

MAKING FILMS

Filmmaking or film (video) production is the process of making films. This starts with the initial story or idea. Then:

Scriptwriting	Working out how you will tell the story and what you will see and hear.
Casting	Finding the right people to be in your film.
Shooting	Recording all the footage (scenes, shots) you need on camera with a crew of people on various locations (sets).
Editing	Putting together the footage you've shot in order to tell the story, with music, effects and titles.
Screening	Showing the finished product before an audience that may result in a film release and exhibition (seen in cinemas or on TV).

These are split into pre-production (before shooting) – production (during shooting) – post-production (after shooting).

CATEGORIES AND STYLES OF FILM

Categories of films are called genres. A film is generally either fiction (not real or imaginary) or documentary (based on real people and events) and can combine different genres.

CAMERA TECHNIQUE

The camera moves in different ways and shows you different views (shots) to help tell the story. A director may choose to move action along by telling the story as a series of cuts (going from one shot to another) or they may decide to move the camera with the action.

SHOTS – SIZE

The distance between the camera and the subject and how much is visible within the camera's frame.

Establishing shot / Very long shot (VLS)



Long shot (LS)



Medium long shot (MLS)



Medium shot (mid shot MS)



Close Up (CU)



Extreme Close Up (ECU)



SHOTS – ANGLES

<p><i>Low</i></p>	<p><i>High</i></p>
<p><i>Canted</i></p>  <p><small>This Dutch tilt in Rules of Attraction (2000) was used to intensify the drama.</small></p>	<p><i>Point of view (POV)</i></p> 
<p><i>Two shot</i></p> 	<p><i>Over the shoulder</i></p>
<p><i>Overhead (bird's eye)</i></p> 	<p><i>Underneath (worm's eye)</i></p> 

CAMERA MOVEMENT

Pan A movement which moves across a scene horizontally (from left to right). The camera is still but is turned, often to follow a moving object which is kept in the middle of the frame.

Tilt A movement which moves across a scene vertically (from up to down), otherwise similar to a pan.

Dolly Sometimes called TRUCKING or TRACKING shots. The camera is placed on a moving vehicle and moves alongside the action, generally following a moving figure or object.

Zoom A video zoom lens can change the position of the audience, either very quickly (a smash zoom) or slowly, without moving the camera an inch.

Handheld Producing "fly-on-the-wall" effect.

CREW ROLES ON SET

The crew are a group of people hired to produce a film. The producer is the person or people who oversees the whole film/video production and often owns part of the film. Some of the other important roles are:

Director Is in charge of creative aspects of the film including all technical aspects, performance of actors, locations and soundtrack etc.

Camera department The cinematographer (also known as director of photography (D.O.P.) and may also be camera operator) is in charge of all lighting and camera choices in conjunction with the director.

Sound department Is responsible for recording and mixing all sound on set. Includes operating and setting up microphones.

Grips and Gaffers Are in charge of lighting and electric. They set up things like the lights, the dolly etc.

Art department Are in charge of the 'look' of the film – from sets, to props and any construction.

Hair and Make-up Are responsible for all make-up and hair for actors on set.

Costume/wardrobe Are responsible for all clothing and costumes worn by actors on set.

WRITING STORIES

The first thing you need to do is catch the audience's interest early. Once you have their attention, it will be much easier to continue with the script. Always make your audience wonder what's going to happen next.

A good short film needs a story in which something happens that has a major effect on the main character. All successful short films focus on one moment or event. That moment is likely to be:

- One of universal significance (matters to the world)

- A moment that is significant to the protagonist (means a lot to the main character)

- One that produces a situation in which the stakes are high for the protagonist (the main character has a lot to lose or gain)

Finding the Story

Any dramatic story requires 3 basic elements:

- A world

- A character

- A problem

Keep asking yourself the following questions about your story:

- What does my character want?

- What stops them from getting it?

- What happens if they don't get it?

Scripts and Storyboards

It is very important to plan your film/video before you start shooting. It will ensure the smooth running of your production. A script or storyboard is a document that lays out what will happen in your film. The script concentrates more on setting the scene (how the location will look), dialogue (what the actors will say) and main actions (what they will do), where as the storyboard is a collection of drawings of each shot of your film and some details written below about size of shot and camera movement. The script is laying out the story, where as the storyboard is showing you exactly what the camera will see. On most productions, both a script and storyboard will be created.

Film script example

INT. GOOBER'S SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

The place is a mess, having suffered the insanity of a Friday night. Cigarette smoke floats in the air.

INSERT: THE DART BOARD

As a dart SMASHES into the board.

BACK TO SCENE

BOBBY plays darts in a dark corner of the bar. Even in his drunken state, he's not too bad. Bobby's darts still fall into the board.

BOBBY

Damn! I'm good!

The phone RINGS.

