from below eye level. Filming from this angle may make the character appear larger or more powerful.

Worm's eye view

A worm's eye view is filmed from ground level, looking up at the character. Filming from this angle creates a dramatic effect.

Activity sheet – Shot types

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

1.

    A   fade background

    B   close shot

    C   high angle shot

2.

    A   long shot

    B   medium shot

    C   close shot

3.

    A   close shot

    B   high angle shot

    C   medium shot

4.

    A   close shot

    B   high angle shot

    C   medium shot

1.2.3. Setting

Elements such as setting, framing, atmosphere and title are important to any movie as they can contribute to improving the film and making the overall theme clearer. By setting we refer to where and when the action of a film takes place, including the socio-cultural context.

The choice of setting to a large extent determines the narrative – what can happen in a story.

It can identify a mood or situation quickly, which is especially important in short films when time to tell the story is so limited, and can support actors, helping the audience to understand the actions and emotional lives of the characters.

In live-action films there are two kinds of settings:

• Interior – either a specially built set in a film studio or an actual location, eg a house or car;

• Exterior – either a set in a film studio made to look as if it is outside, or an actual location (which may be used exactly as it is found or adapted to look appropriate for the film).

In animated films, settings are created especially for the film. Animation enables filmmakers to explore spaces that would be unlikely or inaccessible in live-action.

The films in this resource give us a wide range of space settings connected to social and cultural life.

Setting also includes time, duration and period as well as space and place, filmmakers being able to choose the perspective they give us on a certain place. The concept of time and space are among the basic instruments which enable us to locate our space in our activities and relationships.

The chronology of cinema movies may present the story from the value of movie not from the value of real time. The film director freely plays with time. It violates the laws of real life and creates a time which is perceived with intuitions and is different from the real life. While doing this, it utilizes the instruments such as the display size which affects the use of time, camera movements and sound as well as the techniques such as the narration period of the story, the transition methods between the shots and editing which affects the chronological order of the events. The film maker combines shootings taken in unrelated spaces and times and may create a time through non-existing space and a

time beyond the real time; moreover, they may form completeness. This space and time is a totally new space (space) and time which makes its presence felt solely in the film; namely, it is a **filmic time** and a **filmic space**.

The editing has an important role in the formation of **filmic time**. Throughout editing, the events which take days and weeks in the real life may be narrated within a few minutes in the film. The events in the filmic time may be gathered according to a new chronological order in a way dramatic structure requires. The most frequently used transition methods applied during the editing process are *cutting, enchainment, erasing and blackening and bleaching*. *Time warping* is a method of creating a time dimension which is commonly used within filmic time. This is mostly executed through flash-forwards and flashbacks within the course of time.

The skip displaying of time forms a time-gap during the shots which is also called skipping time or shortening time. In majority of traditional narration films, this application is frequently used in order to extract the unnecessary scenes within the story line and shorten the movements.

Other uses of filmic time are: concurrence (convenience), intensity, maintenance, flashback, psychological time, representation of past and reduction

The time in the film is tightly coupled to **space**. The change of time depends on the changes in the space. This provides the relationships of time almost a spatial quality. The space naturally undertakes the characteristics related to time. As Herbert Read stated, thus, the film becomes an art of time and space which contains maintenance in time and space as a result of all those effects. There is a great freedom of movement in the cinema from the point of space. The film loses it multidimensionality. Two-dimensional reflection of real space is seen on a flat platform. Physical space is divided into visual sections and they are limited through various shooting angles, object lenses with various focusing distances and according to desire of the director. Thus, the space which the topic will be organized in is surrounded within the limits of movie screen. The space becomes a visual element which directly depends on the visual organization and the desired effect. There are two **types of spaces**: *Geographical and Dramatic Spaces*. The *Geographical Space* is the space which is used in order to create a pattern in any part of the world; the *Dramatic Space* is the space to determine and surround the psychology of individuals and situations.

1.2.4. Characters

There are considerable overlaps in the ways we can approach learning about character in books and on film. Picture books offer a bridge between the two media. Children learn very early that in stories 'not all characters are people, and not all people have to be characters'. They learn about character traits and behavior, what we can expect of them, and how to predict what they'll do; to infer feelings from facial expressions, gesture and dialogue, and how to cross-refer other characters' responses to them; that characters appearing in specific settings will behave in particular ways. And then one of the pleasures they learn to take from stories is that characters are capable of surprising us completely! Short films offer children the chance to see and listen to English-speaking characters, and to re-create those characters in target-language writing and drama and role-play.

The characters we meet in a film are revealed to us via:

• What they look like;

• The settings they are presented to us in; how they behave in different situations.

• How they interact with other characters;

• How they speak/what they say;

• Sound and/or music associated with them.

Role on The Wall – version 1

Character's name:

....

He thinks/she thinks:

He said/she said:

Appearance:

....

....

....

....

He feels/she feels:

....

....

Fact 1:

....

....

....

Fact 2:

....

....

....

Suggested vocabulary related to thoughts, feelings and appearance:

sad, happy, excited, confused, angry, hair, clothes

Role on The Wall – version 2

Character's name:

....

What is the character saying?

What is the character thinking?

Appearance:

....

....

....

....
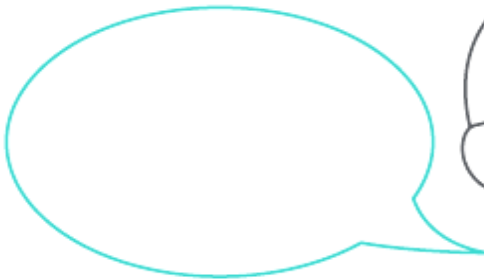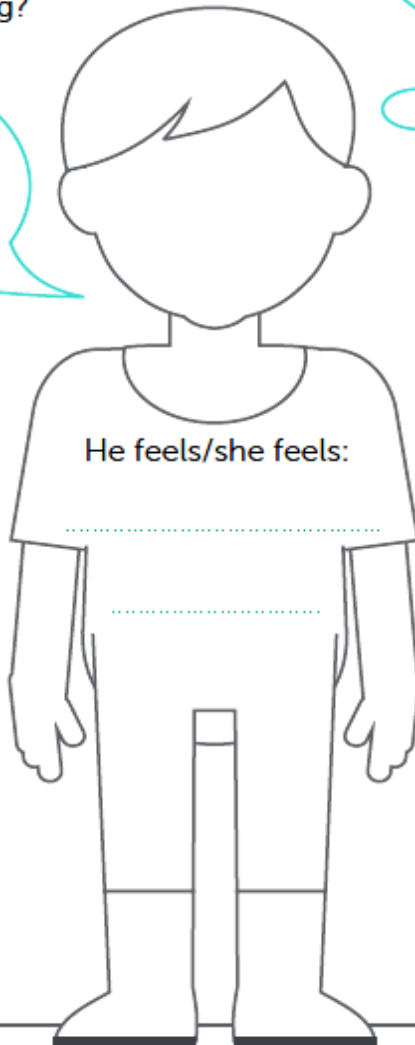
He feels/she feels:

....

....

Fact 1:

....

....

....

Fact 2:

....

....

....

Questions about the character

....

Questions for the character

....

Activity sheet - b

DESCRIBE CHARACTERS:

➤ How are they dressed?
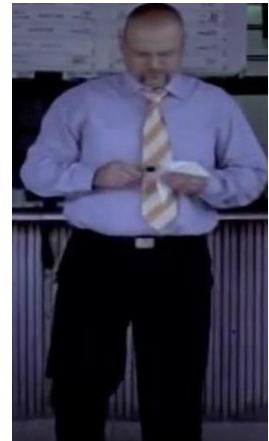
What is their social status?

➤ Compare the two main characters using the comparative and superlative forms:

EXTENSION TASK: Visual analysis

What do the clothes tell you?

Social backround? Job? Situation? Personality?

1.2.5. Story sequence and film time

Approaches to studying story in film ought to cover some sense of the ways in which events in a narrative are linked together. Strictly speaking, a plot is a nothing more than a sequence of story events (at minimum two) linked together by cause and effect. A helpful way of analyzing and discussing films, or any texts with a linear shape, is to break them down into sequences.

The strict narrative form follows five phases – exposition, development, complication, crisis and denouement.
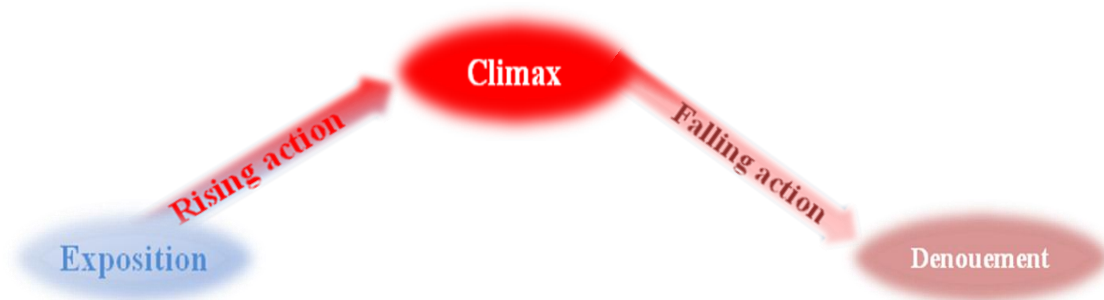
The Narrative Structure

Exposition

Exposition is used to add backstory (meeting the characters, establishing the settings, setting the tone) and reveal something about the characters' pasts that would otherwise be impossible. Exposition comes in many shapes and sizes. Some expand upon a character's persona; others elaborate the story and some of its elements.

