



# YOUNG FILMMAKER COMPETITION

## Guide 2: Visual Storytelling



Royal Conservatoire  
of Scotland



respectme  
Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service

## Visual Storytelling

Your visuals should tell the audience the story, don't over rely on dialogue or on screen text. Here are some examples of how you can achieve this.

### Reactions - to people, environment, incidents

If my character is in an expensive restaurant and they look nervous and afraid to touch anything, that tells me they don't feel like they belong there. If someone walks in and my character immediately hides, it tells me they don't want that person to see them. If they act scared, it tells me they fear that person, if they seem annoyed, maybe this is someone they don't want to see.

### Body language

How a character sits on a chair or stands in a queue of people can tell us how comfortable or confident they are. If a character is sitting at a table with someone they don't like, this would probably be visible in their body language. If my character is tired, they would probably be slumped over. If my character is nervous, they might fidget or move around a lot.

### Costume

Not only what they are wearing, but how does it look on them, what kind of condition is it in?

### Props

Similar to costume, if they have a phone is it a smart phone, or an older handset? Is it shiny and new or old and broken?

## Story Structure

The basic outline for any story follows these key steps:

- There is a problem that causes a disruption.
- Character comes up with a solution, this works, but leads to a bigger problem.
- Character comes up with a solution, it does not work.
- Character finds a solution - happy ending.

In good films, often the main character will learn something and change by the end of the film. For example: If they are shy, they end the film more confident, and if they did something mean, they end the film doing something good.

## Storyboarding

This is a visual representation of what your film will look like. It is essentially a graphic novel/comic book of your film. This can help you identify what shots you need to film to make your film, where your actors need to be in the frame and helps you plan for any complicated bits of the film. This can be a helpful task to complete before you start filming for real.

- Each frame should be what we are seeing on screen and it should be clear as to what it is showing.
- These can be hand drawn, or you can take still images (photos) to represent each of the frames.
- Simply create a grid on a A4 piece of paper.
- Leave a space beneath each image to write the shot size and a brief description of what is happening in each shot.

## Review and Reflect

- Do the images clearly progress the story?
- Are any of the images unnecessary?
- Is the framing clear?

