

District 95 Film Festival

Filmmaking Tips & Tricks

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DIRECTOR VISION

What is your overall vision for your film project? Think carefully about the purpose of your film and the feelings you would like your film to evoke. Keep both in mind as you are going through the process of creating your film and use that vision to guide your decision-making.

- Simple ideas are often best for short films. Brainstorm lots of ideas and ways of telling your story and choose what you think is the best way.
- Break your story down into scenes and draw a storyboard if possible.
- In general, the more locations and characters you have, the more planning you need to do and time your film will take to create. Go with an idea that is doable in the time you have.

SCRIPTING

Some scripts include the name of your film, text that will show on screen, actor dialogue and stage directions, voiceovers, sound effects, and type of music. Others are a simple outline of scenes to be ad-libbed by actors. Others are detailed art boards and animation plans.

Whatever form it takes, your script reflects your plan. Remember that plans can change as you go through the creative process. You are the director, and you get to decide!

PLANNING & CASTING

IMPORTANT NOTE!!! This year, all filmmakers must abide by COVID-19 restrictions – see the 2021 Film Festival Guidelines on the Film Festival webpage for more information.

Get permission before you record someone or show up at a location to film. Filmmakers must get permission from actors (and their parents if they are under 18) before recording them. Assemble a list of the props and costume items you will need. Recruit creative, enthusiastic actors if needed for your film. Give your script to your actors to review before filming including costume & makeup directions so they also understand your vision. Stay safe and use common sense when planning your filming. When in doubt, ask a caring adult for advice.



FOR MORE SHORT FILM INSPIRATION

Book:

“Learn How to Write, Direct and Edit your Own Film Without a Hollywood Budget,”
by Robert Blofield

Websites:

MiniMoviemakers.com
YoungMoviemakers.com
KidsLoveShortFilms.com
[Chicago Filmmakers](http://ChicagoFilmmakers.com)
[Chicago International Children's Film Festival](http://ChicagoInternationalChildrensFilmFestival.com)
[Apps for videos & effects](http://AppsforVideosEffects.com)

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continued

FILMING

Film multiple takes of each scene from different angles so that you have different choices during the editing process. You will have one chance to film when your lighting conditions are consistent, actors and costumes look the same and you want to maximize your options later.

- No need for lots of rehearsals. If you roll tape from the start, you will have more options for editing.
- Double-check your tape at the top of each scene to be sure you can see your actors well.
- Sound is hard to correct after filming. Double-check to make sure your camera equipment is picking up your actor's voices and any other ambient sounds you want to hear.
- Use a whiteboard or clapboard to write down scene number and the take number, and hold it up before the take so that when you are editing you can easily separate and identify the film clips.
- Direct your actors, but be open to their ideas and improvisations. Keep the tape rolling so you have as many options as possible once you get to the editing phase.

EDITING

Keep your vision in mind as you are making editing decisions. What can you do to make sure your vision comes through?

Try to allow as much time as possible for the editing process. A film can go from good to great if you give yourself enough time to polish your material. You may have questions about how to achieve an effect, and if you have time to research the answers you will be much happier!

Any music you use must either be original compositions or directors must secure permission to use recorded music from the artists/composers. Royalty-free music is widely available as well.

If you add music, be sure it doesn't overpower dialogue or other sounds.

POST-PRODUCTION

Be sure to thank all of your collaborators, actors and helpers and show them the finished product.

Keep them posted on your film's progress and be sure to invite them to attend the Film Festival!



**FOR OTHER QUESTIONS
ABOUT THE FILM
FESTIVAL**

Please contact us at
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Have fun, filmmakers!