

# FILMING CHANGE: ONE TAKE AT A TIME



1. Tell a story  
you care about

2. Do your  
research



3. Write  
your script

4. Make  
a plan



5. Start  
shooting

6. Begin  
editing



7. Share  
your work



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# Getting Started

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Before you begin, it will be important to familiarize yourself with the equipment you will be using throughout the filming process. Take time to explore the features of your filming device, try out different shooting techniques and practice speaking slowly and clearly into your audio recording device. To start filming you will need the following equipment:

**Filming device:** video camera and memory card/iPad

**Audio recording device:** microphone/iRig

**Tripod and mount(optional):** this will stabilize your filming device which helps to produce a clearer image and smoother pan. Mounts are available for both iPads and video cameras.

## Resources

### Video Editing Software

iMovie (Designed for apple operating systems)

The app can be downloaded onto your iPad or iPhone for on-the go editing, or can be used on Macintosh computers and includes a collection of free songs to use for film making. In addition, the Making Movies Makes Sense app for iPads offers a helpful introduction to filmmaking.

Movie Maker: (Designed for Windows operating systems)

### Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that offers free copyright licenses to creators. These licenses allow creators to share their work with the public for free while controlling how it is used. Refer to the Creative Commons website to view a key and learn about the 6 different types of Creative Commons licenses. Remember to always credit the source of any media you use that is not your own, regardless of its copyright status.

If you are looking for media to use in a film, [search.creativecommons.org](http://search.creativecommons.org) is a good place to start. Here you will find a number of websites that allow you to filter search results to find images, music and videos with creative commons licensing. The following websites may aid in your media search:

#### Music:

Free Music Archive ([www.freemusicarchive.org](http://www.freemusicarchive.org))

1. Browse songs by selecting curator or genre in the heading of the homepage
2. Click on the track title
3. The song's license type is listed on the right side of the screen. Click on the license key to discover how you are permitted to use the work

Jamendo ([www.jamendo.com/en/](http://www.jamendo.com/en/))

1. Either 'search' or 'discover' music from the menu bar on the homepage
2. Once you have found an appropriate song, click on the track title
3. The creative commons key at the bottom of the screen will indicate how you are able to share this media

#### Photos:

Google ([www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca))

1. Select Settings in bottom right corner of screen
2. Click Advanced Search
3. Under Usage Rights, select the license type you wish to search

Flickr ([www.flickr.com/creativecommons/](http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/))

Photos on this page are filtered by license type. Select 'see more' under the license type you require and search through the collection using key words.

# STEP 1:

## Tell a story you care about



What are the ideas that excite, worry or intrigue you? What are the great stories within your own school? Are there environmental issues that you want to shine a light on? The idea of a documentary film is not necessarily to showcase change, but to call for or inspire it. If you are passionate about your idea, your zeal will show through in your filmmaking, increasing the chances that others will get excited.

Use the following steps to help you determine the focus and purpose of your film:

### Brainstorm ideas.

Don't filter any ideas just yet. Write all of them down. With your group, find out which ideas or themes emerge as most common or which ideas your group most passionate about? Option: Use "dotmocracy" to reduce the number of ideas.

### Narrow your focus.

Choose one of the ideas and mind map out all the associated issues and parts related to that idea. Choose one of the related parts to focus on. If the idea is still too big, write the part you've chosen in the middle of a new mind map and draw out the ideas related to just that part. Continue until you have narrowed your idea to something that will give your film a clear focus.

Notes:

### Draft a purpose for your film.

What is the reason you want people to view your film? Will it make your viewers laugh and cry, feel sad, get angry, feel they want to act? Will your viewers relate to your story because they somehow have experienced a similar situation? Will viewers change how they think or do things? Write a purpose statement that reflects what you want to happen after people see your film.

E.g., My film will show people \_\_\_\_\_ (*problem*) by exploring \_\_\_\_\_ (*topic, situation*). I want the audience to understand \_\_\_\_\_ (*key concept*) or to feel \_\_\_\_\_ (*key emotion*).