Types of exposition:

a. *Exposition Through Dialogue* - The most common way to give exposition is with discourse. A conversation can offer important information about a character's background.

b. *Exposition through Mise-en-Scene* - A less used but equally acceptable method is exposition through the creative use of décor and props. Any object that bares information on a character can be considered expository. A certificate on the

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away....

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wall may indicate that so-and-so is a lawyer or a doctor. Photographs can denote past involvement by a group of people.

c. *Exposition Through Text* - The most obvious type of exposition is through the use of text or title cards. This incarnation is purely expository and rarely dramatic.

d. *Exposition Through Narration*- Narration is one of the most emotional ways to give exposition. Narrators can be either an omniscient, disembodied person that sees all, or they can be characters that exist in the world of the movie, sometimes narrating their own story, sometimes narrating others' stories. The voice-over allows for a more poetic tone of the descriptions.

Writing narration requires talent. The writer must never be redundant to the point where he shows and says the same thing. Crafty narration enhances picture and elaborates the story. Sometimes, the narrators are also characters in the movie, thus having influence on the plot. The other type of the narrator is the omniscient or disembodied narrator, who's not part of the filmic world, but that "knows all."

e. *Exposition Through Flashback* - Another alternative is exposition through flashback, a method less used and quite often unwelcomed. Flashbacks can be powerful systems of exposition when done right. However, the overuse of this approach has eclipsed good storytelling in so many occasions that the safest bet is exposition through either dialogue or text.

Flashbacks should be used mainly to replace major story moments that cannot be reduced to a simple conversation. Another possibility for flashback is when a character thinks something so intimate that he or she doesn't talk about it.

f. *Exposition Through Music* - Unquestionably the rarest manifestation of exposition and likely the one that will not be called for by the writer, exposition through music is often dynamic and exciting.

For example, the Academy Award winning song *Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling* introduces the plot:

Do not forsake me O my darlin'

On this our wedding day.

Do not forsake me O my darlin'

Wait, wait along.

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.

If I'm a man I must be brave

And I must face that deadly killer

Or lie a coward, a craven coward,

Or lie a coward in my grave.

Remarkably, before any of the characters utter a single word, the second stanza from the song already establishes the premise: A deadly killer is coming in the noonday train, and the main character must kill him or die.

g. *Final Words...* - More often than not, expositions detract the progression of the story. Therefore, they must be used sparingly only when necessary according to the reasons mentioned above.

The main purpose of exposition is to transform characters into 3-dimentional creatures by the elaboration of back-story. However, sometimes exposition can be used to foreshadow or justify someone's skills or behavior.

Composition

Composition (or 'mise en scène') is one of the key visual resources available to a filmmaker – how he or she disposes the elements of action and set within the frame. You can 'freeze frame' a shot and analyse its content, focusing on specific features. Freeze framing can support language learning by annotation of elements in the scene using simple vocabulary. Elements to look out for include:

• Aspects of actors' performance – gesture, facial expression, relation to other actors and to the space they inhabit.

• Objects in the frame – props, dress, set design.

• Lighting – the source, intensity and type (natural or artificial). In animation, lighting is only implied, by changes in colour.

• Aspects of composition – lines, planes and patterns.

It is important to remember that no shot in a film is actually static: lighting will change, people will move, the camera will shift its attention and focus. So for each of the categories above, ask also how the elements in the shot change.

Cutting

Shots aren't only edited together to develop narrative continuity; filmmakers can create juxtapositions that jolt, provoke, or confound us, often to bind us in to the story, keeping us guessing.

As you can see, filmmaking is the representation of life but with the boring parts eliminated. With the goal to enlighten, move, and excite a demanding crowd, films must be stripped from all the "dull bits" that could annoy the spectator. The editor, then, will have to exert final judgment and decide if a potentially boring scene works or doesn't, using the ellipsis.

Ellipsis concerns the omission of a section of the story that is either obvious enough for the public to fill in or concealed for a narrative purpose, such as suspense or mystery. Most viewers don't know what the concept of an ellipsis is, but they sure appreciate them. That is why, use ellipses to your advantage!

Activity sheet

Shoe Box Set Design

Interpreting a Room From a Film

Create your shoe box set design room using recycled packaging; it's a very inexpensive way to build a set. Repurposing materials encourages debate, conversation and collaboration within the group, as students are required to think about each item in a way that is separate from its original use.

For this activity, you might find it useful to have the following materials available:
- cardboard packaging (eg. cereal boxes, tea bagboxes)
- egg cartons
- plastic bottles
- tetrapacks
- cardboardtubes
- yoghurt pots or similar
- PVA glue
- colouredpaper/card
- poster paint (optional).

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

Create your own characters!

1.3. Teaching with short films

The notes below outline some useful ways of approaching the study of film in both literacy and language lessons, particularly in the development of speaking and listening skills.

Basic questions

• Was there anything you liked?

• What caught your attention?

• Was there anything you disliked?

• Was there anything that puzzled you? That you'd never seen in a film before? That surprised you?

• Were there any patterns?

General questions

• Have you seen any films like this before? How were they similar? How were they different?

• How is this different from other films you've seen before?

• Having talked about the film, have you changed your mind about anything? Seen anything new? Been surprised by anything?

• Would you like to know more about how the film was made?

Special questions

• How much time did the story in the film cover?

• Are there parts of the story that took a long time to happen but were shown quickly? And vice-versa?

• Were there particular things in the film – shots, sounds, images – that you liked or didn't like?

• How could you have made the film better?

• Has anything in the film ever happened to you?

• What would you tell other people about this film?

• Where did the story happen? Did the setting matter, or could it have been set anywhere?

• Which character interested you the most? Is that character the most important person in the film? Is the film really about someone else?

• Did you ever get to know what the characters were thinking or feeling? Or was the story told from the outside of the characters, watching them, but never knowing what they were thinking or feeling? Did you understand everything the characters said? Did it matter when you didn't understand everything they were saying?

• Are the characters in the film very different from characters in other stories you know? Are they very different from people you know yourself?

Stage 2 – Creating your own storyline and script

Humans have an almost unreasonable and insatiable craving for stories. They surround us night and day, every day of the week: the stories. At home, work, school, parties, malls, diners… People are always narrating and listening to anecdotes and chronicles. It may be something as notorious as the Madoff scandal or as trivial as a mean cab driver who refused to give the right change. Regardless of their nature, relevance, or truthfulness, stories have permeated society. And we love them. Movies tell stories, so we love them as well.

In filmmaking, the story is first developed in the screenplay. Every movie, short or feature, starts with a script – the blueprint for the construction of the motion picture. The screenplay furnishes the framework for every movie production; it is the basis for the decisions made from the early stages of pre-production to the final phase of post-production.

The Process

Writing a screenplay is no easy task, especially for features. Those blank sheets of paper are intimidating. Characters, locations, plot, genres… The variables are one too many.

Attempting to follow a current trend is usually a big mistake and a waste of time. Today's gold is tomorrow's trash. Plus, after you take the time to write and sell it, the producers will take from several months to a few years to actually finish the movie. By then, there will be another demand in town.

If you have an original story it has to be remarkably executed. Rule #1 is to be true to yourself. Don't write a screenplay because you think it will sell. Write it because you love the story and characters. Write it because you want to entertain or instruct or move an audience.

The Rules

Screenwriting has no hard and fast rules, not even the one mentioned above, so ignore it if you want. Writing for the screen is a subjective craft in which anything might work, but probably nothing will. William Goldman said: "Nobody knows anything." That is the greatest truth in the business.

However, in the absence of rules, we're left with the norm – a set of guidelines that has proved valuable and efficient throughout the years of filmmaking. The main concepts to fathom are: the 3-act structure and character arc. Those two are standard in the industry, followed practically by every movie, both commercial and independent. Another nugget of knowledge is high concept, though those are much rarer to find.

The Three-Act Structure

The **3-act structure** is an old principle widely adhered to in storytelling today. It can be found in plays, poetry, novels, comic books, short stories, video games, and the movies. It was present in the novels of Conan Doyle, the plays of Shakespeare, the fables of Aesop, the poetry of Aristotle, and the films of Hitchcock. It's older than Greek dramaturgy, Hollywood and Broadway use it well. It's irrefutable and bullet-proof, so to speak.

Though quite simple, the 3-act structure has proven to be a valuable weapon in the arsenal of any screenwriter. Yes, there are alternatives to telling a story. But the 3-act structure is a highly accepted and greatly successful method.

