



YOUNG FILMMAKER COMPETITION

Guide 3: Film Roles & Filming Advice



Royal Conservatoire
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Crew Roles

If you are creating a film submission as part of a group, it's a fun activity to give everyone a role in the creative process. Here's a list of key roles you may want to have in your film project.

Director

The Director is the creative force in film production by visualising and defining the style and structure of the film. On set their main focus should be to their actors and making sure they get the performance right. The Director and the Director of Photography work together to create the 'look' for the film.

1st Assistant Director

Runs the set. Keeps everything on time and ensures the film doesn't run over time. They liaise with all departments and act as a conduit to the Director.

Continuity and Script Supervisor

Makes sure each take matches the one before it. All props are placed in the right place, anything moved is moved back to its first position. With food and drinks, these are replaced (water levels are most often wrong from take to take). Making sure actors pick up props with the same hand and that their performance is as similar as possible to previous takes. This crew member also keeps notes of which takes were best and which ones have issues or mistakes. They also make sure the lines are performed as written in the script.

Director of Photography and Camera Operator (can be one role or two)

Responsible for making artistic and technical decisions related to the image. This role is also responsible for operating the camera.

Clapper/Loader

This crew member marks up a clapper board in the professional filmmaking process. This is usually done at the start of every shot, once the camera is rolling, but before action is called.

Sound Operator

Responsible for sound and ensuring there are no noise interruptions. This role does not need to worry about the performance, they just need to focus on the dialogue. Depending on the nature of the scene, they might have to adjust levels if the actors goes from speaking very quietly, to shouting very loudly. They also keep a sound log of any issues and any takes where the sound is better or worse.

Runner

The Runner provides a range of support tasks, like helping out across the departments. This is a fairly well-known pathway into the film industry.

Actor

The Actor is the person in front of the camera, who will play the character(s) in your film. It is important that they know the full action of the scene, the lines of dialogue and what will be filmed. This is something they would discuss with the Director and should rehearse ahead of filming to make sure there are no mistakes when it comes to the actual filming of the scene.

Editor

Works with the Director to take all of the filmed footage and put it all in correct order. They can add in effects and music and make sure that the story of the film is clear. They would use the storyboards as a guide to help them with how the film will look.

The Clapper Board

Are you using a Clapper Board? This is an iconic filmmaking item used across all filmmaking. The Clapper Board operator would shout "ACTION" when the camera rolls for each SHOT.

Mark up your Clapper Board to show which SHOT and TAKE you are filming. Every time you move the camera that's a new SHOT. It can also help keep track of the number of times you film each of the shots if marked up e.g. Scene 1, Shot 1 and so on. Write on your board the information most important to you.



Filming Advice

You are now ready to start making your film. Before you start, here are some things to check before getting underway.

Battery: Have you made sure your battery is fully charged?

Memory: Make sure you have enough space on your device to record your film. Do not erase footage without checking if it has already been backed up and saved. You may not need 100% free memory on your device, but check you have enough memory to get everything you are planning to film that day.

Check your frame: Before you press record, do a final check of your frame - is there anything you don't want in the shot e.g. like a rubbish bin? Is your actor in the right position, is one of their arms out of shot for example?

Always make sure you have in frame what you want to see, it saves time to check before you start filming, rather than having to film the scene again because of any small mistakes.

Record: Always make sure there is a short gap between when you press record, and when the scene starts.

Once you know the camera is recording, wait one/two seconds and then call "ACTION!" At the end of the scene, wait one/two seconds and call "CUT!" Those gaps will help when it comes to edit the film.

Filming Advice Continued...

Shooting order: Does everyone know which scenes you are shooting in which order? You don't have to film in sequence, for example: you might start filming Scene 8, then Scene 2, then Scene 11. Make sure the crew and cast know which scenes you are shooting and when in advance.

Location: Do you know where you are shooting? Are there any issues which might mean moving the scenes around? For example: if you wanted a really quiet scene with only two characters, you wouldn't film a scene that was in the school corridor during a class change, or at the end of the day. If you move something, make sure you move it back. If you are filming near a classroom, try not make a lot of noise which could distract those pupils in class.

Props and costume: Before you start filming, do you have all the props and costumes you need and are they all in the correct position? For example: if a character reaches into their pocket to take out their phone, make sure the phone is in that character's pocket before you start filming. Make sure to collect all props and costumes at the end of the day. If your actor leaves with a crucial prop, make sure this is returned to ensure continuity of the scene of shot.

Final checks: Make sure everyone knows what you are filming and what is happening in the scene in advance. For example: if your actor suddenly gets up and walks away, but the camera is meant to follow them and the camera team did not know this was happening, you may have to re-do the scene again.

Continuity pictures: Take pictures of the set and the costumes in case you need to come back and re-shoot anything the following day or week. This could be done by the Continuity person or team. You could take pictures of the locations when you arrive, so you can make sure they return to how they looked before filming.

Mobiles on silent: Make sure everyone has their mobiles on silent, you don't want any mobiles ringing mid-scene.