### Timelines

1-2 lessons 40 min each)

### Equipment

area to brainstorm and record ideas— chart paper, white board

### Classroom connections

**Citizenship:** telling stories about their community, taking responsible actions to move an issue forward

**Collaboration:** working in groups brainstorming, problem solving, making decisions together

**Literacy:** engaging in meaningful discussions, expanding ideas,

**Ecoliteracy:** connecting behaviour to impacts, recognitions to actions, identifying the ways in which the many "parts" are interconnected in systems

### Instructional strategies

Brainstorming, mind mapping, class discussions—meaningful dialogue, dotmocracy



# STEP 2:

## Do your research



Take the time to thoroughly investigate your topic through inquiry. What do you already know about your topic, what do you think you know but is worth testing or verifying? Are there different or untold perspectives about the story? What might your audience already know about your topic, what don't they know, and what do you want them to know? What part of your topic interests you the most, would interest them most? Create a KWL (know, wonder, learned) chart to organize your investigations.

### Types of research:

- 1. Print/media texts:** Get factual information from books, videos, magazines, newspapers, and websites. Collect photographs and text that can be used in your film.
- 2. On-site:** Collect information directly on your topic by visiting the location.
- 3. Interviews:** Gather many different perspectives. Talk with people that are directly and indirectly connected with the subject.

### Kinds of research material:

(source: How to Write a Documentary Script, by Trisha Das)

- "top" – the facts, the present research, the history of the issue
- "heart" – the insightful details, the relationships, emotional and spiritual connections

- "root" – What are the reasons this topic is important? What are the underlying causes behind this topic?
- "branches" – What related issues would add depth and value to the film? How does this issue connect with other issues?
- "challenges" – Are there obstacles facing the people and nature that are involved in the issue? How might they overcome these challenges? Can they? What can the audience do to help?

### Watch Documentaries:

Learn what makes great documentaries. Develop success criteria for both the process and product of making films.

### Timelines

5-10 lessons (40 min each),

### Equipment

access to print information, internet searches, people to interview, on-site primary research

### Classroom connections:

**Inquiry:** conducting primary and secondary research. Asking complex and meaningful questions  
**Critical thinking:** identifying and investigating different perspectives and biases.

**Literacy:** constructing and contributing to knowledge base

**Ecoliteracy:** identifying parts, wholes and connections to environmental and social systems

### Instructional strategies

Conducting interviews, completing, summarizing, and organizing research e.g., KWL chart, transcribing interviews

Notes:

# STEP 3:

## Write your script



Once you have done your research, write a script or outline of how you are going to tell your story. For documentary films, filmmakers use treatments, proposals, or even outlines in place of a script, to describe and help plan the project. Keep in mind the outline can and will change after shooting is complete, however, it is worth crafting in advance as it will help keep the process manageable and moving forward. Take the time to include all the good short story components, i.e., beginning, middle, climax and end as in a plot summary and think about how to inspire your audience so that they're interested in being a part of the solution.

### Organize your information to tell the story

To pare down all of your research into a story line that flows, try the following:

1. Have each group write down or draw each chunk of information they collected in a few words on a post it note.
2. Stick the notes on a blank board or wall randomly.
3. Create headings from a plot summary chart and place as headings above the notes. As a large group, re-stick the chunks of information under the appropriate headings.
4. Keep selecting, discarding, and re-sticking the cards until you have a flow of information which makes sense and tells the story you want to tell.

### Write your outline

To write and organize your story, try any of the following (give different sections to different student groups, or to your student screenwriters).

- Write a simple outline based on the information on the post-it notes from above.
- Storyboard to help plan the narrative or to rough out the action sequences.
- **Script breakdown:** A grid that identifies the image in the first column; the audio in a second column; the time in the third column; and miscellaneous notes in the fourth column.
- **Treatment:** A short story narrative written in simple, non-technical language (ie. no camera angles, transitions, etc.) that captures how an audience will see and hear your film on the screen.

