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MINI FILMMAKING GUIDES

CONTENTS

DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOP YOUR FILM IDEA

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PREMISE

Good films have a clear message within them that can be described in one sentence. This is called a premise. If you don't have a premise, you don't have a film. Having a premise will keep you focused and motivated throughout the production process and ensure that what you want to say is communicated to the audience.

Think about your theme and then mind map what you know about it. What do you want to tell the audience about your theme? This will help you to decide on a premise.

The examples on the following pages identify what we think are the themes and premises used in some well-known films.

E.T. THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL (U)

THEME		
	♥ Love	👪 Friendship
PREMISE	*If you love someone, let them go.*	

Elliot finds an abandoned alien in his garden. They become friends and he tries to help E.T. live undetected on Earth as part of his family. However, when E.T. becomes ill and homesick, Elliot fights to help him go home.

TOY STORY (PG)

THEME	
	😷 Identity
PREMISE	*The best way to win is to work together.*

Woody is a cowboy doll who belongs to a young boy named Andy. His position as Andy's favourite toy is jeopardised when his parents buy him a Buzz Lightyear action figure. Woody becomes jealous of Buzz but when the family move house, Woody and Buzz have to work together to find Andy.

BATMAN BEGINS (12)

THEME	
	Triumph over adversity
PREMISE	*Your fears can become your strengths.*

The desire to avenge his parents' murders sends Bruce Wayne on a quest to learn how to improve his fighting skills. Bruce discovers that he has to defeat his phobia of bats in order to achieve power and strength. He returns to his home city of Gotham as his new alter ego Batman.

JAWS (12A)

THEME	
	Courage
PREMISE	*Be brave and do the right thing.*

When a great white shark starts killing swimmers off the island of Amity, police chief Brody wants to close the beaches. However, the town's mayor, wanting to preserve the town's tourism industry, overrules him. Brody realises he'll have to hire a boat, and a couple of helpers, and go and kill the shark himself.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Once you have your premise, you next have to create characters who will prove it. Traditionally, the two main characters in a film are the protagonist and the antagonist.

Protagonist (hero)

A protagonist is your main character and it is their story you are telling in your film. A protagonist needs to be likeable so that the audience will engage with them and want them to succeed. You can have an evil protagonist, but they will need to have likeable qualities or weaknesses that people can sympathise with. By the end of the film, your protagonist should have learned something new about themselves or the world – the thing they learn is your premise. In order for them to prove the premise, they need to go on a journey during your film that causes them to change.

Antagonist (villain)

The antagonist's role is to challenge and cause trouble for your protagonist. The antagonist often holds an opposing point of view to the protagonist, which may force them to question their beliefs. The antagonist may force the protagonist into a difficult situation, or present them with problems and challenges to overcome. It's through experiencing and overcoming difficulty that your protagonist will learn something new and prove your premise.

Other character types you may be familiar
with from films are:

- **Mentors** who advise and guide your hero,
  e.g. Yoda from Star Wars

- **Allies** who provide help and support to the hero,
  e.g. Mr Potato Head, Slinky Dog, Rex, Hamm etc.
  from Toy Story

- **Tricksters/clowns** bring humour to a film,
  but also convey a mischievous point of view, e.g.
  Donkey from Shrek

- **Shape shifters** are characters that change.
  They can appear to be one way but actually
  turn out to be the opposite, e.g. Harvey Dent
  (Two-Face) from The Dark Knight

NB

When developing
your characters,
avoid stereotypes
that make
assumptions or that
might offend your
audience.

GENRE

Who your protagonist and antagonists are and where they live can all be decided by the genre of your film. Each genre has a set of conventions associated with it that dictates character roles, settings, costumes and props etc.
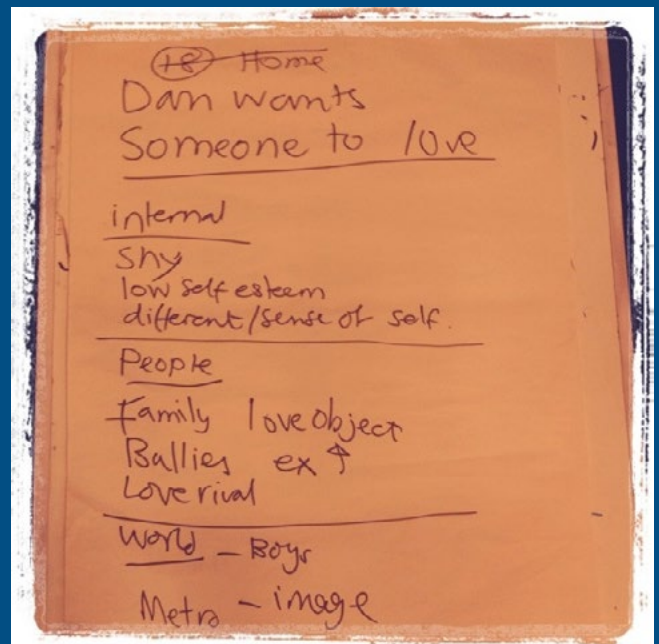
For example:

If you are going to make a horror film, your protagonist might be a curious teenager, your antagonist a mad inventor and your setting a haunted house. From that, your theme might be good versus evil and your premise might be 'look before you leap'.

You can also mix conventions a little. You could make a science fiction film with a lonely teenager as your protagonist, alien abductors as his antagonists and an outer-space setting. The theme, however, could be love and your premise could be that love is found in the most unexpected places.