In a nutshell, the 3 acts are labeled as:

Act I: Setup

Act II: Confrontation

Act III: Resolution

Some people like to call them beginning, middle, and end, which is not inaccurate. The point of the acts is to make sure that the story evolves and the stakes get higher.

The Three-Act Structure

All acts have their own sets of guidelines and rules that make the foundation of story development. The next sections will go over the differences of one act and the other, plus the obvious and the obscure dos and don'ts of the craft.

Act I: The Setup

The first act is where all the major characters of the story are introduced, plus the world where they live in, and the conflict that will move the story forward. In Act I, the writer has the freedom to create any setting and reality that he so wishes. It's in the first pages of the script that he defines the reasoning and logic of the story. This early in the script, anything is possible.

The story may happen in the distant future or long time ago. It may take place in downtown New York or in an African jungle. The first act also establishes genre. It may be a drama or a thriller.

The writer may even distort reality or create his own. As the movie progresses, the viewer unconsciously forms a frame for the story, and their **suspension of disbelief** narrows, limiting what they will accept as plausible and congruent.

Ideally, your main character can never be lucky further down in the script. But while the story is introduced, this gimmick is acceptable if done right.

Act I must also present a strong hook – an exciting scene early in the script that grabs the audience's interest and hooks them. Part of that hook is the inciting incident that takes place somewhere in the beginning of Act I. This inciting incident often provokes a change in the protagonist's routine – something new they experience that could either challenge or encourage them.

Act I ends with the first **plot point** of the movie. This action completely changes the course of the story.

Act II: Confrontation

The second act is by far the longest, encompassing half of the movie and taking place between the first and third acts. For some screenwriters, Act II is the hardest one to squeeze out. This happens because after the initial boost of a new story, the writer is left without plot elements to introduce. The story, its characters and conflict are all established. At this point, the writer has created a solid frame for his narrative. Yet he's still roughly sixty pages away from the ending.

With so many blank pages remaining, the writer faces the challenge of keeping the story moving forward and not boring the audience. One device to accomplish this feat is the creation of **subplot**. The subplot is a minor story layered under the main narrative. It often adds a three-dimensionality aspect to the characters by allowing them to engage in a behavior that is not necessarily connected to the main plot, but still relevant in the overall narrative and often linked to a central theme.

In the second act, the stakes escalate. If the hero is "on the fence" or confused about what he should do, then something must happen by the **midpoint** of the script to make his goal clear.

A pivotal element of this escalation inherent to Act II is Plot Point II, which catapults the story into the third and final act. Much like Plot Point I, Plot Point II also affects the main character by changing the direction he's headed. The difference is that the stakes are much higher. This is often a moment of crisis, in which all hope seems lost.

⬥ Act III: Resolution

The last act, Act III presents the final confrontation of the movie, followed by the **denouement**. This act is usually the shortest in length because quickly after the second turning point of the script, the main character is face to face with the villain or just about. Showdown ensues and then conclusion.

The spectators are smart, so don't underestimate them.

The third act is also when the writer ties up any loose ends and offers a resolution to the subplots.

The resolution can also give extra information for a more elaborate character.

Activity sheet – Ellipsis and Narration

Watch the following film between 2,11 and 2,45!

Short Film - Donor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I1Zkg32amQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I1Zkg32amQ

Synopsis (What has happened up to this point?)

Issue (What issue do the main characters need to overcome?)

Outcome (What will happen? How will the main characters triumph?)

The Script

Contrary to what most people believe, learning proper screenplay format is not the first step in becoming a screenwriter. Story and structure always come first, so before you proceed further, make sure you understand basic storytelling concepts such as three-act structure, character arc, and the often-overlooked theme.

♦ **What is a script?**

It is a project of film making. It can be: a. Literary (the story) b. Directorial (dialogue, environment, technical indications).

♦ **Duration and format**

In a standard form, a page is roughly equal to one minute of time on the screen. Thus, looking by the number of pages, we could realize, how long the movie will be. This is an approximate criteria: the scripts for action movies are usually short but they take a lot of time on the screen comparing with the scripts based on dialog.

Don't forget to count your pages. The first page is the one with the first sequence.

The standard format for the American film industry is the Master Scene, which "breaks" the script with each new scene, designated by a new header. Although screenplay formatting may look strange, this is a convention of the trade and, as such, it must be followed.

♦ **Basics**

Font is always Courier, always size 12. The reason for this particular typeface is that Courier characters have the same size, so an estimation of how long the finished movie will be is more accurate, as each page should equal a minute of screen time.

If you're writing a spec script, intending to sell it to a production company, then you should start it with FADE IN, which is the type of transition in which a black screen dissolves to picture. This is common practice. If the director chooses to start with a wipe or with a cut from black, that is his prerogative. FADE IN is the only transition notation that goes on the left-hand side of the page.

♦ **Quick Reference Guide:**

font: 12 point Courier

spacing between dialogue and action (two lines)

left margin: 3,81 cm

right margin: 3,81 cm

tab for left dialogue margin 6,35 cm

tab for right dialogue margin 6,35cm

♣ CAPITALIZE THESE ELEMENTS:

- all camera instructions (use sparingly)

- all sounds, including music

- all character names the first they appear in a description/action line

- every word in the header

- the speaker's name, above each line of dialogue.

Sample Script from *Pulp Fiction* (1994)

```
INT. COFFEE SHOP — MORNING

A normal Denny's, Spires-like coffee shop in Los Angeles.
It's about 9:00 in the morning. While the place isn't jammed,
there's a healthy number of people drinking coffee, munching
on bacon and eating eggs.

Two of these people are a YOUNG MAN and a YOUNG WOMAN. The
Young Man has a slight working-class English accent and,
like his fellow countryman, smokes cigarettes like they're
going out of style.

It is impossible to tell where the Young Woman is from or
how old she is; everything she does contradicts something
she did. The boy and girl sit in a booth. Their dialogue is
to be said in a rapid pace "HIS GIRL FRIDAY" fashion.

                    YOUNG MAN
         No, forget it, it's too risky. I'm
         through doin' that shit.

                    YOUNG WOMAN
         You always say that, the same thing
         every time: never again, I'm through,
         too dangerous.
```

Filmmaker's Insight

Some rules of script formatting may look arbitrary and pointless, but they are standards. Overlooking these standards is self-defeating, a sign of amateurism that might

discourage potential buyers from even reading your script. Don't ruin your chances over something so small. Know the rules.

Scene

```
After FADE IN, you must introduce the scene location and time with a Header,
also called a Slug Line. Write it all in caps. Examples:

INT. BELLAGIO – NIGHT

EXT. CENTRAL PARK – DAY

INT. DAVE'S KITCHEN - DAWN

EXT. PIER - DUSK

EXT. and INT. stand for "Exterior" and "Interior" respectively, meaning
whether the scene is set outdoors or indoors. It's that simple.
```

If you have a scene that involves a mix of both types of location, use the one where you think the camera would shoot the scene from. For instance, if you have a scene of a father in his living room observing his children playing in the yard, you should use INT. LIVING ROOM because the active character is doing the action inside his living room.

For the time of the day, you only need DAY, NIGHT, DUSK, or DAWN. All of those are acceptable because they are visually different and significant. There's no need to be specific with the actual hour. 10:00 AM doesn't look much different than 3:00 PM, especially when indoors, so just write DAY. Instead of "Noon" or "Midnight," right DAY and NIGHT. If you need, for some reason, to specify the hour, then write it in the description lines. Don't forget to make obvious how this fact is known. Is it said by one of the characters? Is there a clock on the wall? Maybe someone's watch?

Action

Following the Header we have the Action and Description line, where you describe the scenery, characters, and their actions. Unlike what you see in novels and short stories, in screenplays the action is **always in present tense**. So instead of writing "John pulled out his revolver and fired" write "John pulls out his revolver and fires."

Descriptions should be kept to a minimum. Something like "A dark, cluttered bedroom." is better than "The bed is a mess. Books clutter the floor. The closed window lets

no light in. It's dark."

Lengthy descriptive passages with too much detail are frowned upon. From the example above, you could use the second description if the bed, the books, and the window were relevant to the story. Also, this longer passage would, perhaps, be welcomed if you're introducing a location visited often throughout the script. If it is a one-time-only location for, say, a detective to find a clue, there's no need to go overboard with detail. Use restrain and common sense. Write as if you were reading someone else's script, and you only want what is relevant.

Film Professor's Insight

Relevance is key when writing a screenplay. Be judicious when determining what is essential and what is superfluous.

For instance, when describing a character, oftentimes there's no compelling reason to describe color of the eyes.

If a seductress has "mesmerizing blue eyes," and she's gonna use them to entice someone, then go ahead and mention the eyes.

This is subjective and varies with each script, so use common sense. Too much detail is a turn off as it hinders one's reading.

🔸 Dialogue

When a character speaks, write his or her name in the center of the page, using upper case letters. Minor characters are often named after their profession or a trait or both, like Tall Professor or Geeky Tech. The dialogue follows under it in a central column under the name.

```
                    AURORA
                It's sunrise.
```

Film Professor's Insight

Occasionally, parentheses are used between the name and the dialogue to give extra information on how a character feels or the way he delivers his or her lines. Parentheses should be employed sparingly only when the information is not obvious.

For instance, consider the following dialogue:

```
                    VICTOR
                (whispering)
            Can you keep a secret?
```

The information in the parenthesis is not needed because the dialogue itself gives enough information on how the line should be delivered. Keep your script clean. Avoid redundancy.

⚜ Transition

In scriptwriting, the term "transition" refers to how one scene shifts to the next, thus they either precede the Header or finish the script. The most used transitional notations are *cut to*, *fade in*, *fade out*, *dissolve to*, *cut to black*, and *cut from black*. However, this information is superfluous and unnecessary in a spec script.

As a screenwriter, you have no idea what the director's plans for the scene will be. Even though you think your suggestion is worthy, unfortunately it isn't, nor is it appreciated. Avoid specifying transitions. Let the director figure it out.

If you are the screenwriter working alongside the director and responsible for the shooting script, then this is a different game. You should convene with the director and reach a consensus about which transitional device best fits each scene.

⚜ Wait! Don't stop!

Learning screenplay format is easy and simple. With all due respect, anyone can do it. It's all about capitalizing, spacing, margins, placing the header here and dialogue there.

What is really hard is writing compellingly, understanding structure and tempo. Take the time to read more screenplays and see how, for instance, a chase is narrated or a location is described.

Professionals writers are able to entrance us with powerful wording. This cannot be taught in a brief how-to guide. It involves a certain level of craftsmanship that takes years for one to perfect.

⚜ Final page

When you finish your script you should write THE END and stay centered, or to leave two newlines, on the right side of the page and to write FADE OUT. This "FADE OUT" has no connection with a transition on the screen, but it is used typically at the end of a script.

Sample Script from *Independence Day* (1996)

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY   Header or Slug Line with location and time

The room is packed. The President and his chief advisors are there along with the Joint Chief of Staff. Representatives from the Atlantic Command and U.S. Space Command have formed small clusters around telephones.   Action and description lines

Character Speaking   GENERAL GREY
Where in the Pacific? Line of Dialogue
            (turning to the President) Extra info or action clue
They've spotted one off the
California coast line.

Surrounded by the Secret Service, the President is speechless. Constance Halbrook comes rushing into the room and whispers to the President.

                    PRESIDENT
       Put it on.

Constance moves over to a cabinet and turns on the T.V. (the reception is still fuzzy, picture "rolling"). The CNN News broadcast shows the phenomenon over Novosibirsk, Russia. There is mass hysteria behind the reporter.

                    NEWSCASTER
              (filtered)
       ...sightings of this atmospheric
       phenomenon have been reported here
       in Novosibirsk, Russia and other
       parts of Siberia. Moving too
       slowly to be a comet or meteor,
       astronomers are baffled as to its
       origin...

Everyone is locked onto the television, mesmerized.

Reviewing and rewriting

Pare down your dialogue!

Read your screenplay aloud to hear if it flows well.

Remember film is all about images.

Activity sheet

Different scenario... Focus on future tenses - creative writing

Activity: decide what will happen next!

What game are they going to play?

This is the end of a line. What will happen next? What will the girl do?

The game is coming to an end...What is going to happen?

Activity: Starting from the previous answers, construct a screenplay for a short film.

Organize your club members into the groups they will be in when they make their films. The groups should conclude the session with a summary of their idea for a film.

Film pitch

Your pitch should be a maximum of three minutes long and must include the following:

Film title:

Genre:

An explanation of the storyline of your film:

A list of characters in the film, and your choice of actors for each main role:

Setting:

Opening sequence description:

Activity: look at another group's completed film pitch and give some feedback on what they have done so far. Here is a checklist of things to look out for:

✓ Does the storyboard clearly tell you the story of the film?

✓ Is it clear what the genre of the film is?

✓ Can you see who the main characters are?

✓ Does the film use a variety of camera angles and shots?

✓ Is there any information about props, costumes or locations on the storyboard?

What feedback or advice would you give on how to improve the storyboard before starting on the production of the film?

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

Stage 3 – From theory to practice – making a film

Activity sheet – teamwork

Planning grid

In pairs think about the planning needed for your short film! Afterwards share your ideas with another pair. Were there any similar ideas? What was different?

Aspect of the film	What needed to be planned in advance?
🎇 Theme	
○ Premise	
🎞 Genre	
📜 Script	
📍 Location	
🔍 Props	
👓 Costumes	
😊 Characters	

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

3.1. Pre – production

For pre-production to start, producers must commit themselves to a project – a screenplay. Once green -light, the script furnishes the framework for the production. Location scouting, casting, equipment rental, storyboard, and shoot script all happen in accordance to the screenplay.

One of the main tasks for the producer during this phase is to secure funds for the production to progress to the next level. Equipment rental, contracts, permits, and insurance are also costly for the independent producer and should not be ignored.

Creatively and artistically, many decisions must be made. First and foremost, a director must be chosen; he or she will be in charge of creative decisions from that moment onward unless fired. Writing the shooting script is huge responsibility in this phase. The director must be extremely familiar with the screenplay to the point that he knows what and how he wants to shoot the movie. The shooting script is a more detailed description of the shots and scenes of the movie.

    ✚   EQUIPMENT SELECTION: CAMERAS, MICROPHONES, LIGHTS

Depending on the screenplay, appropriate equipment must be selected. **High-definition (HD) cameras** are the most appropriate standard as they allow us to make low-cost quality shots. We always recommend a minimum of two cameras to be able to film the shot and the counter-shots at the same time, allowing us to choose different shots and avoiding the actors having to repeat scenes many times.

The script also tells us which types of **microphones** are needed. If the dialogue takes place in wide-angle shots, you have to opt for a directional microphone that allows audio recording even from a distance, while if the framing is in the foreground you can opt for a dynamic microphone or if the set is silent, and you are not a professional, you can use the camera microphones.

The choice of **lights** is also very important because a poorly lit set does not allow quality shots. When shooting indoor shadows behind the subjects should be avoided; outdoor

shooting is simpler because they usually do not require additional lighting, though care must be taken with the backlighting.

➕ CHOICE OF TECHNICIANS: DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, SCENOGRAPHER, COSTUMIST, OPERATORS, SECRETARY OF PRODUCTION, SOUND ENGENEER, PROP MAN or FINDER

Every person on the set plays a very specific role and these parts must be chosen carefully.

The director is the artistic director of the film, often writing the subject and or screenplay. In the pre-production phases, he chooses the actors to agree with the producer and decides the visual setting of the film. He is the one who will decide the shots to film based on the screenplay, indicating precisely their order, usually determined by the different places where they will take place.

The director of photography is responsible for the cinematographic image and for all the technical devices involved in filming. He collaborates with the director in the composition of the shots and stylistic choices; he has mainly three tasks: to illuminate, frame and set the lens (defines the amount of light necessary for a good image). It is responsible for the image, therefore for the lighting of the rooms according to the expressive needs of the film, not only with the actual light systems (the lamps to be clear), but also directing the operators, collaborating closely with the set designer.

The set designer or **art designer** is in charge of adapting the set to the needs of the script, he can also use sketches designed by the director himself.

Parallel to the work of the set designer is that of the **costume designer**, whose task is to prepare the clothes for the actors, from the main to the last of the extras, depending on the characteristics of the characters they interpreted.

The Cameramen shoot using the camera and follow the directions given by the director and the director of photography, paying close attention to the focus of the image (i.e. sharp edges or subject blur). He is responsible for the recorded image. They need to make sure the subject is well framed, properly lit, and in focus. Lighting is a skill in itself, whether that means making use of available natural light or setting up specialist lighting equipment.

Recording the sound properly means someone has to listen to it while the

interview is taking place. You can combine those three roles, so the camera operator is in charge of setting up lights and listens to the audio while watching the camera screen as well. It's quite demanding and requires a lot of concentration, but it works for a good effect.

The audio is recorded separately from the video and will be paired with the footage during editing. If you can separate out the technical roles of camera operator and **sound recordist**, you'll make life easier for both of them. That means they have fewer tasks to juggle at once. Don't do this for every shoot, but it's useful to have it as an option

The production secretary takes care of the convocations of the technicians and the actors and records and photographs all the positions of the objects and actors on the set including costumes and hairstyles. This is necessary to make the different cuts or continuations of scenes linked to each other coincide. In fact you have to be able to perfectly recreate the set in case the shots take place over several days or just after a pause. The production secretary also takes care to avoid anachronisms, that is when, for example, a film is set in ancient Rome, it must check that none of the actors wears a watch or the presence on the set of objects that could not exist at that time.

The audio engineer takes care of the audio and places the microphones on the set making sure they do not fit into the frame. The engineer can use a shaft extension (giraffe) with a microphone attached in order to get the best quality audio by approaching the actors as much as possible.

The finder is the one who, based on the shooting and the screenplay, procures all the objects necessary for the set according to the set designer. From the ashtray to the four-poster bed, from the lamp to the pens on the desk.

You're lucky when you have several people who can take on the role of **editor**. Like operating the camera, recording the sound, setting up the lights and designing motion graphics, editing footage is a skilled job that can take years to learn. The camera people double as editors too, but that doesn't mean you can't separate the roles if you're able to. One thing to consider is that editing is very time-consuming; if your camera operator and editor are one person, you'll have to allow them enough time to edit each film they shoot.

Don't use motion graphics in all films, but you can do in some, and one of the team can be a **motion graphics designer**. This is another job that's often a lot more

complicated and time-consuming than people expect it to be. While it's not essential for all films, it helps to have access to someone with this skill - either as a member of the team, or as an occasional freelancer.

The ***producer*** makes sure that everyone on the team:

- knows where and when to be for the shoot

- has what they need to make the film

- understands what the purpose of the film is

Often, it's useful for the producer to sit in during filming, keeping an eye and an ear open for problems that the interviewer and camera operator are too preoccupied to spot.

Sometimes **roles don't necessarily equal individuals**. Often, the individuals on a film production team will perform more than one role, and those roles vary from one film to the next. Just as you'd expect with other multidisciplinary teams in government, the film team is flexible. Sometimes a film might only need input from two or three of the team. At other times, all of people will chip in. It helps to have lots of people with a variety of skills, so they can swap roles when needed. Sometimes you need to hire in extra help from a production company, and on those occasions juggle our roles and to-do lists to fill the gaps that the production company's team can't fill.

It's a good idea to go through rough cuts as a team as well, and use feedback from those sessions to make more polished edits.

Revision - What are the main roles in film

ACTOR

NAME:

You interpret the character and bring them to life through your voice and movements. You work with the director to decide how best to interpret the script.

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EDITOR

NAME:

You edit all the scenes together to create a finished film. You will work with images and sounds to create a story using the storyboard as a guide.

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CAMERA OPERATOR

NAME:

You operate and look after all the camera equipment. You record the shots the director would like to use, making sure the camera is in focus and the shot is well framed.

INTO FILM

DIRECTOR

NAME:

You look after all the whole creative process, making final decisions about the acting and camera shots.

INTO FILM

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

NAME:

You break up the script into a shot-by-shot storyboard, and work with the director to decide which order to film the shots.

INTO FILM

SCREENWRITER

NAME:

You write the screenplay (story and script) from which the film is made. You are responsible for researching, developing and writing the story, characters and dialogue.

INTO FILM

HAIR AND MAKE-UP ARTIST

NAME:

You design and create the make-up and hair for characters. This might include making an actor look much older than they are or creating cuts and bruises using make-up.

INTO FILM

CHIEF LIGHTING TECHNICIAN

NAME:

Also known as a Gaffer, you oversee all practical and technical aspects of the electrics and lighting to get the right effect.

INTO FILM

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

+ CHOICE OF ACTORS (CASTING) AND ENVIRONMENTS (LOCATIONS) ACCORDING TO THE SCREENPLAY

The casting concerns the choice of performers, both for the main characters and for the secondary ones, as well as for the simple extras. In many cases a determining factor for the choice of an actor is the specimen to which it is submitted, which makes it possible to verify its adaptability to the character to be interpreted.

The inspections, on the other hand, serve to identify the real environments in which to shoot some scenes of the film, the so-called locations, both for the exteriors and for the interiors. These real environments must then be adapted, i.e. made compatible with the narrative needs of the film and its historical setting.

Activity sheet – Film

Having this information check your script and your planning grid. Go through the following checklist and see whether or not you are ready for filming.

NO

If you answer 'No' to any of them, then take a few minutes to discuss the issues with your group and to decide what you can do. Write this in the space under each question.

Do you know the locations of where you will be filming and are they accessible to you today?

COMPLETE?
☐

Are the actors in your film ready to be filmed? Do they know the script?

COMPLETE?
☐

Are the props and costumes ready and available?

COMPLETE?
☐

Do you know in which order to film you shots? Are you familiar with the storyboard?

COMPLETE?
☐

Do you know how to hold the camera and steady the shot?

COMPLETE?
☐

YES

If you answer 'Yes' to all of these points, you're ready to shoot your film!

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

3.2. Production

➕ WORKING PLAN: WHERE AND WHEN TO SHOOT, TECHNICIANS AND ACTORS NEEDED

The working plan is the graphic representation of the filming organization, according to the needs expressed by production and direction. The plan includes the locations where you must shoot, the expected days of filming, the indication of the light (day, night), the number of shots to be realized, the actors and their role, the technicians and the materials necessary for every day.

➕ LIGHTS ARRANGEMENTS

Lighting is an integral part of cinematography, and it's one of the few areas of filmmaking that has infinite arrangements of set-ups. Quite like camera terminology, there are many variations of tools and lighting language. In short; it can get confusing.

There is no one right way to employ lighting design. A scene could be lit several different ways by different cinematographers, each altering the mood and overall impact of the image. However, there is a basic list of lighting placement.

Below is a list of primary light placement terminology, and the key points for that placement. It's important to note that there can be several terms for the same placement. For example; A backlight, rim light, and a hair light are interchangeable terms for having the light placed behind and above an actor.

Key Light

A key light is the primary light of the scene. It will be the most intense and direct light source of the entire scene. It will be the first light to set up, and will be used to illuminate the form of the subject or actor.

Key Points:

• Avoid placing your key light close to the camera. It will cause your lighting to become flat and featureless.

• If a key light is positioned to the side or back of an actor, it will create a mysterious/dramatic mood, and overall keep the image dark.

- A key light is the primary light in a three-point lighting setup.

Fill Light

A fill light illuminates the shadows that are created by the key light. A fill light is usually placed on the opposite side of the key light, and often not as powerful as the key.

Key Points:

- As the primary function of the fill is to remove shadows created by the key, it's important that the fill remains indistinctive and does not create shadows or it's own characteristics. The closer the fill light is to the camera, the less shadows it will create.
- Fills are easy to create even if you don't have another light at hand; you can place a reflector on the opposite 3/4 to the key. Light will spill onto the reflector and bounce up to your subject.
- A fill light is measured in a *fill light ratio* also known as *a key/fill ratio*. It describes the relative amount of light from the key and the fill. For example, a ratio of 1:2 would indicate that the fill is half the intensity of the key.

Back Light

A back light hits an actor or object from behind, and is usually placed higher than the object it is lighting. A backlight is often used to separate an object or an actor from a dark background, and to give the subject more shape and depth. Backlighting can help bring your subject out and away from looking two dimensional.

Key Points:

- Non-diffused sunlight can often be too harsh to light your subject as a key light, but as a backlight, the sun can make your subject stand out.
- With the sun as a backlight, you can use a reflector or a foam board to bounce the sun at a lesser intensity back up to the actor.
- To create a silhouette, expose for the backlight and remove your key and fill.
- If a backlight is placed behind an actor at a directional angle, where the light hits part of the face, the backlight becomes a *kicker.*

- A great affordable backlight is the ARRI 150.
- The **key light, fill light, and backlight make up a three-point lighting setup**. You can learn more about setting up a three-point lighting scheme in this video tutorial from Full Sail University.

> **Watch the following movie!**

How To Set Up 3-Point Lighting for Film, Video and Photography

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3xYPOiPtE4

Sidelight

Image: Casino Royale via Columbia Pictures

A sidelight, as you might have guessed, is a light that comes from the side parallel to the actor. A sidelight is ideal for creating a dramatic mood and chiaroscuro lighting. Chiaroscuro is created with low-key and high-contrast. A traditional technique employed throughout the film noir period of cinema.

Key Points:

- To create better dramatic lighting with a sidelight, it is best to use it without a fill or have the fill ratio very low such as 1:8.
- Sidelights are ideal for revealing texture.

Practical Light

Image: Goodfellas *via Warner Bros.*

A practical light is an actual working light within the scene itself. This can be a household lamp, a TV, candles, police lights and so on.

Key Points:

- Practical lamps were a big part of classic Hollywood films. Take the above image from Goodfellas for example. The lamps are a major source of illumination, and they also increase the depth of the scene.

- Common practice for practical lighting is for the lights to have a dimmer of some sort. Unfortunately, you might not be in a position, or have an electrician on set to install a dimmer switch. Therefore, an option you can take is to cut some diffusion gel and place it around the bulb.

- Unless you're filming with a Carl Zeiss Planar 50mm f/0.7 like on Kubrick's Barry Lyndon, candle light itself will not be strong enough to illuminate your entire scene to a substantial exposure.

Here is a tutorial about shooting a candlelit scene on a small budget.

How To Light A Scene By Candle Light - Filmmaking Tutorial

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oCHWck5RkE

Image: Bounce light via **Wikipedia**

Bounce

A bounce light, commonly just called a bounce, is a light that has been reflected. There are dedicated tools such as a silk or a foam board to do this, but a bounce light can also come from the wall or the ceiling, the possibilities are endless.