### Timelines

2-3 lessons (40 min each)

### Equipment:

post-it notes, plot summary headings, plot chart, graphic organizers for story boarding, outlines, or script breakdown chart

### Classroom connections:

**Critical and creative thinking:** decision making, problem solving, finding solutions, thinking visually, sequencing the story

**Media literacy:** negotiating meaning, deciding style and form, persuading audience, organizing and charting outline, telling narrative with images and words

**Ecoliteracy:** making human/personal connections to story, presenting different perspectives, calling to action

### Instructional strategies

Charting plot, using graphic organizers, drafting outline, storyboard, and or narrative

Notes:

# STEP 4:

## Make a plan



Once the script has been written, you need to work out how to film it. This stage is called pre-production where you establish the roles and plan all the items for your film.

### Determine production roles:

Have students apply for the different production roles. Refer to the Planet in Focus guide book for suggested film roles for the classroom. Alternatively, have students take turns in each role and experience all the aspects of the process.

### Create a storyboard:

A storyboard is a visual plan of the shots and actions of your film, drawn out on paper. It shows the type of shots you will be using and what happens in each shot. Storyboarding also helps organize the shots before shooting begins.

### Make a schedule:

Make a list of priority scenes and

shots, supporting images and footage, locations, and props. Gather props and costumes. Create a schedule to organize your shots by locations, time of day, actors and props. See a shooting schedule worksheet in the Planet in Focus guide book 1 p 17.

### Write Interview Questions:

Contact and set up times with each person you hope to interview. Prepare and practice questions for each character that will appear in the film.

### Draft script dialogue:

If you are including narration or dialogue in your film, write and practice your lines.

### Timelines:

4–5 lessons (40 min each)

**Equipment:** Props and costumes, production roles -job descriptions, templates for production role applications, storyboards, shooting schedule, sample interview questions, script or outline of your story

### Classroom connections:

**Literacy:** writing and speaking for a purpose, organizing information in different forms,

**Media literacy:** creating media texts using storyboarding to communicate meaning to an audience

### Instructional strategies

Posting job descriptions, writing applications and interview questions, hosting interviews, using graphic organizers—charts to organize information, storyboarding

Notes:



# STEP 5:

## Start Shooting



Your team is excited, your equipment is ready, it's now time to start shooting. This is the stage when you bring everything together to capture your story on film.

**Review roles:** Make sure everyone knows their job responsibilities and what is happening.

**Create lists and shooting schedules:** To ensure all the equipment and supplies are ready for the shoot, create a checklist of what to bring and what to have ready. In addition, produce a schedule for the film shoot. Include what scenes are planned for filming, who is required, where and when everyone is meeting and alternative instructions for rain or other challenges.

**Review shot list:** The shot list tells the subject of each shot, the kind of shot, and the order, location, actors and props needed for the shot. Having the story board and the script available helps the director put the shot into context in case plans change and quick decisions must be made.

**Shooting the Scene:** Refer to the Planet in Focus guide book for information on how to shoot a scene.

**Recording Sound:** Recording live sound is difficult. Tips for recording sounds are in the Planet in Focus Filmmaking Handbook, pages 7 and 8.

**Logging and backing up footage:** On a film shoot, things can get hectic. Keep track of what's been shot, and where it is on the camera or memory card. Back up your footage daily!

**Reflect on the process:** At the end of the shoot, evaluate and record what actually happened during the filming. Include how the day went, what footage was captured, what goals were met and what challenges or set backs occurred. Plan for the next day based on your reflections. By taking time to analyze what happened students will discover how to learn from their own experiences.

**Timelines:**  
4-10 lessons (40 min each)

**Equipment:**  
iPad/video camera & memory card, power cords, lights, microphones, headphones, pen/paper/note book, scripts, storyboard, shot lists

**Classroom connections:**  
**Critical and creative thinking:** problem solving, decision making, finding solutions, creating alternative options, experimenting

**Media literacy:** Interviewing, filmmaking,  
**Collaboration:** working together to organize the set, roles and sequence of shots.

**Instructional strategies**  
creating schedules, lists, filming, writing reflections, role playing, interviewing

# STEP 6:

## Begin editing



Editing, or cutting, is choosing the most effective footage and shots to tell your story. Editing is not just the removal of unwanted material, but placing the shots in the best order to engage your audience. During the editing stage you can add sound, titles, credits, graphics and visual effects.