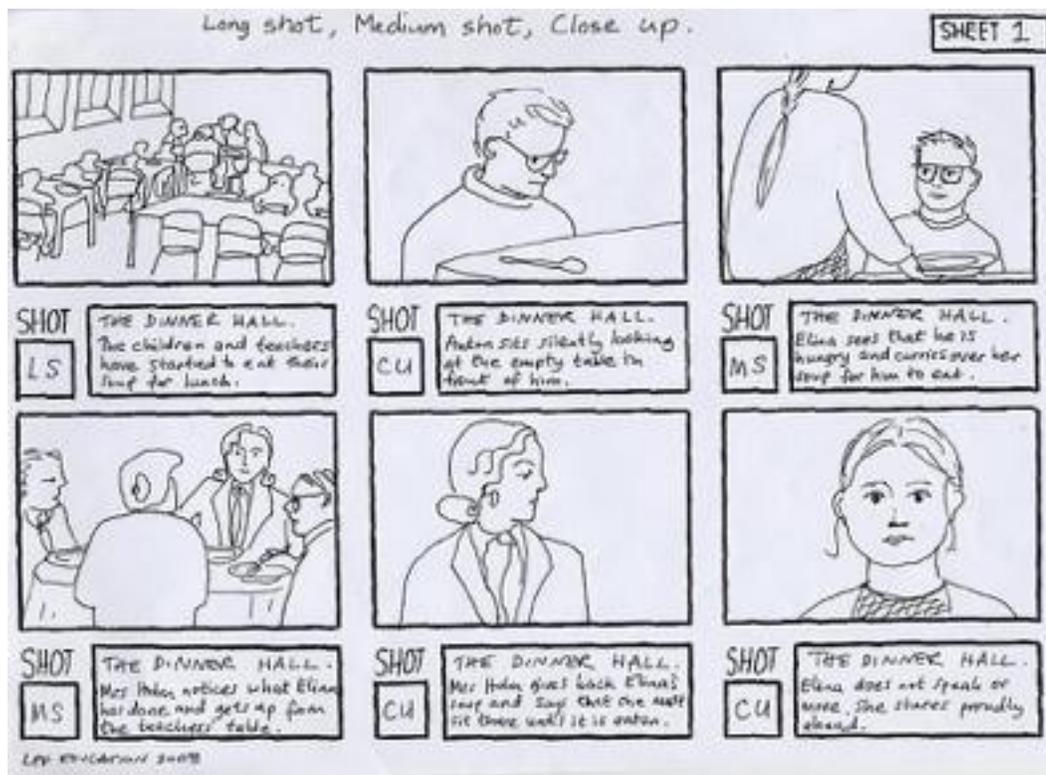
We follow Bobby over to a phone sitting on the bar.

Audio / Visual video script example (often used for documentary)

A separate narration (the words heard over the top of the images) script is written which is what you will hear on/off screen – as a voice over.

Scene	VISUAL	AUDIO
1	FADE IN Various shots of ballet dancers in the practice studio dancing.	SFX: Up tempo music.
2	Close-up of eggs in a basket.	NARRATOR: Where does it come from?
3	More dancing shots ending with the close-up of a young girl's face as she stands in a group.	NARRATOR: The dawning interest that fuels the imagination...
4	More dancing in the practice studio.	NARRATOR: And fires the spirit with a passion for excellence.
5	More shots of girls dancing in the practice studio and ending with a close-up of street shoes on the floor. On "transform" a magical glitter sparkles around the street shoes that--	NARRATOR: What's the inspiration behind the drive and determination that suddenly transforms the ordinary...

Storyboard example



EDITING

Now that you've shot all the video footage, you'll need to combine these shots in a meaningful way. Think about whether you want it to look like 'real' life or if you want it to have a particular 'feel' or 'look'.

Cut

Sudden change of shot from one viewpoint or location to another. On

television cuts occur on average about every 7 or 8 seconds. Cutting may:

- change the scene;
- compress time;
- vary the point of view; or
- build up an image or idea.

There is always a reason for a cut, and you should ask yourself what the reason is.

Matched cut

In a 'matched cut' a relationship between the shots may make the change seem smooth:

- moving in the same direction;
- completed action;*
- a similar centre of attention in the frame;
- a one-step change of shot size (e.g. long to medium)
- a change of angle

*The cut is usually made on an action (for example, a person begins to turn towards a door in one shot; the next shot, taken from the doorway, catches him completing the turn).

Jump cut

Abrupt cut from one scene to another with shots that don't match.

Cutaway/cutaway shot (CA).

A connecting shot between two shots of the same subject. It represents another activity occurring at the same time as the main action. It is often used to show time passing.

Fade, dissolve (mix).

Both fades and dissolves are slow transitions between shots. In a fade the picture slowly appears from (fades in) or disappears to (fades out) a blank screen. A dissolve (or mix) involves fading out one picture while fading up another on top of it.