

# Pre-production

# 2 Script & Storyboard

## Class level

Second class upwards

## Learning Objectives

- The child will be enabled to
- Understand the structure and layout of a script
  - Understand the purpose of a script in film-making
  - Write the script for their class film
  - Know the function of storyboarding in film-making
  - Draw their own storyboard

## Methodologies

Whole-class, paired work and group work

## Resources

Script—I'm a Goner  
Selected films downloaded to laptop  
Scissors, glue, paper

## Time

This may take several classes, depending on the length of the storyline

## Curriculum links

**English**—Developing cognitive abilities through language  
*Reading; Comprehension strategies, understanding the story.*  
*Writing; Different genres of writing; scripts*

**SPHE**—Emotional and imaginative development through language  
*Creating stories for scripts.*

**Drama**—Exploring and making drama  
*Role-playing, character scripts, interviews with characters.*

**Visual arts**—*Drawing; Storyboards, comic strips.*

## Suggested films

*The Boy from Mercury*

## Film portfolio

Samples of scripts, samples of portfolio



## Introduction

Once a basic story structure has been created, the next step is to write the script and create the storyboard. These next stages allow for detailed planning of the film, from action and dialogue to sets and camera set ups. A basic rule of thumb for script and storyboard is to ask “what is this contributing to the story?” for every decision made. All too often action and dialogue is superfluous to the story and reduces the quality of the finished film.



## Script

There are a number of conventions in scriptwriting which help to organise the film making process, making it easier to recognise locations required, characters in each scene and set design requirements. In a classroom setting, there is no need to adhere to strict script writing conventions, but some guidelines will make the process easier in production stage.

## Screenplay

- The person who writes the script for a film is called the screenwriter.
- Film actors learn their lines from a script or screenplay.
- A director uses the screenplay to help plan how the film will be made.
- Each screenplay consists of scenes. A scene is where the action of the story takes place. For example, Sam is picked up from the classroom in the first scene of I'm a Goner; Sam and Mam driving in the car to the dentist is another scene.
- Each scene includes a description, details of characters' actions, and details of the location.
- Actions are given whenever anything physical happens, for example, "Mary walks towards the door"



## Development of Script

Discuss how information is presented in a script: that it is written in the present tense (here and now), visualisation, descriptions of what characters do (write what you see).

List the actions that are included in the descriptions, for example, "Children are talking away and working in the classroom," "Sam has a look of horror on her face; she puts her hand to her chin."

- Name all the characters; Sam, Aoife, all the children in the class, Mr Hurley, Sam's mother (Mrs Maguire), the receptionist, the dentist.
- Where does the story take place? In the classroom, school corridor and stairs, school yard, dental surgery, and kitchen.
- What do you think is meant by INT. and EXT.?
- How do we know what is happening in the story when there is no dialogue? The class has drafted an outline for its film at this stage. (See Lesson 13, 'Creative writing for film.')

The class works on the draft of its own storyline. Each group collaborates on the screenplay for its scene from the story. Each group is encouraged to write the screenplay in scriptwriting format. Each group nominates a spokesperson; it can also nominate two people to share the writing of their part of the script and possibly the typing also.

## Adaption

Adaptations can be a wonderful starting point for a script and great fun. Try creating a modern take on an old classic or changing the point of view to a lesser known character or the villain of the piece for a well known story. Great learning can be achieved by adapting a piece of poetry into a short film, or even a piece of news from the point of view of a particular character.



## Exercise

Try mapping out the most important plot points in the piece to be adapted and translate them visually. Instead of using words, let the children come up with visual replacements, through drawings or suggestions.

Choose a story from your English reader to turn into a film script. Note that the descriptive passages in your story cannot be included in your script. You will have to include directions for your actors as well as dialogue.

## Documentary

A documentary needs a story structure just as much as a piece of drama. Try finding the story from separate characters points of view. As much as possible try to create a clear story structure for your documentary, rather than just shooting a lot of “talking-head” interviews. Make sure that interview questions are well planned in advance, keeping in mind the story you are trying to tell. You will also need to script your locations to reflect the story you are telling.



## Documentary Preparation Exercise

**English; Report-writing**—The children report on events similar to those they would hear on the news: a break in at their school, a fire at a local hotel, a burglary at a local shop, the opening of a library. Read the reports to the class.

**English; Interview-writing**—The children choose a scenario in which an interview is taking place: for example, they interview other children about their hobbies. A child could pretend to be somebody famous, such as a singer, football star, actor, etc., and be interviewed as that person. In pairs or in groups, they write a list of suitable interview questions. They role-play an interview with two actors, one as the interviewer and the other as the interviewee.

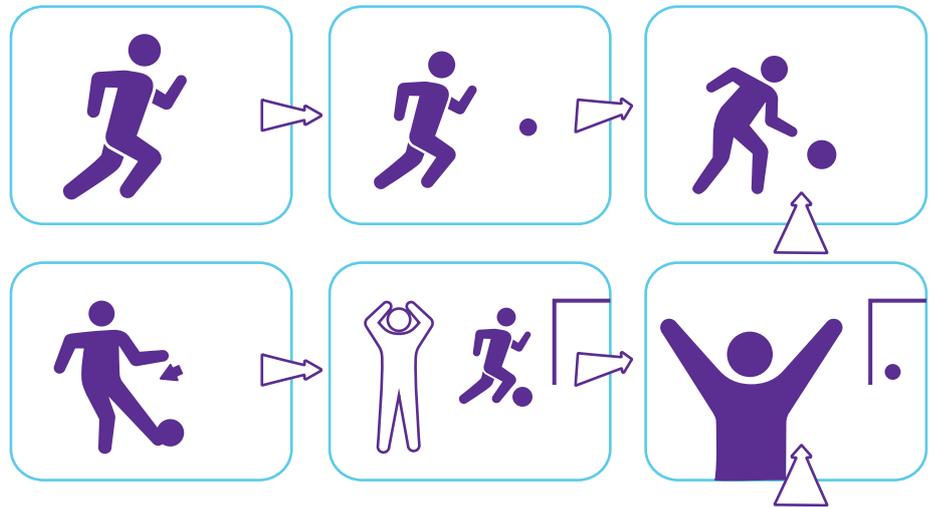
## Note for teacher

These ideas could be used as scenes for filming by the children.



