Production

6 The Shoot

Class level	Third class upwards
Learning Objectives	The child will be enabled to — Use basic staging conventions for shooting a film — Understand standard practices on a film set — Understand and use common techniques for various film genres
Methodologies	Group work
Resources	All filming equipment
Time	Several classes
Curriculum links	**English**—Responding to text **Visual arts**—An awareness of line, form and space **Drama**—Exploring and making drama, rehearsing, acting, building dramatic action

Film Credits

Credits are the list of names of all the people involved in the making of a film, and the jobs they did. Credits are listed at the beginning and end of films and television programmes. These are called opening credits and closing credits, respectively.

At the start of a film, we sometimes see the name of the director or some of the main actors in the film; these are the opening credits

The closing credits at the end list everyone involved in the making of the film.
These include
— the cast (the actors)
— the film crew (the people who work on music and sound, costumes, make-up, camera people, etc.)

Film Crew Jobs

The film crew are those people working on the set behind the scenes.
The cast are those people who appear in front of the camera.

Director—is responsible for all aspects of the film. The director usually helps hire the actors, decides on locations,and plans the shots before filming. The director also keeps the filming to a schedule. The director says, "Action" when filming begins, and "Cut" when they want an actor to do it again.

Producer—finds or decides on a script to be made into a film. The producer hires the director, actors and technical crew and is also responsible for the film's finances.

Writer—The term "Written by" in the credits refers to the screenwriter or scriptwriter. The writer creates the story or adapts a book or play for use on the screen.

Boom Operator—holds the microphone boom, a long pole on which the microphone is placed for the actors.

Foley Artist—creates sound effects that cannot be properly recorded during filming, such as footsteps, thunder, doors slamming, etc.

Director of Photography (Cinematographer)—is responsible for the look of the film, such as the lighting.

Gaffer—is the main electrician on the set and is responsible for making sure all the lighting equipment is where it should be and is working correctly.

Costume Designer—is in charge of deciding on the costumes for a film.

Set Designer—decides on the set with the help of the art director.

Make-up Artist—applies make-up to the actors.

Camera Operator—operates the camera, working alongside the director of photography and the director. The camera operator is responsible for what you see on the screen.

Clapper/Loader—is responsible for operating the slate or clipperboard.

Storyboard Artist—is responsible for drawing the film on paper.

Continuity Person—is responsible for ensuring continuity in the film, for example, making sure that an actor isn't wearing a hat in one scene and then reappearing without it in the next.

Shooting the Film

Basic Staging Conventions

By knowing the basic ways in which people position themselves in conversation and the accompanying set-ups used to record them, you will have a secure base from which to improvise.

This approach is made up of five basic areas
— Staging stationary actors
— Staging moving actors
— Using the depth of the frame – foreground and background action
— Staging camera movement
— Staging camera movement and actors' movements together

Master Shot

A master shot is a single shot that is wide enough to include all the actors in the scene and that runs for the entire length of the action. Normally, the camera remains motionless. The master is usually the first to be shot, and serves as a safety device to cover any missing shots. Additional closer shots of the action are then recorded, usually from new angles.

Coverage

The alternative camera angles and set-ups, beyond the basic requirements of the shot list, give the director and editor maximum flexibility during the editing process. The general procedure is to shoot an establishing master shot, group shots, and individual medium and close-up shots of each actor. For example, if there were two actors in a static scene, the first master shot would be a two-shot LS (long shot) followed by a two-shot MS (mid-shot) and then CU (close-up) of Actor 1, then CU Actor 2. Coverage could involve OTS (over-the-shoulder) shots of both actors.

The Shot/Reverse-Shot Pattern

When actors are seen in alternate close-ups, the shot/reverse-shot pattern is one of the most useful. This offers the widest range of cutting options.

— You get to see the actor's isolated reaction to dialogue.
— The point of view changes within the scene.
— The eye-line match between each actor helps to create unity.

Sight Lines & Eye Contact

An actor can look directly into the lens and make eye contact with the viewer. This way, the audience is made to see things through the eyes of one of the characters. It's common practice to maintain the same distance from the camera for sight lines in alternating close-ups of two or more actors. This allows for dramatic implications.

Continuity

Continuity is very important in film, and is extremely important on set. It involves paying close attention to the position of objects, characters, lighting and taking notes of what happens in each shot. The purpose of continuity is to prevent errors in movement in the edit later on. If a character has picked up a phone in one shot, the person on continuity has to make sure he/she is holding the phone in the next shot.

Likewise, if somebody is wearing a hat in one shot, he/she must wear the hat in the next. If they didn't, it would be a continuity error and may distract people watching your film. Also, by making a note of what happens in each shot, you will be easily reminded in the edit of what you are looking for with the continuity notes. These are valuable assets to professional editors.