### Tips for Editing:

**Get to know your footage:** With your students, log and evaluate the footage so you know what you have to work with. Gather any missing visuals or audio.

**Re-write your script:** Using the post-its from your draft script (Step 3), have the students create post-its from the new footage and revise the old post-its to reflect the actual footage. As a group, use the post-its to visually lay-out the structure of your film. Keep in mind which shots can follow and 'flow' into each other. It is not uncommon during an edit to realize that what you originally planned for the middle or end of the story is actually better at the beginning or vice versa.

**Assemble the Rough Cut:** After the shots have been re-organized, assign different sections of the story to groups of students. Have each group import the clips into a movie editing software and organize their section in roughly the right order. Now the students can begin removing unwanted parts, ensuring the cuts and shots are in the right spot, and adding transitions where appropriate. Although the edit will still be choppy, have each group present their sections for group feedback. Always save the original footage in case the class decides to change any of the editing decisions.

**Refining and Re-editing:** After each group has received feedback on their rough cut, have them continue refining and presenting the draft footage until each shot contributes to and fits the story. To help with editing ask: Is this footage necessary for the audience to understand or relate to the story or subject? Will it add to the overall quality of the film? Even if the footage is amazing, is it better than the visuals that have been included so far?

**Adding Sound:** Sound is a very important way to give the audience information. It can tell the audience about the location or the mood of the story. Have the students make their own music and sound effects to compliment the footage.

**Inserting Titles, Graphics, Credits, and Visual Effects:** The software you choose will give you lots of options to add extras like titles and graphics to your footage. When using text, make sure the information doesn't fly by too fast for your audience to read. Always ask yourself when adding extras, are they helping the audience understand your story better.

### Timelines

7-12 lessons (40 min each)

### Equipment

Editing software, film footage, computer/iPad, soundtrack software, instruments, music, microphones

### Classroom connections:

#### Inquiry:

**Critical and Creative Thinking:** analyzing, synthesizing, problem solving and decision making, finding solutions, presenting information from different perspectives, experimenting

**Media Literacy:** creating and crafting media text for a specific audience

**Collaboration:** problem solving and decision making, finding consensus, contributing ideas, planning

### Instructional strategies

Receiving and giving constructive feedback, reflecting on editing choices, making music and sound tracks



# STEP 7:

## Share your work



Once your group has a finished film how will you share it? What you do with your film is an important part of the filmmaking process that can offer new learning opportunities, celebrate students' efforts and increase your film's impact. When deciding how to share your work consider the following questions.

- **What is your goal** (e.g., stimulate concern about your issue, change behaviours, raise awareness for a new campaign)?
- **Who needs to see your film** (e.g., other classes, teachers, parents, politicians, etc.)?
- **How will you market your film to these people** (invitations, posters, announcements, brochures, etc.)?
- **How will you introduce and debrief the film** (e.g., introduction by students, have students prepared to take questions or run a panel discussion afterwards)?

Not sure what this could look like? Try our one (or more!) of the following options.

- Invite another class in the school to an intimate screening and follow-up panel discussion in your classroom.
- Make a request to have the film shown during a staff or parent council meeting. Students could come prepared to introduce the film and take follow-up questions.
- Share the film with the whole school by integrating it into a character trait or Earth Day assembly.
- Loop the film on the schools video display to help raise awareness for a new campaign.
- Sell popcorn to audience members to raise money for your cause.

### Timelines

2-3 lessons (40 min each)

### Equipment:

marketing materials (paper, markers, paint etc.), space to show the film, projector/large screen, speakers

### Classroom Connections:

**Citizenship:** taking responsible actions to move an issue forward

**Collaboration:** working in groups brainstorming, problem solving, making decisions together

**Literacy:** engaging in meaningful discussions, communicating with different audiences for a variety of purposes, creating media texts,

**Ecoliteracy:** responding to environmental issues, working to understand the many impacts of our choices

### Instructional strategies

class discussions— meaningful dialogue, creating media texts and projects to communicate information

Notes: