

Film-Making Tips

Planning and making your film

Step 1. Work out what your film will be about.

The very first thing you will need to do is to think about what your film will be about. It might be that you have to think up an idea, or it may be that your teacher gives you an outline or instructions. This will give you an idea of what themes the film should be based on, how long it should be, what it needs to include, what it shouldn't include, and any other important information.



Step 2. Come up with an idea.

Brainstorm some ideas and think big within the constraints of what's possible or feasible considering your resources (e.g. timeframe, budget and equipment).

“Creativity is putting your imagination to work, and it's produced the most extraordinary results in human culture.” - Sir Ken Robinson

Step 3. Planning your film. What will be the message? Who will do what? How will you do it? Use the table on the next page to help you plan your film.

Step 4. Storyboarding and writing a script. Storyboarding means visually planning your film. Sketch out scenes from your film showing characters and events. Add ideas you have for visuals and audio (such as music or sound effects). When you're happy with the structure and flow of your film, you can write your script.

Step 5. Sets, props and costumes. By now you know what will be happening in your film so it's time to start planning what sets, props and costumes you will need. What sets you need depends upon the type of film you are making (e.g. short film, animation or documentary). You may be able to use locations around your school or in your neighbourhood as sets (just check there is enough light for filming and that it is free from background noise). Or you may want to make some sets if you can't find suitable locations. The same goes for props and costumes: you may be able to use what you've already got. Create a list of what you need and check if anyone in the group can lend items for the making of the film. And check with the drama department to see what they've got before you start buying or making loads of stuff.

Note: Images and music sourced online or publicly available could potentially be subject to copyright and so cannot be accepted as part of the competition. You are encouraged to create your own props, models, sets, images, music, etc. These do not need to be complex or elaborate: sometimes the simplest props, sets and music are the most effective. The important thing is to demonstrate creativity and good messaging, not expensive sets and props.

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Step 6. Practising lines. Knowing your lines before you start filming will make the filming process much easier and faster. Create cue cards for actors if needed and encourage actors to rehearse scenes.

Step 7. Production. It's time to SHOOT! You don't need a whizz-bang blockbuster quality video camera to make a great film – a mobile phone, camera, computer, iPod, or iPad will work very well too.



Post-production

Step 8. Editing and post-production. It's time to pull all your scenes together, add music and polish the overall look and feel of your film. Use editing software to:

- Put the scenes together
- Add music, edit sound (be sure to use music not restricted by copyright)
- Add special effects
- Add credits

Step 9. Sharing. Before you submit your film to be assessed, share it with a friend or family member and listen to their feedback. Maybe you missed something, maybe a simple tweak would improve the plot line or flow. It can be hard to listen to criticism – even when it's constructive – but it can help to make your work stronger and more engaging.