Crossing the Line (180 degree rule)

If you have two actors looking at each other, imagine a line drawn from one character's eyes to the other character's eyes. It's important that the camera doesn't cross this line of action between the two: crossing it would cause the viewer to become confused, because the spatial relationship between the two characters has become discontinuous.

overhead view
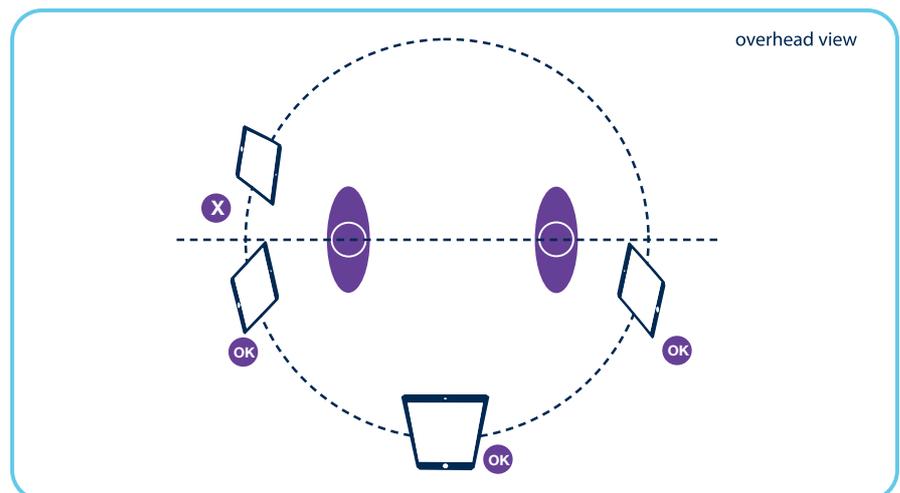
Tips

— Shoot to edit. If your script requires a number of different scenes in a single location, shoot them all on the one day and put them in order later. This involves non-linear thinking—thinking out of order. The last shot you make may turn out to be the opening shot of the story when the editing process starts.
— Let the shot settle at the beginning and the end of the movement.
— Sometimes the camera operator sits in a wheelchair with the camera hand-held and, pushed by an assistant, follows the action. This can be very effective. A skateboard can also be used, or a pram, or any wheeled object that you can sit or stand on.
— The camera operator can sit in the open boot of a car, which then pulls away from the subject or the actor.
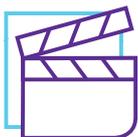
The Day of the Shoot

Conversations During Filming

On a film set, there is a sequence of conventions that are followed before filming begins. There are good reasons for these conventions. They allow everyone involved to know exactly what is happening, and they give the creative people, technical crew and actors the chance to prepare for filming. They also help to avoid problems during editing, such as clipping the opening line of dialogue or not leaving a sufficient "handle" on a shot to allow for a transition from one shot to the next.

The usual conventions are as follows: The director makes sure that the actors and camera crew are ready to begin filming. He or she then asks the first assistant director to begin filming.

Director: *I'm ready to record a take.*
First AD: *Stand by, everyone! Quiet on set!*
Director: *Okay. Let's do it!*
First AD: *Roll camera!* [The camera operator presses the record button on the camera. If the sound is being recorded on a separate device, the first assistant director will also ask for this to be switched on.] *Roll sound!* [The sound recordist presses the record button on the sound equipment.]
Camera operator: *Speed.*
Sound recordist: *Speed.*
Director: *Action!*

Following the action in the scene, the director will normally let the camera run for about five seconds before shouting, "Cut!" to allow a "handle" for the editor in the post-production phase. This footage may be needed for a transition to the following shot in the sequence, for example, a dissolve, fade, or wipe.

The Documentary

Making a documentary is very different from shooting a drama film. A typical crew consists of a camera operator and assistant, a sound recordist and possibly an assistant, a producer or production manager, and a director. A personal assistant to the director, or a researcher, may also be involved. A documentary camera operator will often work with a hand-held camera. (Safety straps of a holding frame should be used for the camera or smart device if shooting is hand-held.) Available light is generally all that is used. Indoors, a light can be bounced off a ceiling or wall to shed more light on the subject.

The sound recordist normally relies on a directional microphone pointed at the same subject as the camera, except for interviews. Sometimes, interviews can be recorded without the camera and used later as voice-overs. The sound recordist will also record ambient sound and conversation to be used in the editing process, for example, a dissolve, fade, or wipe.

Logs

It is important to keep logs when you are shooting a documentary in order to record who was spoken to and what events were photographed. The shots are listed in order, with a brief description and essential details. The editor can match the order of the shots on the sound and picture tapes with the order of the shots on the log sheets. Interviews are transcribed for ease of editing. Generally, documentaries take longer to edit, as the storyline has to be built at the editing stages.

Go to **page 10** and find a log form template.

