

Pre-production

3 Elements Of A Film

Class level

All levels

Learning Objectives

- The child will be enabled to
- Understand key safety issues while shooting a film
 - Choose appropriate locations for shooting a film
 - Participate in designing and creating sets and costume design
 - Work creatively with hair and make-up

Methodologies

Group work

Resources

Arts and crafts materials
Stage make-up
Old clothes and fabrics

Time

As many class sessions that are available

Curriculum links

English—Developing cognitive abilities through language
Reading; Interpreting story, acting from script.

Drama—Exploring and making drama
Rehearsing and improvising scripts.

Visual arts—*Drawing; Set designs
Paint & Colour; Painting Sets
Clay; Making papier mâché props
Construction; Making sets
Fabric & Fibre; Making costumes and sets*

Suggested films

Explore FÍS Films—<http://www.fisfilmproject.ie>



Locations

Locations that suit the story and the style of the film have to be found. There should be plenty of appropriate and interesting locations close by. Locations should be safe, accessible, and easy to work in.

Note for teacher

Check all locations for potential risks.



Production Design & Art Direction

Sets can be designed to create the “look” of the film. The production designer designs the sets and makes sure they are built in time for the day’s shoot. Often an existing location will be exactly right and will need very little alteration. Sometimes objects have to be hidden or disguised in a location because they do not fit the story. The designer or art director will organise this, and prepare the location for the shoot.

Tips

- To make sets for an interior scene, canvas-type material can be stretched over light wooden frames and painted. (Can be painted over for a different scene.)
- Perspective can be created on a flat surface to create the illusion of distance and depth.
- Cut-outs for windows revealing an outside scene can be very effective.
- Even in a corner of a classroom a set can be created, painted and repainted as required, especially for small projects.
- The story may require props. These can be brought in as required in a scene. Props can be made from *polystyrene foam*, *papier mâché*, card, and many found materials. These, when painted, can look very realistic and are fun to make.





Costume Design

Costumes have to be designed and made up, and ready for the shooting day. The characters in the script should be analysed carefully; the design of their costumes should reflect their personality, the period in which the story is set, and the genre of the film. The costumes should be put in the order of the shooting schedule that has been arranged for the day.

Tips

- A collection of clothes can be individually altered and adjusted to create new costumes.
- Using remnants of material is an economical way to make costumes.
- Material can be dyed to the required colour to suit a character's clothing.
- Feathers, ribbons, braid, scarves and beads can be collected for dressing up the costumes, including headgear.

The following example uses costume to separate people into their social classes, notice the difference between the rich, the poor and the workers.



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



Set & Art Design

Set and art design are important in making your film look more realistic and impactful. Once you remind yourself that everything in the frame is contributing to the story, it is easier to think like a set designer. This includes ‘props’ Props are items in scenes, such as telephones, guns, mobiles and so on. Props can be integral to a story i.e. what is in the briefcase?



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



Activity

Ask the children to come up with various objects which would be appropriate to the setting and time-frame of the film. Let them create the props and set by crafting items and objects as a group.



Make-up, Hair & Special Effects

Make-up, Hair and Special Effects roles work closely with the production manager or assistant director to make sure each actor is ready when needed, and looking suitable for the part.

Make-up can be used in a number of ways in film

- Basic; to compensate for changes in appearance that sometimes occur on film.
- Corrective; to enhance positive features on film.
- Character; to introduce major changes in appearance.

Application

Make-up is applied to take the shine off the actors’ faces and to match the colour of face, neck and hands.

1. Use make-up base or foundation (water-based is easier to use and can be removed easily).
2. Use a foam rubber latex sponge, moistened, to apply make-up to the face, ears and neck.
3. At the end of the day’s shoot, remove the make-up with cleansing cream or lotion.

Character make-up covers a wide range, from ageing or rejuvenating to grisly science-fiction and horror-film transformations. Special prostheses (artificial body parts) can be made from latex to change the look and character of the face.

Note for teacher

Make sure that all products are safe to use on the skin, and that they will not cause irritation or rashes, or harm the actors in any way.



Rehearsals

Rehearsing the actors before shooting is essential. The actors become familiar with the characters they are playing, their roles in relation to others, the storyline, and the action. Technical rehearsals allow the crew to run through the scenes with the actors, and try out the lighting set-ups, camera angles, and movements.

Tips

- Make sure the actors have learnt their lines. In rehearsals, they can concentrate on the performance and the actions of their characters when they are familiar with the dialogue.
- Make sure the lighting cameraperson, camera operator and sound recordist have had enough practice with the equipment to be confident when the day of the shoot arrives. This can be achieved through various, small exercises, tasks and mini-projects.



Ready to Roll

You have reached the end of Pre-production and you're ready to make a film. Sometimes, the process can be confusing, so here is a very basic layout of the order of events when making a film.

- The story is planned
- The script is written
- Storyboards are drawn
- Hold auditions for parts in the film. (You might decide to make auditions more “professional” by having readings, in which different children read the parts of the various characters)
- The crew starts working on the set design, art design and coming up with ideas for costumes and appearances
- Rehearsals begin

You are now ready to start filming!