

1-minute short films

This short manual will guide you through from different steps to make a 1-minute short films with your students

Why only one minute (60 seconds)?

One minute can be small time for many, but also a long time for others. In a very short time the idea of the movie should be presented and this can be a difficult task, but also a starting point for longer films.

It's a good time span that sets limits on how to convey an idea, pace, and visuals. It normally does't require too much preparations, actors and editing, so it is very suitable for classwork with students.

Competences

- creative and critical thinking skills
- problem solving and investigative skills
- research, data gathering and data classification skills
- enhanced artistic writing,
- designing storyboards
- screen literacy skills (role of music and visuals)
- team, time management and planning skills
- practical filmmaking skills - camera, sound recording, acting and directing
- post-production skills - editing, sound effects, music, titles and credits
- presentation skills - pitching, presenting the work

Key rules for creating good short movies



Keep your films short and simple



Good size of a group - 4-8 students



Well prepared script and storyboard



Well recorded and edited

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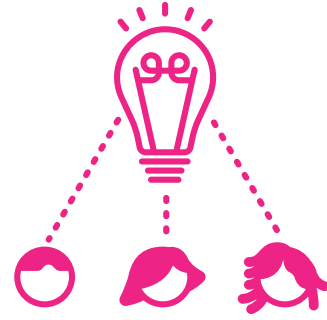
Script - user Creative Stall (<https://thenounproject.com/icon/script-1091892/>)

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STORY AND BRAINSTORMING

Key questions to consider:

- Why are you making this film?
- What specific requirements (topic, content, time limit and format) must you consider?
- Who is your audience?
- What is your message?
- What sort of film will you make?



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GENRE

What type of film are you making? For example, is it a narrative or a recount?

NARRATIVE

Narrative genres include mysteries, romance, science fiction, adventure, action, horror, heroes and villains, fables, and historical narratives. The purpose of a narrative is to entertain, but it can also teach or inform. Narratives are usually imaginary.

RECOUNT

Recounts reconstruct past experiences to tell what happened, recording the particulars of an incident or imaginative event. Examples include documentaries, news reports, and current affairs reports, etc.

STORY OUTLINE

Once the story idea including characters and setting has been approved, researched and fine-tuned, write a story outline outlining the entire story in one paragraph. A storyline does not include any dialogue. When writing a story outline ask the following questions.

What else do you need to find out for your story? You may need to find out more information or check facts.

NARRATIVE

Who are the main characters?

What is the setting?

Break it into the main components - orientation, complication and resolution.

RECOUNT

What is the topic? Who is it about? Why? What are the events? Where is it happening? What is interesting about this? What angle will you take on this story? Do you agree or disagree? What is the role of the reporter, presenter in this film? How much of them will be seen?

SCRIPT

Characters and roles - who is the story about?

Who are your characters? What are they like? Who will play them?

Locations - where is it happening?

List ideas. Locations should be within the school or on private property as filming in public places can be difficult.

Dialogue (live action) - what do they say and how do they say it?

All dialogue needs to be short and to the point. An actor needs to say the lines so they need to flow well and make sense.

Time and lighting - when is it happening?

Decide on the time of day and any specific lighting conditions that may be required.

Plot - how do we keep the audience interested in this story?

What twists or interesting story points will keep the audience interested?

Direction - what do you want the actors to do?

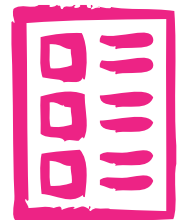
What twists or interesting story points will keep the audience interested?

Music and sound effects

Add any ideas for music and sound effect instructions if required.

STORYBOARD

Drawing a storyboard is an important part of planning a film. It lets the director/group figure out how the film will look, what each of the shots are, and forms the structure of the shooting schedule. A storyboard uses rough drawings like a comic book to plan the shots for each scene based on the script. This is where you plan the composition and framing of the shots for your production.



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Example

The best storyboards are quick, clear and simple. They show movement and expression and they give your cast and crew a clear sense of how shots should be composed. List all of the shots in your film, make diagrams, drawing, etc.

Scene #:

Shot Type:

Notes:

PITCHING

TIME

Approx. 3 minutes to explain your short film idea to others

HOW

- pitch your film idea to others, tell your story in a way that one could imagine the story in their minds (or you can read your synopsis/script)
- you can use a storyboard to illustrate your story
- what will you need (inventory, actors)? Where will you shoot? What sound/music will you use?

DISCUSSION

Others can comment and react to your story



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SHOOTING

Students need to have completed the following components of film pre-production:

- **script, storyboard, casting.** Encourage teams to make all the major decisions during pre-production, before they get the camera in their hands.

CASTING

The students must divide themselves and arrange the roles in the filmmaking process. Key roles are:

Director - responsible for directing the actors and the group, knows the script and storyboard

Camera operator - responsible for setting up the equipment, operates the camera, and works with the director to shoot the scene as planned on the storyboard.

Assistant - Assists the director, keeping the set clear and watching out for possible problems.

Actors - look for talented students, who act in front of screen naturally

LIGHTING

It is really important to light your scene properly. A lamp on either side of the camera works well. Keep the light constant and watch for shadows made by people moving nearby.

SOUND

The quality of sound is vital and this is often a real problem with student productions.

TIPS FOR SHOOTING:

- Leave a space at the beginning and end of each shot – don't start or stop too abruptly.
- Look through the viewfinder, this helps to save the batteries for longer.
- Use a tripod or a stable surface whenever possible to avoid camera wobble.
- Use handheld shots only if absolutely essential.
- Use manual focus, not automatic, otherwise the results can be disappointing in the end.
- Frame your shot. Think carefully about exactly what you want to see in the frame.
- Avoid zooming and endless panning. It looks jerky and is unprofessional.
- Look out for shadows, e.g. direct sunlight because it produces flare in the camera lens and harsh shadows.
- Don't shoot towards the light (unless you want a silhouette effect).

EDITING

Editing is a time-consuming process, so careful planning of shots and good shoot records during the shoot identifying which take to use, are essential in keeping post-production time down and avoiding confusion. A film can be edited in many different ways, so an editor is constantly making decisions about how to move the story on.

We recommend to use Davinci Resolve free software for editing.



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SPECIAL EFFECTS

It is possible to add special visual and sound effects during editing, but these should be used rarely and only when they are necessary to help the story.

Extra sounds can be added during the editing process to enhance the story and to reinforce or convey information to the viewer. Common SFX include rain, wind, explosions, footsteps, doors creaking open and exaggerated heartbeats.

MUSIC

Music plays a powerful role in reinforcing the mood of a film and is used to great effect in influencing audience emotion. Music can change the whole meaning of a scene when used well. Copyright of music in particular is a huge issue with student films. It is best to encourage students from the earliest beginnings of filmmaking to use original music wherever possible.

TITLES

Add the title to the film at the beginning, including the text, images and sound to introduce the story. At the conclusion of the film, add the credits sequence with all the production details including crew, actors, acknowledgments and thank-yous.

PREMIERE AND SCREENING

When the films are finished and the students may like to arrange a screening of their films for family and friends or the school community, to share and celebrate their success as filmmakers.

A important part of the process in filmmaking is to ensure that the finished film has an audience. Discuss it with the group and look at ways in which films are publicized – for example, trailers, posters and film reviews.

Have students design and make a poster for their film that highlights the message or story, and 'sells' it to the audience.

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