

MAKING MOVIES

HOW YOU DO IT

1 Have you ever dreamed of becoming a major filmmaker? It certainly seems like a fascinating life, travelling the world, telling stories and capturing inspiring images. In the past, making a film was very expensive, so only professionals could ever hope to produce one. Luckily, digital technology has made it possible for many to start living their motion picture dreams. Here's a basic outline of how you can have a go and get a taste of the film business.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- a pen and paper, or a word processor, for Scriptwriting
- a digital video camera
- a computer film editing system
- actors
- crew members
- costumes, makeup, props
- food



- 2 **First of all, grab a large sheet of blank paper and brainstorm story ideas.** Brainstorming involves taking every single thought you might have and writing it down. No matter how silly an idea may seem, keep note of it — you never know what it may evolve into.
- 3 **Every good film needs a beginning, middle and end.** Take five pieces of plain A4 paper and cut them into quarters. Write your opening scene idea in one sentence on the first piece of paper. Stick it to the wall. Then write the idea for the next scene on the next piece and stick it up. Continue this process all the way to your final scene.

4 **Once you have your scene ideas in the right order, it's time to write the script** — turning your one-sentence idea into action and speech (or dialogue). A good way to do this is to ask yourself the questions: "Where are my characters at the beginning of this scene?" and "Where are they at the end of this scene?" Action and dialogue are what will help you move from the first answer to the second. If a character's words or actions do not move the story along, don't write them down.

5 **Movies aren't written. They're rewritten.** So, if your first draft stinks, that's fine. You might have to write five or six drafts before your script is great. A lot of cinema blockbusters actually have their script rewritten as the film is being made — you'd have to type very fast to get away with that!

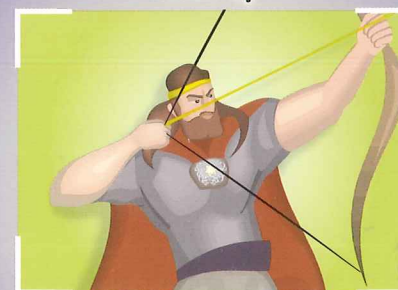
6 **A very important step is to find your cast of actors and decide on your film crew.** For the crew you'll need a camera operator, a sound recorder, someone to do make-up and costumes, as well as assistants to run around and grab things for you. You'll also need to do location scouting. This is when you find the places that you'll shoot your film in. Finally, you'll need some equipment. Even the most basic film will need a camera, a tripod (to put the camera on when you need a still shot), a microphone, some lights and videotape. And don't forget costumes, make-up, props and FOOD! Your crew will love you for the last one.

7 **It's time to plan your shots!** Shots are like moving photos and a single shot is everything recorded on film between pressing the

'Record' and 'Stop' buttons. Most times a shot will show a scene from one angle, however you can also have shots that move. These are called tracking shots and are quite challenging to make. A good way to plan shots is to make a storyboard (a drawing of every shot in your movie). Next, write up your shot list (a list of shots that you tick off as you film them). This tells you what size the shot will be (close-up, mid-shot, wide-shot), who is in the shot and any special camera movements.



Close-up



Mid-shot



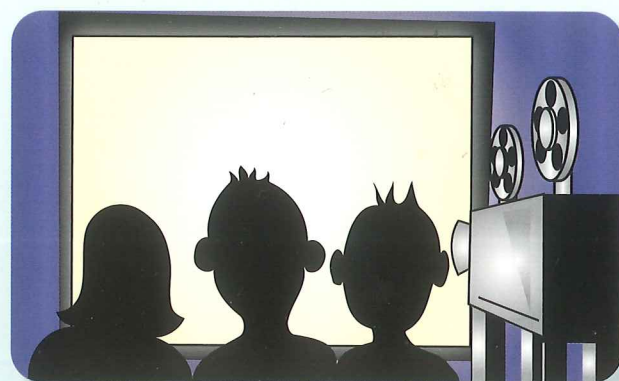
Wide-shot

8 **Now it's time to shoot.** Don't get nervous! Just line up your shot, set the lights and let the actors run their lines, rehearsing your shot for the camera. When you're ready, press record, call 'Action!' and you're away. When the scene is over, call 'Cut!' Record the same shot over and over until you have it just how you want it. Each separate recording of a shot is called a take. Tick the shot off your list and move on to the next one.

9 **Time to watch and edit your footage — over and over again!** Decide the best take of each shot in your movie. Once the footage is in the computer, you can start cutting it together in the right order. Congratulations! You've just completed your first film. Well, nearly. Don't forget to add music. Music will make it feel like a real movie.

10 **Finally, you need to get your film in front of people.** Will it be a private home screening? Maybe you'll hire a local theatre? Perhaps enter a local film festival? Or maybe even a national or international festival?

There are a lot of opportunities to express yourself out there. So it's time to get rolling. Action!



Questions

- 1 What makes it possible for anyone to make a film these days?
 - a dreams
 - b digital technology
 - c professionals
- 2 What do you need five pieces of A4 paper for?
 - a to write down your scene ideas
 - b to write down silly ideas
 - c to draw shots
- 3 What helps move the story along?
 - a action and dialogue
 - b rewriting drafts
 - c brainstorming
- 4 A shot where the camera moves is called
 - a a storyboard.
 - b a mid-shot.
 - c a tracking shot.
- 5 What makes your film feel like a real movie?
 - a food
 - b music
 - c actors
- 6 Why is editing important when you make a movie?
 - a It makes sure that only the best shots are seen, and that the movie makes sense.
 - b It makes sure that every scene has music, which the actors will love.
 - c It allows you to plot out exactly what is going to happen in each scene.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 Very interesting and exciting (1)
- 8 The place where an action or event occurs (4)
- 9 Investigating or searching (6)
- 10 Doing something often to get it right (8)
- 11 To communicate what you think (10)

Grammar

Find an **adjective** (a word to describe a noun) in these sentences.

- 12 Ask yourself relevant questions.
- 13 Even a basic film will need a camera.
- 14 Music will make it feel like a real movie.
- 15 Use elaborate costumes in your movie.

Back To The Text...

- 16 Making a film is a very quick process.
 - a true
 - b false
- 17 The illustration on page 2 most applies to
 - a the shot list.
 - b the cutting process.
- 18 Key words are important words that help you understand the main ideas. Which of the following is a key word in section 2?
 - a brainstorming
 - b evolve

Sequencing

Look back through the procedure to find what you should do first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Cut the A4 paper into quarters.
b Brainstorm your ideas.
- 20 a Plan your shot lists.
b Do your location scouting.
- 21 a Rehearse the shots for camera.
b Set the lights.

Think About This

- 22 Which of the following should be re-done many times?
 - a location scouting
 - b the script
 - c the music selection
- 23 The writer tries to encourage the reader to make a movie.
 - a true
 - b false

Challenge Option

Design: Sketch up a quick storyboard for a TV advertisement you have seen.