Genre

Refers to a grouping of films or television programmes in terms of their theme and style, e.g. horror films, sci-fi, soap opera.
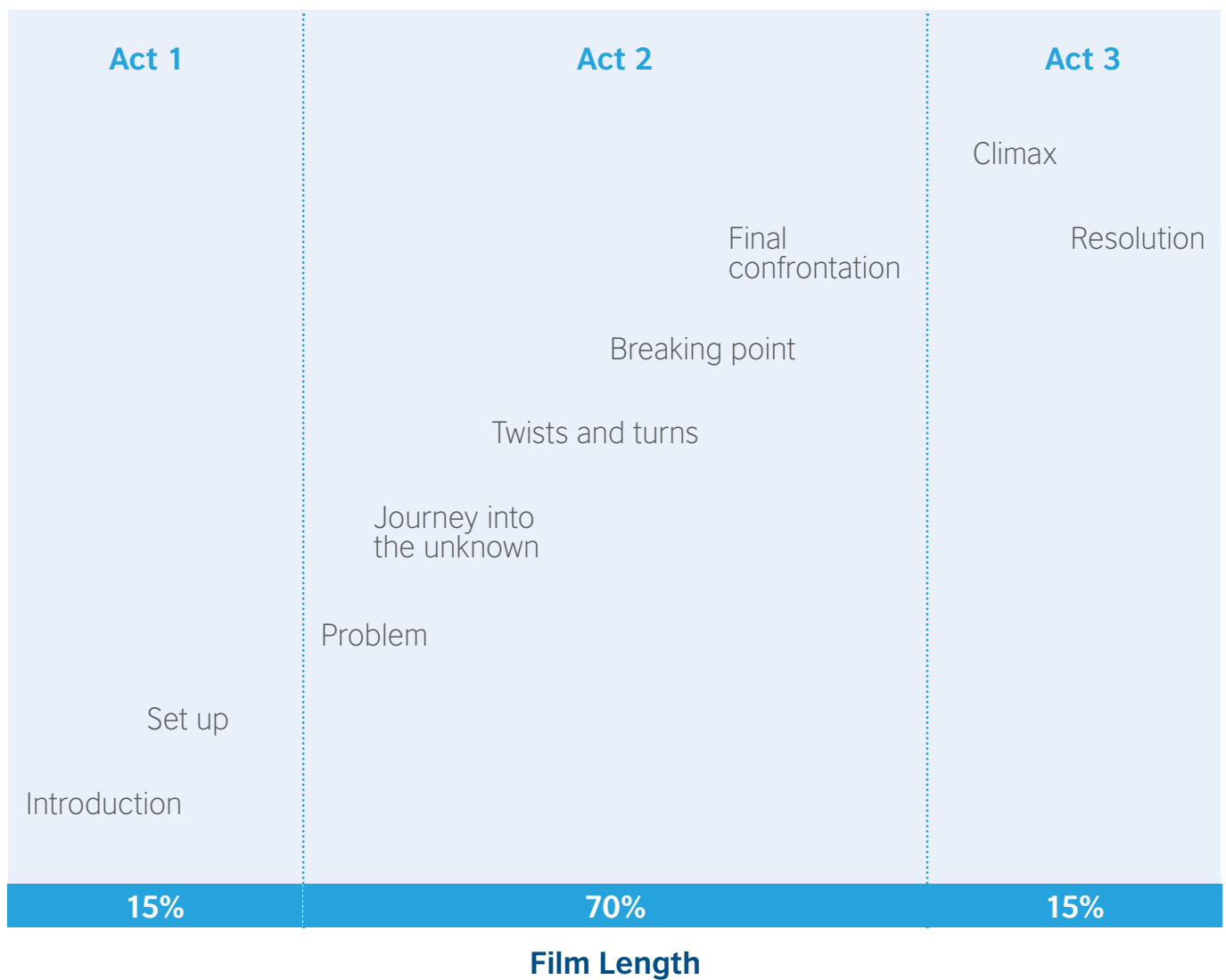

NB

Many genres overlap or have sub-genres. For example, the drama genre, which portrays realistic characters, settings and scenarios, has sub-genres such as weepies, biopics and courtroom dramas. Comedies are often categorised by sub-genres such as slapstick, rom-com or spoof.

CREATE YOUR STORY

Now you are ready to write the story for your film. It will need a beginning, middle and end and should be structured like a play with three acts. Setting out a clear structure will give you a solid foundation to build your film around.

Act 1	Act 2	Act 3
		Climax
		Resolution
	Final confrontation	
	Breaking point	
	Twists and turns	
	Journey into the unknown	
	Problem	
Set up		
Introduction		
15%	**70%**	**15%**

Film Length

Act 1 Beginning: Introduction, Set up
Introduce the world of your protagonist. Who is your main character? How old are they? What do they do/like? Where do they live? What is their day-to-day life like?

Act 2 Middle: Problem, Journey into the unknown, Twists and turns, Breaking point, Final confrontation
A problem or issue arises for your protagonist which forces them to go on a journey to overcome it. This problem could be caused by your antagonist or your main character could meet them during their journey. The antagonist may be part of the twists, turns and challenges that the protagonist has to negotiate. Eventually they will be pushed to breaking point and will be involved in a confrontation. The confrontation will cause him or her to learn something new and change.

Act 3 End: Climax, resolution
Here the protagonist has to apply his or her new knowledge (and prove the premise) by using it to resolve the problem(s) he or she is facing. The story can now conclude with a happy ending. If you want your story to end in tragedy, then your protagonist's failure will prove the premise.

And finally, your thought process might not follow the order stated above. However, if you cover all of the elements (Theme, Premise, Character, Genre, Story) you should create an entertaining film. For example, you might begin to realise that you want to make an alien abduction film, and so you develop your theme, premise, characters and story from this sub-genre starting point.

Planning your story

1) Beginning
(There was once a...)

Who is your main character (protagonist)? What does the audience need to know about them? (Age? What do they like? What are they like?) Where is the story set?

2) The Build Up:
(One day...)

What happens to the protagonist which sends them on a journey, mission or adventure? (They could receive a message or an invitation or somebody could ask for their help...). What is their goal?

3) The Problem:
(Suddenly....)

What big problem occurs that gets in the way of your protagonist achieving his/her goal? Who or what causes this problem (antagonist)?

4) The Resolution:
(The hero must...)

What must the hero do to solve the problem? (This will probably be something new or something they have never done before.)

5) The Ending:
(Finally....)

How does the story end? What happens now that the problem has been solved? How has your protagonist changed? What has he/she learned?

DEVELOPMENT

WRITE YOUR SCRIPT

Your film script is the tool that shows how your story will be told on the screen through a series of scenes.

Scene

A section of film that shows part of a story taking place in real time in one location.

Script format

There is a specific set of conventions used when writing a script. As a general rule, one page of a script should equal one minute of your film. When typing your script, use Courier font in size 12. The description and action needs to be clearly distinguishable from the dialogue. There are a number of good scriptwriting software packages available, which will automatically format a script for you. Alternatively, you can use the guidelines below to ensure you set your script out correctly.

Each scene begins with the scene title, which should be written in capital letters. Include INT if your scene takes place inside and EXT if it takes place outside. Write the name of your setting and the time of day your scene takes place.

The action describes the setting and what happens there. It also describes the characters: their age, what they look like and what they are wearing (only if it is relevant to the story). It describes what the characters are doing: their movements, actions and expressions. These details help the actors to portray the characters as you have imagined them; they also tell the audience a great deal about who the characters are and what they are feeling. Character names are written in capital letters throughout a script.

When a character is going to speak, write their name in capital letters in the centre of a new line. Centre the dialogue underneath.

INT. LOUNGE. LATE AFTERNOON.

DEREK (16) is dressed casually in jeans, t-shirt and mismatched socks. He hasn't washed for a few days. He is lying on a battered sofa in the lounge of a suburban family home.

DEREK tries to read a magazine but throws it aside after a few seconds. He checks his mobile phone: no messages.

DEREK flicks the TV on using a remote.

An alien-abduction film fills the screen: bright colours, shouts and screams explode into the room. DEREK immediately sits up to watch it: he is transfixed.

<div align="center">

DEREK

Woooow! I wish...!

</div>

Suddenly, a loud crash and huge bang! Smoke fills the room.

<div align="center">

DEREK

Aaarh! What's happening? LET ME GO!

</div>

<div align="center">

ROBOT

Engage the laser beam! Capture the human specimen!

</div>

A green laser beam cuts through the smoke, DEREK levitates off the sofa...

There are three areas you should pay particular attention to when writing your script: structure, characters and dialogue.

Structure

Your film script needs to convey the mood and atmosphere of your setting, the personality of your characters and how they are feeling. How will you convey each of these things in the film? By using direct dialogue or by describing action?

Characters

Character development is an important part of understanding the characters and how they would speak and act in a given situation. Consider what each character's personality and qualities are and how this can be presented in the script. Will they insult other characters to show a mean spirit? Will they run from danger to show they are a coward? How can you show strong friendships between characters? Use a combination of action and dialogue to tell your character's story.

Dialogue

What are the characters going to say and how are they going to say it? Write the dialogue as you would say it rather than using formal language. This will make it more realistic. Remember to think about your audience and use appropriate language.

PRODUCTION

MASTER THE CAMERA

MASTER THE CAMERA
(CAMERA SHOTS, ANGLES AND MOVEMENTS)

Professional filmmakers divide scenes into shots. They set up their camera and frame the first shot, film the action and then stop recording. This process is repeated for each new shot until the scene is completed. The clips are then put together in the edit to make one continuous scene.

Whatever equipment you work with, if you use professional techniques, you can produce quality films that look cinematic. The table below gives a description of the main shots, angles and movements used by professional filmmakers. An explanation of the effects they create and the information they can give the audience is also included.
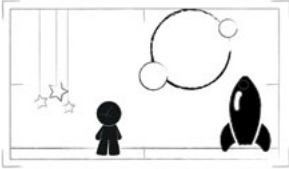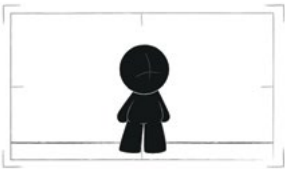
When you start out, you will probably instinctively shoot using mid and long shots as these are the easiest to use. As you become more confident, try to include a wider variety of shots. Close-ups are particularly effective as they enable the audience to connect with your characters - this gives your film more impact.

When deciding which shots to use, consider the length of the scene and the information you need to get across. Shot changes should be used only for a particular purpose or effect that is needed to tell the story. Details of your shot choices should be recorded on your storyboard and/or shot list. If you make changes as you shoot, remember to update this so your editor has the correct information for post-production.

Top Tip

Before you begin making your film, have a play with your camera: try to film something! A simple, silent (no dialogue) scene where somebody walks into the shot, does something and then leaves is perfect. Once you've shot your first film, watch it. What do you like/dislike about it? Save this first attempt. We'll be asking you to return to it later. (If you have already done this and saved your films, you don't need to do this again.)

CAMERA SHOTS

Name	How to achieve it	What it does

Extreme long or wide shot, sometimes called an establishing shot.

Film from a distance to include a whole setting in the frame.

Introduces the audience to the setting for the film. Often used at the beginning so the audience knows where the action is taking place.

Bird's-eye shot

Professional filmmakers will use a jib or crane to film a setting from above. You could use a bird's-eye shot to look down on a table in order to show an important prop or detail like a footprint on the ground.

When used for settings, a bird's-eye shot replaces or complements an extreme long or wide shot to introduce the audience to the setting. For props or details, this shot is used to give the audience a key piece of information and move the story on.

Long or full shot

Zoom out to include the full length of a character, from head to foot, and the surrounding setting.

Introduces a character into the story by placing them in the film's setting. Gives the audience information about the character (costume, height, stance etc.).
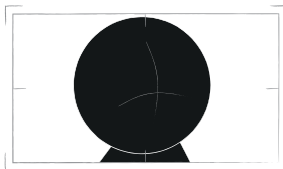
Mid-shot
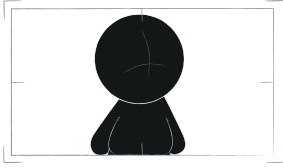
Zoom in to frame just the top half of a character's body or just the legs from the waist down.

Focuses the audience on what a character is doing and their body language. Can also show the movement of the legs if this is needed for the storytelling, e.g. dancing, running away when being chased.

Close-up/reaction shot

Tightly frame the character's face or part of an object; does not include the broader setting.

Shows the audience a character's facial expression to give clues about their feelings and emotions. Using this shot helps the audience connect with the character.
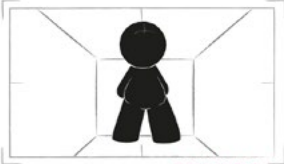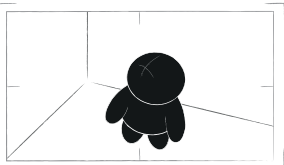
Extreme close-up
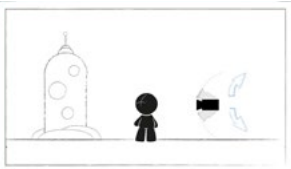
Zoom right in to focus on just a small part of a person or thing, perhaps the eyes or mouth.

Highlights an important small detail, to move the story on or help the audience's understanding.

CAMERA ANGLES

Name	How to achieve it	What it does
Low angle		
	Film your subject from below, camera looking upwards.	Filming from this angle makes your subject look tall, scary, dominant or powerful.
High angle		
	Film your subject from above, camera looking downwards.	Filming from this angle makes your subject look small, scared or weak.
Dutch angle		
	Slant the camera.	Makes things look weird and is often used to cause a sense of unease or disorientation for the viewer.
Over the shoulder		
	Film over the shoulder of one character to show another.	Helps the audience to place characters in a dialogue scene or interview.

CAMERA MOVEMENTS

Name	How to achieve it	What it does
Tracking shot		
	Move the whole camera to follow a subject. You need to use a dolly for effective tracking shots. A forward movement is called a track in, backwards is track out and sideways is crab.	This shot can be used instead of zooming to show what a character is seeing or to expose more of a setting.
Tilt		
	Turn the camera vertically up or down. Practise the movement before you go for a take. Always plan where the shot begins and ends: moving from something to something else is a useful approach. Hold the shot for a few seconds at the end of each movement.	Slowly reveals somebody or something. The classic example is the shot that starts with someone's feet and tilts up to show how big and scary they are.
Pan		
	Turn the camera horizontally left or right to scan a scene or follow movement. Practise the movement before you go for a take. Always plan where the shot begins and ends. When filming someone who is moving, try to allow space in the shot for them to walk into. If possible, try to anticipate the action in advance. Ensure the camera stops panning and the person walks out of shot before you stop filming.	Reveals more of a scene or setting, covering more space sweeping across a landscape.

THE PROCESS

This is the filming process you should work through
on your shoot.

1. Check the storyboard and shot list. What shots do
you need for this scene?

2. Dress the location and position the actors for
the first shot.

3. Frame the shot and check the composition.

4. Film the action. Record at least 5-10 seconds of time
at the beginning and end of each shot. This 'breathing
space' gives the editor extra footage if they need it. For
example, if an actor gives a great performance and you
have extra footage, you can linger on their face after they
have delivered their final line.

5. Keep a shot log. This is often completed by the first
assistant director. It involves recording the time code from
the clock on the video screen. They should record the in-
point (i.e. the starting point) and out-point
(the ending point) into their shot log. Each shot should be
given a scene number, shot number, take number and a
name that describes it.

If you are filming on a tablet or smartphone, review your
shots as you go and delete any shots that don't work. Only
keep and log the good takes.

Shot Log

A paper record
taken during filming
of each shot you
record. It lists the
'in point' (i.e. the
starting time), 'out
point' (the ending
time), scene number,
shot number, take
number, a short
description and a
note of whether or
not the shot was
good or bad.

Before you begin filming, remember to:

• Try and shoot a wide variety of shots so that the editor has plenty of varied footage to work with. You may have to film a scene or part of a scene several times to get the range of shots you need.

• Consider a variety of angles; a high angle to show a location in its entirety or a low angle to make someone look important.

• Only include camera movements if you have good reason. Each change of movement, shot or angle should provide new information.

• Frame each shot whilst the camera is idle. Avoid zooming or framing shots whilst recording. The separate shots you record will be put together in the edit.

Advanced camera techniques
Using these techniques will vastly improve the quality of your finished film:

Establishing shots
At the beginning of a film a series of establishing shots can be recorded to introduce the setting. As well as an extreme long shot of the location, other shots like a close-up of a sign could be recorded. A variety of establishing shots helps to locate your audience in a 'place in time'.

Master shot
You should begin the filming of most scenes by recording the entire scene using one shot called a master shot. Having a master shot ensures you always have a shot you can use if other shots aren't suitable.

Master Shot

A master shot is usually a long shot which shows an entire scene from start to finish. It's a good idea to shoot a master shot as it gives you footage you can use if there's any problem with the close-ups, mid shots etc. that you recorded of the scene.

CUTAWAY SHOTS

A cutaway shot gives the editor something to cut away to if other shots have failed. They can draw an audience deeper in to a story and add meaning to what the film is about. Cutaways are also useful for scenes where your characters might be talking about a moving object. For example, a moving dog cannot be included in the frame but cutaways of it could be inserted between the main shots of the characters.

Here is an example of how a master shot and cutaways could be used.

The scene shows the main character writing a letter. To begin with, a master shot of the entire scene is recorded. The director decides to use a long shot for this. He/she then asks the camera operator to record a close up to show the concentration on the character's face. Finally, the director instructs them to frame a cutaway shot of a ticking clock on the wall.

What messages does the audience get from this scene? What sort of letter might the character be writing and to whom?

SHOT-REVERSE SHOT

This is a technique where the camera shoots in one direction, then in the other (the reverse angle). It is useful because it makes it easier for the audience to understand the space. It also lets filmmakers shoot two people in conversation using close-ups.

To make this work, you need to follow the 180-degree rule. This means that you should shoot all of your shots with the camera on one side of an imaginary horizontal line between the two characters. If you 'cross the line' viewers won't be able to make sense of the scene. You don't need two cameras for this; you can just shoot the scene several times with the camera in different positions. When you edit the film you can cut between the shots from the different cameras/positions.

180° RULE
The 180° rule keeps the camera on one side of the line of action, which ensures that characters are positioned on a particular side of the screen and appear to look at each other. Filming which crosses the line between shots may make characters appear "reversed"

180°
180°
LINE OF ACTION
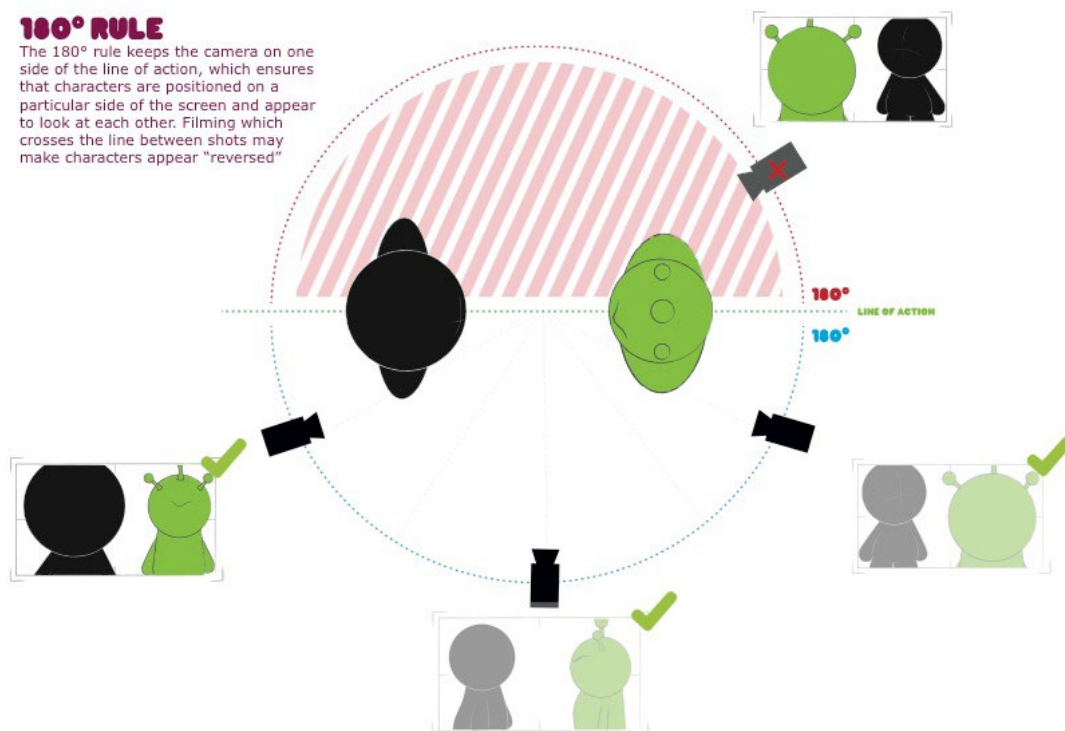
PRODUCTION

RECORD SOUND

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND

Sound is easily the most overlooked aspect of filmmaking, but is just as important as the visuals. Sound can powerfully affect an audience and has a huge impact on how they interpret what they see on screen.

Film soundtracks can have four elements: music, sound effects, voice and silence, which all contribute to the meaning and storytelling. Sound, particularly music, can set the mood and inform the audience about the genre of the film: a horror film will have a very different soundtrack to a comedy.

Sound can sometimes tell the audience more about what is going on in the film than the visuals do. It can affect how an image is interpreted and also what an audience actually thinks they can see. Imagine a scene showing a flower blowing in the breeze in a field, accompanied by a calming classical music soundtrack. How would watching this make you feel?
Now imagine the same visuals accompanied by the sound of an approaching lawnmower and funeral-march music. The visuals are the same but the sound dramatically changes the impression given to the audience.

HOW WILL YOU INCLUDE SOUND IN YOUR FILM?

As a filmmaker, you have three options when it comes to sound.

1. **Record none of your sound live and create a digital soundtrack.** This can be made up of sound effects, musical loops and a pre-recorded narration.
These elements can be put together on a computer/tablet using digital audio recording and editing software/apps. Many animations are made this way. It's easy to replicate this by recording a narration explaining what is happening on a USB microphone. You can then add relevant digital sound effects which can easily be downloaded for free from the internet. You can also create and digitally record your own sound effects to add into your software, the art of which is called Foley.

   Recording a modern version of silent film is another type of film where you could use this technique. You would replace the narration with intertitles with the dialogue typed onto them. Sound in your film would be a musical soundtrack and sound effects. There are a variety of silent movie apps and software available that will help you create intertitles for your film.

2. **Record all of your sound live on set.** This is a good option for live-action filmmaking because then you'll definitely have some sort of soundtrack for your film.
If you have a lot of dialogue in your live-action film, you really need to record it live. Recording dialogue separately and syncing the recording with your actors' lip movements is extremely tricky!

3. Use a combination of live-recorded sound and digital sound. This is probably your best option for live-action filmmaking, as it gives you the chance to improve or enhance your live soundtrack. The easiest way to do this is to record all of your dialogue live and add digital sound effects and music in the edit. Some sounds like footsteps, waves or crowd noises can be recorded live (Foley) or added in as sound effects when you edit. Music will need to be sourced or composed ahead of time, ready to be added in the edit. Remember any music you use will have to be **copyright**-cleared. If you are using music in your film, it's best to compose it yourself rather than use a pre-existing piece of music. This will mean that you will own the copyright and won't have to get permission or pay to use somebody else's music in your film (see **Post-production: Add Sound Effects and Music** for more information on music copyright).

If you want to use some silence in your film, plan to record this on location so that you capture the correct atmosphere.

Top Tip

Do not record your audio as MP3 files or use MP3 files for music and sound effects. This is a very compressed format and, as a result, the audio file will skip noticeably in most editing software packages. Use or record WAV files instead.

Foley:

Foley artists work by using a variety of surfaces - concrete, sand, wood chippings, gravel etc. They also use different props which make noises like squeaks and bangs. Foley is used to enhance a particular sound which contributes to the storytelling, so that the audience can hear it more clearly.

For example:

Prop and techique	Sound effect
Rub a pair of old jeans together, slowly or quickly	A person walking or running
Flapping a pair of old jeans	Washing on a line, sails in the wind, a flag
Snap celery or carrots	Twigs breaking
Open a small umbrella quickly	Flying bats
Pop bubble wrap	A crackling fire
Rustle plastic bags	A person walking on gravel

Top Tip
If you want to record Foley sounds, they will be of a higher quality if you use an external (plug in) microphone.

Consider collecting a variety of everyday objects and experimenting with them to see what sounds you can make. What sounds of other objects or occurrences can you replicate? Can you recreate the sound of a heartbeat or a door closing?

RECORDING LIVE SOUND: EQUIPMENT

The way you decide to use sound in your film will be greatly influenced by the equipment you have. Using just your camera's built-in microphone may be acceptable if you can find a really quiet space and get close to the subject. Ideally though, you need a separate microphone and headphones, and a camera with sockets you can plug these into. Tablets usually only have one audio socket but you can get an attachment that you can plug both the headphones and microphone into.

- A handheld microphone is good for interviewing or can be held just out of shot for close-ups.

- For recording drama the traditional way, you'll need a separate microphone on a boom pole. One of your crew will have to hold this up in the air above the action. It's helpful to add a furry windshield to your microphone when you are filming outdoors. Make sure the person holding your boom pole holds it above their head with their hands spread wider than shoulder width. They should take regular breaks to stop their arms getting too tired and the boom dropping into shot.

- A basic tie clip, radio mic or lavalier microphone is the cheapest way to get good sound for interviews and presentations to camera. They are also great for when you are shooting a wide shot where a boom-mounted microphone would have to be in shot.

- Headphones are essential so you can hear what is being recorded by the microphone – recording sound without them is a bit like filming with your eyes shut. When recording live sound, you should use headphones to check the microphone is switched on. You should also check that the sound can be heard and that there are no unwanted background sounds. If there is a sound level on the camera you are using, make sure the levels never go into the red. It's always a good idea to record a few lines and play back a test recording to check sound levels are ok.

RECORDING LIVE SOUND: HINTS AND TIPS

- Before you begin, ask all of the cast and crew to be silent so you can identify any low level noise that could be picked up by the microphones. Electrical equipment such as humming or buzzing fans, computers or fridges should be turned off, as should mobile phones. Some microphones will even pick up the sound of a vibrating phone on 'silent'.

- When you scouted for outdoor locations during your pre-production stage, you should have checked for distracting background noise like a busy road or railway lines. If you have no option but to include some very loud noise such as roadworks, always try and record a shot of this activity. It helps the viewer accept the noise if, at some point, they can see it in vision.

- When shooting begins, there should be absolute silence. No talking, no whispering and no fidgeting – all of these could be picked up by your microphones.

- Make sure the actors leave pauses between their lines and don't talk over each other.

- Ambient sound of other people in the scene will be recorded separately. Actors who are the main focus mime their words in a separate take.

- It's a good idea to record some 'silence': this is background noise if you are on location, or just the silence of a room if shooting indoors. This can be really useful for patching up gaps in the sound at the editing stage. Approximately 30 to 60 seconds is sufficient.

- If there is a sound problem, a loud bang or the sound cuts out, do not be afraid to stop filming and start the scene again.

POST-PRODUCTION

EDIT FILMED FOOTAGE

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EDIT FILMED FOOTAGE

Editing is like doing a jigsaw – you piece all of the parts of your film together so it makes sense to your audience. There are a number of ways you can edit your film.

- You can edit in-camera, where you shoot the film in sequence and keep a neat structure to each scene. This is the way you'd probably work if you make your film on a phone or tablet.

- You can upload your film onto a video-sharing site like YouTube and use their online editing software.

- Alternatively, you can transfer your footage from your camera onto a computer and use editing software to construct your finished film. This is the way professional filmmakers work. Popular editing software includes Windows Movie Maker, iMovie and Adobe Premiere. Most PCs come with Windows Movie Maker and this is a good entry-level package to start with. iMovie is a very accessible software package available on iPads.
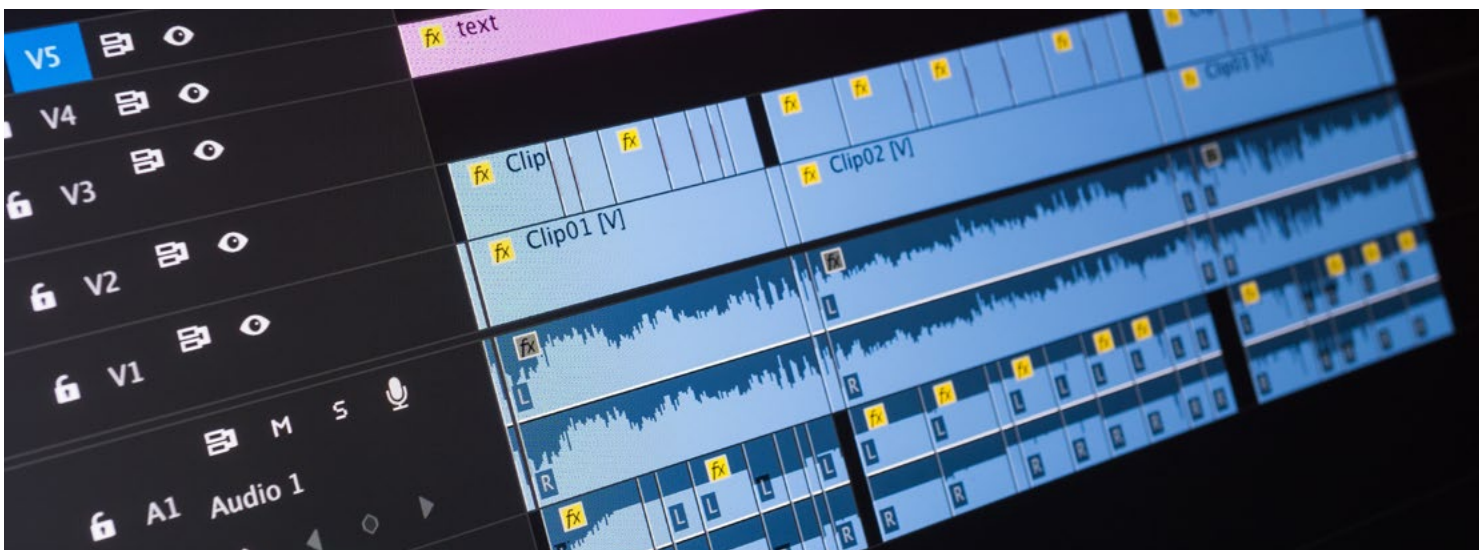
Editing allows you to:

- Select the shots you want

- Order them

- Add, remove or repeat shots to tell the story more clearly

- Cut and trim particular sequences or clips so you just have the most essential parts

- Add effects like black and white to age something

- Add transitions (dissolves or fades) between shots

- Add sound effects, music and voiceover/narration

- Add opening titles, subtitles or intertitles if needed, and credits at the end

- Export the finished film into a version you can play on your computer, use online or burn onto a DVD.

There's a great deal of craft involved in editing. As with any creative process you are taking something raw (film footage) and sculpting it into a piece of art. It takes a great deal of patience and skill, but can be one of the most rewarding filmmaking tasks.

THE EDITING PROCESS

The principal aim of editing is to assemble film clips to tell your story accurately. If there are gaps in the narrative, it will be difficult for the audience to follow.

Upload your video clips on to your computer
The first step in the editing process is to transfer your film footage from your camera onto your computer or tablet. Transferring your footage onto your computer rather than straight into your editing program gives you greater control. You can review it easily and ensure that the correct footage is selected.

Save each clip into a folder on your computer/tablet where you can easily find it. Check each clip against the first assistant director's shot log and only transfer the good takes. You will have shot more footage than you want to include in the final version of the film, so it is important your takes are clearly labelled. As you save each file, name it so you can easily identify and find it later. The best method for this is with a scene number, a shot number and a short description.
If you didn't film your shots in narrative order, it might be easier to number and order them after all shots have been transferred. This process is called logging.

Assemble a rough cut
After you have labelled and logged all of your clips, the next step is to get your shot footage (rushes) into the edit suite. All of the different types of software will have a function name or command for this, along the lines of 'capture', 'import' or even something as simple as 'add video'. As you import each clip, it will appear in a 'bin' or 'collection folder'. You can then drag the clips onto your timeline, in what you think might be the correct order. If you have labelled and numbered your clips earlier, it should be easy to assemble a rough cut.

Editing:

Once you have your rough cut, watch it to see if it makes sense and start reordering shots if necessary. If you need to change the order of any of the clips, select the clip you want and drag and drop it into the preferred place. Remember your aim is to convey your story to the audience in the most effective way you can. You can apply the following techniques:

- **Remove shots by selecting and deleting.** Editing involves cutting out clips that aren't needed. Don't be afraid to be ruthless – cut out anything that does not work in a scene or add anything to the narrative. Every shot should help tell the story. Your original footage should be saved on your computer/tablet so deleted clips can be restored if you make an error.

- **Trim clips.** Shortening some shots can make a film tighter. Consider trimming off the beginning and/or the end of a clip so that you are left with the most important part.

- **Set the pace.** Always review and watch sequences after you have edited them. Fast editing where shot changes occur quickly can make things feel exciting and more frantic, but take care not to make changes too quickly as it can be disrupting and confusing. Slower-occurring shot changes set a peaceful tone or build suspense. Where changes in pace are not needed, shots where nothing much is happening do not need to last more than a second or two.

- **Split clips to insert cutaways.** For example, a person being chased can be cut with shots of the person doing the chasing.

- **Create continuity.** When editing from one shot to the next, look carefully at what you are looking at in the end of one shot and what is in the next shot. It can work well to match these so that the shots are similar. For example, you could have two adjacent mid shots with the action in the left hand side of the frame. In two close-up shots the eyeline of the character in the first shot could be matched with the eyeline of the character in the second.

- **Set the tone.** Your choice and order of shots can help set the tone of your film to match the story, theme or genre. With the same footage, you can create more than one film, each representing a different genre just by the way you assemble the footage. There are lots of examples on YouTube of 'genre mash ups' that demonstrate this.

- **Film more footage.** If you are not happy with some of your shots, don't be afraid to go back and film some more footage or experiment more with your editing. Don't worry about making mistakes as you can always undo your last step.

- **Colour grading.** When you are happy with your edit, you might want to use your software for colour grading, to help the final look of the film and match up any differences in colour between the shots.

Cutaway shot

A cutaway shows something away from the main action. They are useful for showing more about a setting and can help in editing by giving you something to 'cut away' to.

Transitions:

Transitions are the animations that can be placed between shots to make the change from one shot to the next smoother. Fades, dissolves and wipes can be inserted to create a particular effect. Without transitions, shots just cut from one to the next. Most editing software will give you some choices of transitions.

When choosing whether or not to put a transition between shots, consider whether its inclusion makes sense to the story; gimmicky effects can just confuse things. It's probably best not to put transitions between every shot, particularly if the action is supposed to be continuous; simple cuts work well here. Use transitions to create useful effects that will help people understand your story.

- Black and white or sepia can be applied to show something's in the past or in somebody's imagination.

- Dissolves, where one shot melts into the next, can show that part of a journey has been missed out or that the scene is part of a dream. You can also use dissolves in montage sequences that sum up stories or ideas.

- Fade to black at end of a scene, or use a fade to black followed by a fade in to show that time has passed.

Titles

Your opening titles tell the audience the name of your film. You type this onto a slide, which is positioned before the beginning of your footage. Consider your genre when designing your titles. Matching the colour and style of your background and font to the film's genre will introduce the audience to the film they are going to watch and will set the correct tone and atmosphere.

Intertitles and subtitles

Intertitles are usually used in silent films to replace the dialogue, sound effects or narration. If you aren't making a silent film, you could use them sparingly to provide information that wouldn't be conveyed by your characters as part of the action, such as 'Based on a true story'.

If your editing program allows you to add subtitles, you could make a version of your film suitable for hearing-impaired audiences. Subtitles could also be used to translate any dialogue delivered in a language unfamiliar to your audience.

Credits

In your closing titles, you give credit to everybody involved in making the film by listing their name and role. Cast members are traditionally listed first and then the crew. To copyright your film and show other people that it is your work, you could add © with your name and the date to the end credits.

Cast and Crew

Ed	**Edward Bowness**
Will	**Will Stanford**
Thomas Brewster	**Director**
Thomas Brewster	**Editing and Sound**
Charles Richard	**Mise en Scene**
Charles Richard	**Cinematographer**

POST-PRODUCTION

SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC

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ADD SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC

Within your editing software, you should be able to work with your soundtrack. You usually create this from your dialogue, the atmosphere you recorded on location, sound effects and music. Remember, only use sound effects and music composed by other people that are copyright-free or that you have permission to use. Copyright-free digital sound effects are easily downloaded from the internet, or you can create and record your own Foley effects.

It is much harder to source music from the internet. Websites like Musopen Bensound and Incompetech have clips that can be downloaded and used for free. These clips are covered by Creative Commons licenses. Check the restrictions associated with the license covering the music you want to use in your film before you download it, especially if you are planning to charge people to watch it.

Your best option is to compose any music you need for your film yourself. You can play your own instruments and record something original (covering other people's songs also infringes on their copyright) or compose something using a computer program/app like GarageBand. If you don't need a great deal of music, your editing software may have free loops and effects you can use.

Foley

Sound effects you create and record yourself, e.g. clapping coconut shells together to recreate the sound of an approaching horse.

www.musopen.org

www.bensound.com/ royalty-free-music/2

www.incompetech.com/ music/royalty-free/ collections.php

www.creativecommons. org/licenses

Creating your soundtrack

You can add your soundtrack in your editing software or app and decide where you want to position it in your film. When you import your soundtrack into your editing software/app, each different soundtrack will often sit above your film footage in the timeline. Most editing software allows you to add in at least two soundtracks. This means you can have music or dialogue or atmosphere and sound effects playing at the same time. Remember you can also use silence to create a dramatic effect – use your atmosphere track recorded on location for this.

You can edit your soundtrack to fit your visuals by cutting, trimming, removing parts and repeating, just as you can with your film clips. You can then adjust your sound by rubber-banding. This means plotting the sound levels with dots and moving them up for louder and down for quieter. The more dots, the more gradual the change in volume.

The other way of editing is to start with your soundtrack. Put markers on the timeline (or just fit to the waveform of the sound) and edit your visual shots to fit this. This is great for making music videos where the edits match the beat, or documentaries where the video matches what the presenter is talking about.

Sharing the film

When you've completed your film, you'll need to save and export it so that it can be shared with your audience. You can produce your film in several different formats depending on where you want to play it: online, on a computer, on a tablet, on a mobile phone or to be burned onto a DVD. It's a good idea to export one version in the highest quality resolution, which for HD would be 1080p (1920 x 1080). Your editing software/app will list the formats available and suggested file sizes.