Key Points:

- Foam bead boards have a matte surface and will create the softest bounce light.
- Reflectors with silver reflective material can create a hard light and often provide bounce light at 3/4 of the intensity back, depending on the distance of the light itself.
- Bounced light in the form a reflector can be very versatile. You can create a key, fill, backlight, and even illuminate objects in the background with reflective material.

Soft Light

Soft light is more of a term that describes the size of a light source rather than a placement

itself. Soft light comes from a large source, either a light fixture or diffusion sheet. The light produced will have soft shadows – or if soft enough, no shadows at all.

Image: Her via Annapurna Pictures

In film, video, and photography, there are two big categories of light: **hard light and soft light**. You can easily figure out if your light source is hard or soft depending on the shadows. Hard lights will have shadows with very sharp edges, whereas soft light will have shadows with soft edges or no defined edges at all.

The thing that makes a light either soft or hard is **the relative size of the light source.** A small source will be much harsher than a larger source. The best example of this is the sky. On a bright and sunny day your shadows will be incredibly sharp because the light source that hits you is (relatively) very small in the sky.

Now contrast a sunny day with an overcast day. On an overcast day, you no longer have a strong single point in the sky hitting your subject, rather the light is diffused across the entire sky. The result is incredibly soft shadows.

Why Soft Lighting Rules

One type of light source is not better than the other. Both hard and soft lights have their own storytelling purposes in both film and photography. That being said, **soft light is much easier to work with than hard light.** This is for a number of reasons.

First, soft light doesn't draw attention to shadows as much as hard light. By nature, our eyes are drawn to points of high contrast. If you're using hard lights, your viewer's eyes may be focusing on other points in the frame other than your subject. Soft light helps make your subject look as good as possible by minimizing wrinkles and blemishes, which is incredibly important for commercials and corporate videos.

When shooting with hard light, it's not uncommon to have to have your subject stay in a very particular place. But when shooting on soft lighting, you typically have more freedom for your subject to move around the frame.

Diffusion Techniques

In a nutshell, **diffusion changes the relative size of a light source.** For example, if we were to place a white sheet between your subject and a floodlight, we would get much softer shadows than if we simply hit the subject directly with the floodlight.

It's important to emphasize the word *relative size* here. While a softbox may produce soft shadows on a human when 5 ft away, it will likely produce sharp shadows on a car. In ideal soft lighting scenarios there's **a direct relationship between the size of your subject and the recommended size of your source light.** As your subject gets bigger, so should the size of your light source (if you want soft shadows).

Let's break down a few ways to get softer light on set:

- ### Diffusion Paper

Diffusion paper is a great option if you want to **soften your lighting up just a bit.** The "paper" is usually clamped to the barn doors of a light. The result isn't dramatic, but it is subtle enough if you're trying to soften up the overall look. Some people use wax paper instead of diffusion paper to get the same effect. While this may work with LED lights, you shouldn't use wax paper on a tungsten light as the paper can catch fire.

Diffusion paper tutorial, https://vimeo.com/9817517

- ***Softboxes***

A softbox is incredibly versatile on set, making it a great **key, fill, or back light** for your subject. The softness of the light produced from a softbox depends on the size of the face. In general, larger softboxes will produce softer light than smaller softboxes.

Be careful when looking for softboxes online. There are a lot of really terrible softbox brands out there that target indie filmmakers. These lights break easily and have **horrible colour casts**. I recommend using a simple Lowel softbox kit if you're just starting out.

Filmmaking 101 - Three Point Lighting Tutorial
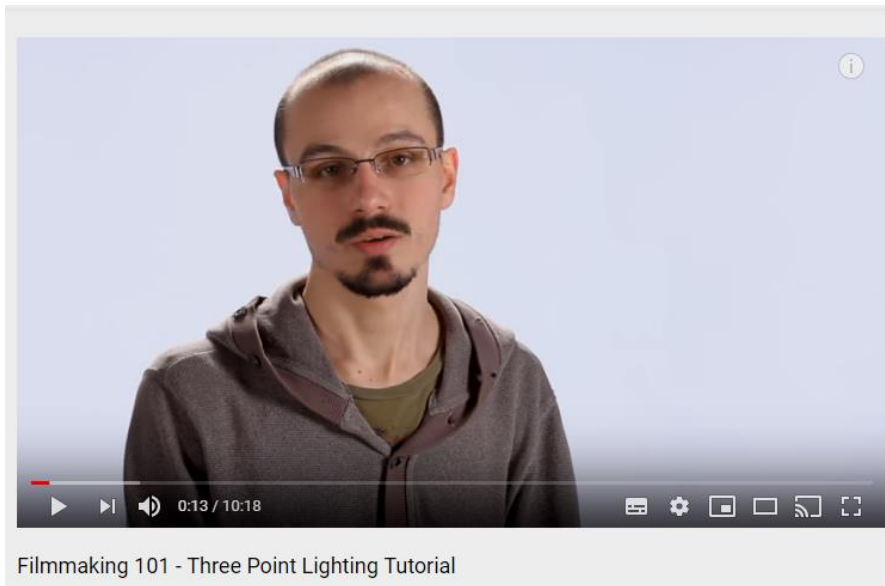
- ***Umbrellas***

Umbrellas are similar to softboxes in that they are usually attached to a light source. Depending on the type of umbrella you are using, you can either shoot through the umbrella or bounce light off the umbrella onto your subject.

Some umbrellas are made up of a white cloth and others are made up of a metallic material. Both are good and **both can produce soft light** depending on the material and the distance from the subject.

- ***China Balls***

If you're looking for incredibly even lighting to add to your scene, a china ball is a great place to start. They're incredibly cheap and the light they produce is just the right kind of soft. The only downside to working with china balls is the fact that **they are hard to mount. B**ut if you're willing to work with them, they can give you nice soft light for very little money.

- *Silks/Scrims*

A silk is typically placed on a separate stand between your subject and your light source. Silks can be large (up to 20 ft. x 20 ft.) or small. On a film set you will normally hear silks referred to by the size of the metal frame around them. Common sizes include **4×4, 6×6, 8×8, and 12×12.**

Image via *LightingIntensive*

If you're on an indie budget, you don't necessarily have to buy a "professional" silk to get a similar light effect. Most of the time you can get away with just suspending a white sheet or shower curtain between your subject and the light source. Be sure to bring lots of sandbags when using silks. If the wind catches your silk just right, it might fall and hurt somebody!

- *5-in-1 Reflector Diffusion Screen*

If you don't already have a 5-in-1 reflector, stop reading this article and go buy one. There is no lighting tool more essential to indie cinematographers than a **5-in-1 reflector**. The inside of a 5-in-1 is made up of a light diffusion fabric that can be used to cut light from a bright light source. They can be mounted to a c-stand or held when you're in a pinch. I often use these diffusion screens when outside in direct sunlight.

Outdoor Lighting at Noon: Reflectors, White Boards, and Diffusion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwDFcAdlQEU

- ***Bounce Light Off the Ceiling or Wall***

If you're working in a boring office space or home (or if you've simply forgotten your softbox) you can always **bounce light off of the ceiling.** This technique essentially turns the entire wall into **one big soft light**. I typically use this technique if I want to light an entire room evenly. Just keep in mind you'll need a powerful light if your room has tall ceilings.

Bouncing tutorial

While this tutorial is about bouncing light using a speedlight, **the same concepts can be applied to film lighting**. Notice in the tutorial how the light changes depending on the angle in which the light hits the wall.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTkuCJLdpqI
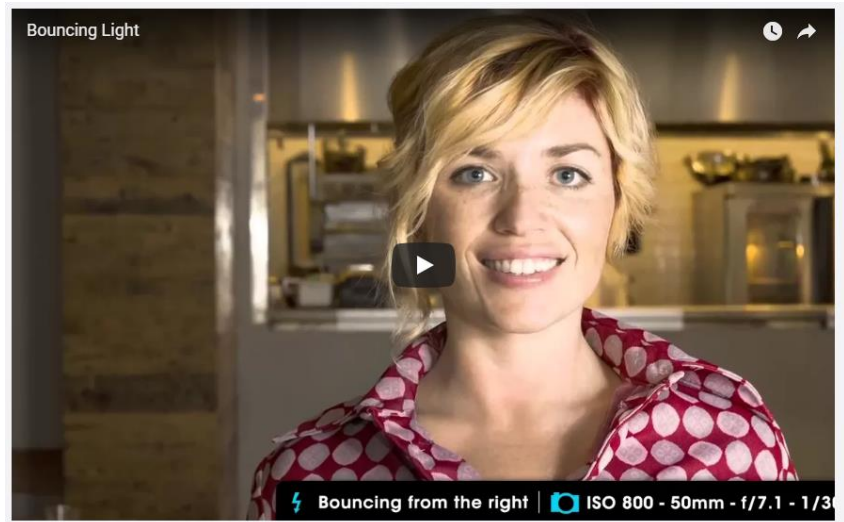
- *Shade*

If you're shooting outdoors and looking for soft light, try to find some shade. Instead of diffusing the light, shade will completely cut off the main light source. Instead of being lit from the sun, your subject will be lit by light bouncing off of objects from all around you.