## Storyboard

The story having been written or adapted and the script written, now it's time to visualise the story and turn it into pictures that represent the camera shots and angles that will make up the finished film.



**(A)** An arrow appearing on the right-hand side of the storyboard frame indicates the movement of the camera.

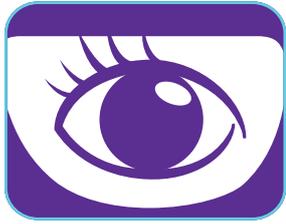
**(B)** Arrows inside the storyboard frame indicate the movement of a subject (actor).



See Tutorials on FÍS website: <http://www.fisfilmproject.ie>

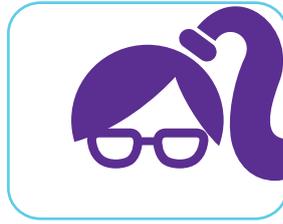
There is no standardisation in the design of storyboards, as long as the idea comes across. Usually, there is just one drawing per shot. When the action is very involved, extra drawings can be useful. Storyboard frames reflect the shape and dimensions of the frames of the film. Take some time to discuss which shots might be appropriate for different moments in a film.

## Choosing the shots that tell the story



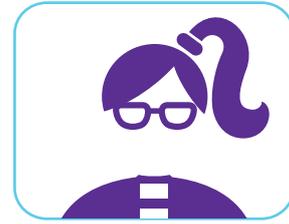
### Extreme close-up (ECU)

A very close shot that emphasises a reaction



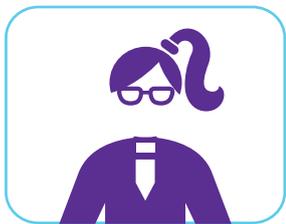
### Close-up (CU)

Face and head; shows details of character



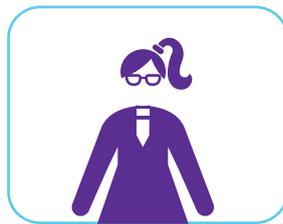
### Medium close-up (MCU)

Head and shoulders



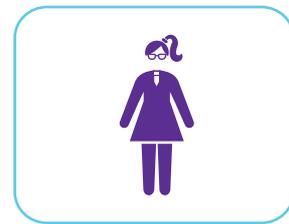
### Mid-shot (MS)

Just above or below the waistline



### Mid-long shot (MLS)

Usually just above the knees



### Long shot (LS)

Full length of figure; head to toe



### Extreme long shot (ELS) or wide shot (WS)

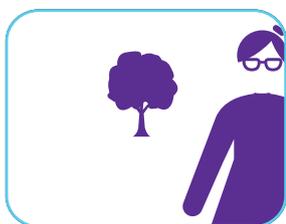
A scenic shot that shows locations, setting, etc.



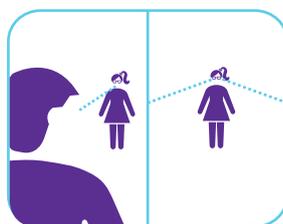
### Over-the-shoulder (OTS)



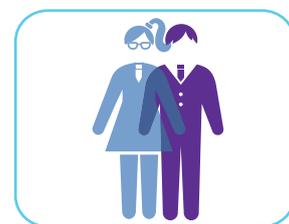
### Foreground (FG)



### Background (BG)



### Point of view (POV)



### Dissolve

A fade-out of one picture and a simultaneous fade-in of another



## Group Activity

### Storyboard Development Activities

1. In groups, choose a story. The children decide on the main points of the story and scenes through discussion. They then decide on the picture for each frame.
  - How many frames will they use?
  - Put a caption with each
  - Ask them to draw a storyboard
  - Display it around the classroom
2. The children can create their own storyboards, using images from a disposable camera or digital camera.
3. Create a photo diary—a storyboard of events of one day in the life of the children. They photograph a day in their lives. They can also bring the camera on field trips or outings. Display in the form of a storyboard around the class.
4. The children can create scenes using clay or cardboard figures, and other props (lollipop sticks, etc.). They can photograph the “characters” in different positions or movements, and use these in their storyboards (stop-motion).

### Drama: Freeze-frames

Select a story with the class. Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to choose a scene to represent the beginning, middle, and end.

Discuss the most important moments in each scene. The children position themselves to capture this moment in a freeze-frame.

Other children in the class act as the audience and are asked to decide what is happening in each scene. To support this activity, a child or the teacher could capture each drama freeze on camera.

## Note for teacher

Storyboards resemble comic strips in that they use drawings and minimal dialogue to tell their story. Try some of the following comic strip activities that could be used in parallel with the storyboarding activities or as a support to help the children develop visual skills.

### Comic strip activity

1. Give the children an incomplete comic strip. Ask them to finish the story by drawing the pictures from the rest of the sequence.
2. Give the children comic strips with empty speech bubbles. Ask them to write the dialogue.
3. Cut up comic strips and ask the children to rearrange the story. Compare the completed stories with other groups in the class and the original story from the comic strip. (You will find that many stories are completed differently and sometimes even tell a different story.)