The Interview

Guidelines
— Treat people being interviewed with courtesy. Be interested, and put them at their ease.
— Try to get opinions, experiences, and anecdotes, rather than just facts. This makes the interview more interesting.
— Do a run-through. The purpose of a run-through is to discuss what topics are going to be discussed. It is not a rehearsal; it's a short discussion to plan the areas that may be covered. It's important to keep a feeling of spontaneity in the interview.
— Write out the first question fully, and note down the other possible questions in order.
— Treat questions as prompts (challenges). The questions should lead the interviewee over the ground to be covered, encouraging interesting and revealing responses. "Tell me..." usually gets a good answer.
— Have a few challenging questions, again creating an interest for the viewer.
— Stop the interview if a problem arises, and start again from the top.
— Keep it simple.
— Keep the interviewer near the camera. If the interviewer is near the camera, the camera will have a full-face shot of the interviewee. This can be inter-cut with profile shots and two-shots.

Shoot Cut-Aways

Shoot cut-aways are brief alternative shots, such as shots of the interviewer. These should match the shots of the interviewee in size, angle and eyeline, and are invaluable for covering any problems that might occur. The original question should be repeated. The camera for cut-aways should be set up where a second camera would have been if one were used.

Edit interviews first, and then put in cut-aways. When you are logging, note the position of the questions. View the cut-aways. Put together the first assembly without using any cut-aways (except where questions have been re-recorded for cut-aways; these should be included at this stage).

Trim and clean up the sequences, and add in the cut-aways where needed. Fine-trim the interview, and record any voice-over that will be used in the soundtrack. Get clearance for the interview by asking interviewees to sign release forms.

Example Shots for Cut-Aways

1. Intro shot of interviewer (MS). This can be a single, a pan to subject or a two-shot.
2. Shoot the subject answering questions (MCU).
3. CU of interviewer asking questions.
4. Include the noddy—a cut-away of the interviewer responding—which allows the interview to be cut down.

— MCU close-up is the best shot for most of the interview. The cut-aways should also be shot in MCU, so that they will always be the matching size. Camera movements should not distract the viewer from the content of the interview, and should be kept to a minimum.
— Make sure that the composition of the shots is right.
— If more than one subject is being interviewed, have them looking in different directions.
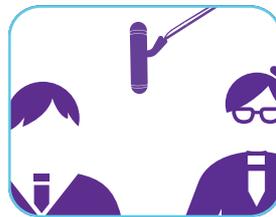
1. (MS) Intro shot of interviewer and interviewee. Overhead microphone and boom records the audience and surrounding sounds.
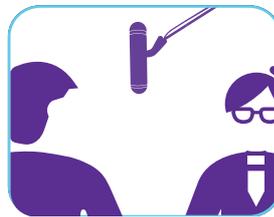
2. (MS) Shot of the interviewer and interviewee. Audience clapping fades out and interviewer gets ready to ask questions.

3. (MCU) Shot of the interviewer asking the questions.

4. (MCU) Shot of the interviewee answering the questions.

5. (Noddy) Shot of the interviewer reacting to his guest's answers. Can also be used as a cut-away shot at the end of the interview.

6. (Fade) Screen fades out when the interview is finished.

Animation

In animation, or model made films, small scale models are filmed like actual sized constructions. Take a look at the following FÍS examples and see how they used models and drawings to tell a story.

Activity—Cut-Out Animation

Cut-out animation is different from traditional animation. The joints of the figures seem to move, for example, Paddington Bear. Create a story using cut-out animation.

— You will need: paper, card, scissors, craft knife, paper-fasteners, blue tack, felt-tip pens.
— Create and draw your character.
— Now, make your drawing in sections: imagine that your character is separated at all its joints.
— Re-draw the character in sections, allowing enough overlap to put paper fasteners through at the joints.
— You can make a series of heads with different expressions, so you can interchange them. Use Blue Tack to attach interchangeable parts.
— Backgrounds for cut-outs can be drawn, painted or coloured with felt-tip pens, or you can use a collage of newspapers or magazine images.

Activity—Animation Flick Book

— You'll need a notebook that you can flick easily, a pencil, and crayons (optional).
— Think about a storyline you would like for your book. Make up a character or image, and plan the movement in a sequence.
— Draw on the right-hand side of the page. Draw with the pencil first, then go over it with a felt-tip pen—but if you decide to colour the drawings in, do this before using the felt-tip pen so as to avoid smudging.
  Note: Draw your pictures towards the bottom of each page.
— When you're finished, stack the pages in reverse order, with Number 1 at the bottom. Who do you think is the most famous animated character? Make a list on the board, and take a class vote!
— There are many apps available to enhance your artwork and make the business of animation less time consuming. Try *Stop Motion Recorder, Animation Creator, Flip Book, My Stop Action, Smoovie, Draw and Show* and many more.

Sporting Event

When filming a sporting event make sure to use a close lens if the pitch or space is very large e.g. for a hurling match. Otherwise, make the space smaller for the purposes of filming e.g. just film in one corner of the pitch.

Log Form

Shot Description	Time Camera Started	Time Camera Ended	Continuity Notes