One thing to look for when shooting in the shade is **blown-out backgrounds.** Because your subject will be out of direct sunlight, there's a really good chance that your background will be incredibly bright. Just keep this in mind when framing up your shot. There's also the chance that your lighting may change while shooting in the shade, so it's best to shoot in the shade if you're shooting a short scene.

- *Windows*

Another option for getting soft light is to **put your subject near a window.** Windows produce incredibly bright and soft light and it's not uncommon for photographers to use this light to their advantage. Filmmakers are a little more limited when it comes to window light, as light could possibly change as the day progresses. But if you need soft light quick, a window is a quick and easy way to do it.

One thing to consider when shooting near a window is colour casts. Lights in your home are typically tungsten balanced (orange) while sunlight coming through a window is typically daylight balanced (blue). In order to avoid shooting in mixed lighting, you may want to invest in a CTO daylight conversion filter to place over your window.

- *Book Lighting*

There's another popular lighting technique that's been making its way through the filmmaking world called **book lighting.** Book lighting is essentially a double diffusion technique that always uses at least 1 silk. The trick with book lighting is to not have the physical light source pointed at your subject. Instead your light will bounce from one source then hit a silk. The result is a very soft glow. Book lighting should be used if you want the softest light possible. Keep in mind: setting this up can take a while.

Hard Light

Hard light creates sharp and harsh shadows. You will get hard light from the midday sun, or a small lighting source. Hard light is often unwanted. To reiterate the points above in soft light, whether a light is soft or hard will completely come down to the size of the source.
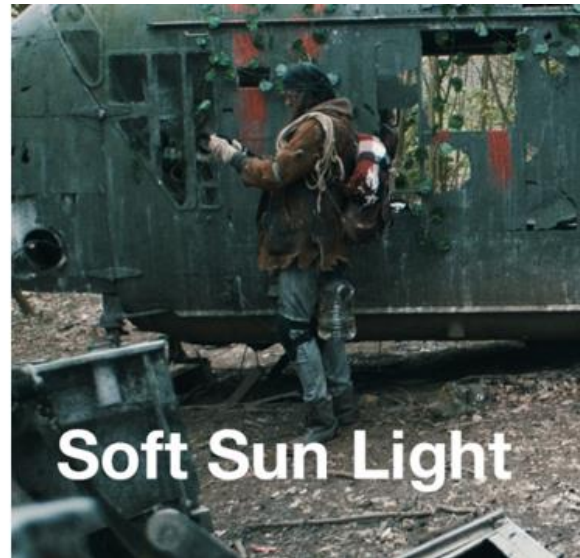
Key Points:
- Direct sunlight will produce hard light and will often need to be diffused.
- A smaller light will produce hard light, and a larger light will produce soft light.

To demonstrate the difference between hard and soft light, here is a comparison.

Hard Sun Light | Soft Sun Light

High Key

High Key is a style of lighting that is bright and shadowless with lots of fill light. It was used a lot in the classic Hollywood period in the 1930s and 40s, in particular for comedies and musicals.

Today high key lighting is primarily used for cosmetic commercials, sitcoms, and music videos. Although it does still find its place within modern cinema; see the above image from Harry Potter.

Key Points:

- High key is shadowless.
- Often close to overexposure on some areas of the image.
- Is usually produced from frontal lighting.
- High key will have a *low* lighting ratio.

Low Key

An image with low key lighting is predominantly dark and filled with more shadows than light. There is little or no fill light. Low key focuses on the use of shadows as a character, rather than the subjects in the light itself. It's commonly used throughout horror and thriller films.

Key points:

- Will often be achieved with just one light.

- Low key lighting will have a *high* lighting ratio.
- Low key lighting works better when using a hard light source.

Motivated Lighting

Motivated lighting is when the light in the scene imitates a natural source within the scene. The difference between motivated lighting and practical lighting is that motivated lighting is the act of enhancing and replicating practical lighting.

Image via Shutterstock

Key points:

- Establish the source of the motivated lighting early in the scene and within the production schedule itself. If your motivated source is a window, and the shoot runs into the evening while the story time remains in the day, you can increase and change lighting gels to match the earlier time.
- Make sure you have the correct gels to correct the colour temperature to match the source of motivation.
- It's important to have your light to look and act the same as the apparent source. If the motivation is moonlight, and your light is producing hard light at 5600k, it's not going to sell the scene.

Available Light

Available is what already exists at the location. This could just be the sun itself in the Rub' al Khali desert, or street lights and store signs on a New York City street.

- *Key* points:
- If you're using the sun as your lighting source, be sure to carefully plan for the weather and sun placement.
- Early morning and late evening are great times for soft golden lighting.
- Keep a track of time, the sun changes intensity and colour quite quickly towards the later end of the day.
- It's very easy to read through this list and think that one definition could easily be another. That's the beauty of it – they can be. One light placement term can very easily merge into a dozen other placements.

Take the image below from Man of Steel it uses the computers as a practical light source, as well as it being the key light of the scene.

Image: [Lawrence of Arabia](#) via Columbia Pictures

✚ SOUND IN FILMMAKING

"Sound" refers to everything we hear in a movie — words, sound effects, and music. Sound is used in location of a scene, advance the plot, and tell us about the characters in the story.

There are two categories of sound in film: **Diegetic** and **Non-Diegetic**. Diegetic Sound refers to all those audio elements that come from sources inside the world we see on the screen, including dialogue, doors slamming, footsteps, etc. Non-Diegetic Sound refers to all those audio elements that come from outside of the see on screen, including the musical score and sound effects like the screeches in the shower scene in Psycho.

How do Sound Effects help to Shape a Film?

 Sound effects can be used to add mood or atmosphere to a soundscape that accents or adds another layer of meaning to the images on the screen. Pitch, tempo, and volume may be altered to indicate how the audience to respond to a given noise. For instance, high-pitched sounds, including screams or squealing tires, help to create a sense of anxiety, while low-pitched sounds, including the sounds of waves or the swinging of a door, can be used to create a sense of calm or mystery.

Perhaps the most interesting use of sound in a movie is the very absence of it: silence. At key points directors may use silence in much the same way that they would use a freeze in a frame. Both tend to arrest the audience's attention to highlight some action or change in story direction. Silence can be used to build up a scene's intensity or to foreshadow impending doom.

In recent years, special sound effects have been added to movies in order to heighten lm experience. Many of these sound effects, including explosions, phaser blasts, the wind and animal sounds are drawn from computer sound effects libraries and are added after the movie has been shot. Besides creating louder and more dramatic movies, these effects have tended to draw more attention to movie sound. With advancements in surround sound, sound effects have developed a more "directional" place or direction. This directional quality of sound (alongside elements such as echoes) enhances a three-dimensional sense of space in the movie.

How Does Music Help to Shape a Film?

If we step back and think about it, music is one of the most peculiar conventions in movies. No one questions that music should be a part of movies because we've all grown used to the idea that, in a movie, when two people kiss, we should hear music in the background. Or when the platoon attacks the beach, a symphony should provide the

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inspiration behind their assault. Of course, no one has a soundtrack accompanying their real lives. But in movies we not only accept this convention, we demand it.

Music can be used for a number of effects in a movie. The most obvious way music scores are used is to guide the emotional response of the audience. They provide clues, or, in most cases, huge signposts, that tell audiences how the the filmmaker wants them to react to a given scene. Some directors play against our expectations and use music in ways we might not expect.

Finally, music can be used to shape the ethnic or cultural context of a film.

How Does the Spoken Word Help to Shape a Film?

In addition to giving voice to the characters in a movie, two of the more interesting ways the spoken word can shape a movie are through voice-overs and by providing subtext to a scene.

Voice-overs are typically used in films to provide background to a story or to help move a story from one set of events to another.

Used well, voice-overs can be unobtrusive. Used poorly, voice-overs can often seem like "the voice of god", bringing forth wisdom audiences are supposed to accept unquestioningly. For this reason, some filmmakers refuse to use voice-overs in their films to let audiences have more freedom in determining what the meaning of the film is.

We all know from our own personal conversations that there is often a subtext to the words we hear. Subtext means there is an implicit meaning standing behind the language we actually hear. In film, actors use this element of language to shape a scene without actually saying what they mean.

Listening!

Listen to the soundtrack of a film (it is recommended not to mention the title or the genre)! Pay attention on the atmosphere and music accents!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-HSu3w_FeA (A World Away - Original Short Film Soundtrack)

Activity sheet

1. Connect the soundtrack with the five phases of the narrative structure. Assign a specific emotion for each of this phases.

Happy

Unhappy

Time

0,00   **7,25**

2. Write the style of music you hear in each box.

The beginning (Exposition)	The middle (Climax)	The end (Denouement)

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

Watch the film!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3UWiOReMtU

Repeat the earlier tasks specifying to what extent the previous analyze is similar with that made starting from the soundtrack!

The main part of the production phase is called **principal photography** – which is the moment when camera rolls to record the actors and make the movie. The purpose of pre-production – all the procedure applied and decisions made during this phase – is to make everything during principal photography go as smooth as possible.

Notoriously, what most stalls principal photography is lighting and camerawork. The inexperienced filmmaker may find this assertion ludicrous, but professionals know better.

The director based on the screenplay and the eventual storyboard will decide the shots, to indicate them to the operators and the position of the actors as well.

　　ꝏ SHOOTING.

1. Schedule the shooting and rehearse the scenes.

Once the actors get onto the set, have them go through a basic reading of the script. Then, have the actors act out the scene. As they go through the scene, tell the actors what you want them to do, how to interact with the environment, and let them know of any modifications that you want to see in their acting. This process is known as ***blocking the scene***.

The script from which a movie is made. Contains scenes placed in order of filming. Usually contains technical notes and/or drawings. A shooting script is essentially a script that breaks the film into scenes, placed in sequence as they are to be filmed on set/location.

These can include any sketches or photographs of locations, include ideas you may wish to film in as well as scene breakdowns, types of shot and technical drawings.

Your schedule is to accompany your shooting script.

A schedule gives you control over the day-to-day shooting of the film. You can allocate how much time you feel is needed for each shot, by looking at your storyboards and shooting script simultaneously.

Scheduling will certainly test your patience. You will need to make countless calls and send countless E-mails to make sure all your cast and crew are available on the days you want to shoot.

If one person can't make it, then you will need to re-organise the whole day again.

It is worth while over-estimating for your first shoot until you get to grips with how long different tasks take (setting up lighting, moving cameras etc)

Give yourself more time than you need.

2. Dress the actors in their costumes.

If the role requires a certain type of clothing or makeup, you'll want to make sure that your actors are in character before you start shooting. After you rehearse the scene, give your actors the clothes or costumes that they need to wear.

3. Film scenes in the movie.

The storyboard that you created earlier will give you a shot list. You don't need to shoot the movie in chronological order, instead, shoot whatever scenes are the easiest to do. Work around actor's schedules and take advantage of days when your filming location is free for filming.

If you have access to a certain location, try to film as many scenes as you can while you're there.

This will save you time and prevent you from having to revisit shoot locations.

The scenes can be put into chronological order during post-production.

4. Focus on visuals.

Because your film is short, the narrative will sometimes matter less than the visuals that you are showing the audience. Choose locations that are visually impressive and make sure that the lighting complements the overall scene. Also, you'll want to make sure that the frame is in focus and that there's nothing obstructing or interfering with the shot.

Thank your cast and crew once shooting has finished. Once you've filmed all of the scenes in your storyboard, you can send the film to post-production for editing. Thank everyone who worked on the film and let them know that you'll contact them once the film is finished.

Working on a film set: getting it right worksheet

1. The camera operator sets up the shot by framing it correctly and positioning the camera appropriately to achieve the angle the director wants.

2. When it's ready, the director calls out, "Quiet please" or, "Quiet on set". This is a zero-tolerance rule. People must be quiet in order to hear the other commands.

3. Any noise could be picked up by the microphones, resulting in a false take which could mean you'll have to start all over again. The sound recorder will listen for a few seconds and will either reply, "Speed" to show they are happy with the sound conditions or give the director a nod.

4. The director can now call out, "Roll camera". The camera operator starts the camera. When they're sure it's recording (after about five seconds) they call out, "Camera rolling".

5. Now the director waits five to ten seconds before calling, "Action" or giving a visual signal.

6. The actors or presenter do their part.

7. The director waits five to ten seconds at the end of the scene before saying, "Cut".

8. The camera operator stops the camera.

9. The camera operator and director play back the footage to decide if they want to keep the take or delete it and start again.

10. A command of "Reset" means the scene needs to be done again, so everyone will return to their original places. If the director is happy, however, they will say, "Move on" and the next scene can be set up.

11. The first assistant director fills in the shot log with details of the successful take.

12. "That's a wrap" can only be said once all scenes are completed. This signals the

Source: https://www.intofilm.org/

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3.3. Post Production

Normally, post-production only starts when <u>principal photography</u> ends, but they may overlap. The bulk of post-production consists of reviewing the footage and assembling the movie – editing. The time editing takes to complete is directly proportional to the amount of footage recorded and how good camera notes are.

+ IMPORTS FILE OF THE SHOOTS ON THE COMPUTER.

At this stage all the frames marked as good are imported into the computer.

+ VIEW OF THE SHOTS AND CHOISE OF THE BEST ONES.

Among the good shots imported into the computer, in this phase, we choose those that best fit the needs required by the script and those that are technically more satisfying, in order to have a first assembly.

+ VIDEO EDITING

1. Upload the film to movie editing software.

Upload the video files into video editing software like Avid, Final Cut Pro, or Windows Movie Maker. Organize each of the scenes into bins or folders so that you have access to the video files quickly. This will help keep you organized while you work. Once the files are transferred and organized, you can start cutting them up and editing them.
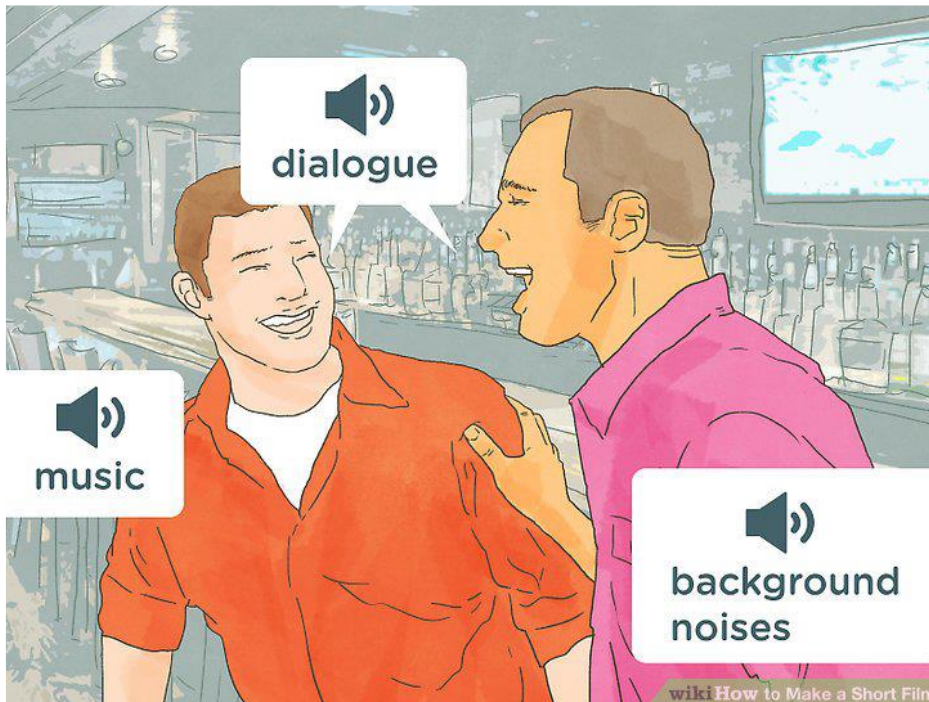
2. Do a rough cut of the scenes.

Start putting the shots in chronological order. Review them as you go along and check for continuity and flow. During the rough cut, you'll want to make sure that the story makes sense.

3. Add audio.

Add the audio tracks of the actor's dialogue and match it up with the video.

It may be necessary to add a speaker or a voice-over, this is recorded in the studio and not on the set, imported into the computer and added to the images. This procedure is also used for dubbing that is when an actor is used only for the video while the dialogues are instead recorded by a dubber in the studio. The same thing happens when a film is dubbed later in a language which is different from the original. The attention to the synchronism between the video (the lip) and the audio is very important.

You'll also want to take this time to add any music or sound effects that you want in the movie.

4. Analyze and tighten up the scenes.

Once you have a decent cut of the film, review it with the producer and other editors. Take people's feedback and criticism and then go back and re-edit the film. Concentrate on flow and pacing during the second edit.

Implement editing techniques like fades to transition scenes. If a scene feels like it's staggering or sluggish, you can tighten up the dialogue by adding cuts in between actor dialogue.

5. Review the film and create a final cut.

After you've tightened up the movie, review the movie one last time with everybody involved in the production, editors, and directors. Get final input on any details that need to be added or altered or issues that may have occurred during editing.

Once the editing of the film, the titration, the video and audio effects, the dialogues and the music have been completed we use the computer to proceed with rendering, that is the optimization of all the previously explained processes. At the end of the rendering, the film will be technically perfect and ready for *export*.

The last stage of a film processing, consists of *exporting the movie* from the editing platform on a DVD, or simply on a single file to be viewed or projected.

Once all of the people producing the film agree on the final product, you can start showing your short film to people.

Watch and learn!

Episode 17

Video Answers

What does a video editor
really do?

▶ ▮ ◀)) 0:06 / 4:12

What does a video editor really do? VideoAnswers. Episode17.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3V3XN3wrqA

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