

MAKE IT YOUR TEAM

CREW

IN THIS GUIDE

THE KEY CREATIVES

Writers, directors, producers - what are they responsible for, and how do they work together?

THE CREW

Who do you need on set with you to make a good film?

RUNNING YOUR SET

There's a lot of work to do and not much time, how do you keep things running smoothly?



THE KEY CREATIVES

There are three roles in a team that are generally considered to be the most important: the Writer, the Director, and the Producer. You might write, direct and produce your film, but it's important to understand what each role is for, and make sure you do each job properly.

THE WRITER

The Writer's job is to assemble the story. It's important they don't think about how it will be shot, they need to focus on the characters - what they do, and what they say. The story needs to work **before** the film is shot. You can't rely on the film looking cool to engage your audience. Get your story right before you start thinking about what the camera will be doing. You can read about how you put together a story in MAKE IT YOUR STORY.



THE DIRECTOR

The Director's job is to take the written script, and tell that story visually. They're the guardians of the story. The Director works with other people in the team, always making sure how they're doing their job supports the story being told in the best way possible.

An actor makes sure they put in an excellent performance, but the Director makes sure the actors are doing their performances in a way that makes the whole story work. The Director of Photography (who you'll learn about shortly) has to make sure the footage looks good, but the Director will guide them to get footage that enhances the story they're telling.

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THE PRODUCER

While a Writer assembles the story, and the Director tells the story, the Producer makes the film get made. The Producer is responsible for getting everyone and everything organised so the shoot can take place. On a big film they've got a lot of people helping them, but it's ultimately their responsibility to make sure it all happens.

But the Producer isn't just an organiser, it's their job to be a creative sounding board for the Director. The Director talks over how he wants to tell the story with the Producer, and the Producer helps them come up with the best solution. The Producer will always be factoring in not just the best story decision, but what is possible with the resources they have available. If a Director wants a helicopter to explode in shot, the Producer is the one that needs to decide whether or not that's possible, given exploding helicopters are in short supply.

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WORKING TOGETHER

It's very important that the key creatives can work together well. The Writer, Director and Producer need to be able to quickly come to decisions together and move forward. Knowing each other's roles is a good start. But there's a lot of overlap with decision making, so they need to be able to compromise.

Good filmmakers know that making a film is all about compromise. Demanding things are done one way won't get you anywhere. You're better off listening to the advice of the people around you, and figuring out the best solution that everyone is happy with. You'll find your film will be better that way. Collaborating with everyone involved is one of the best parts of making a film, so make the most of it.

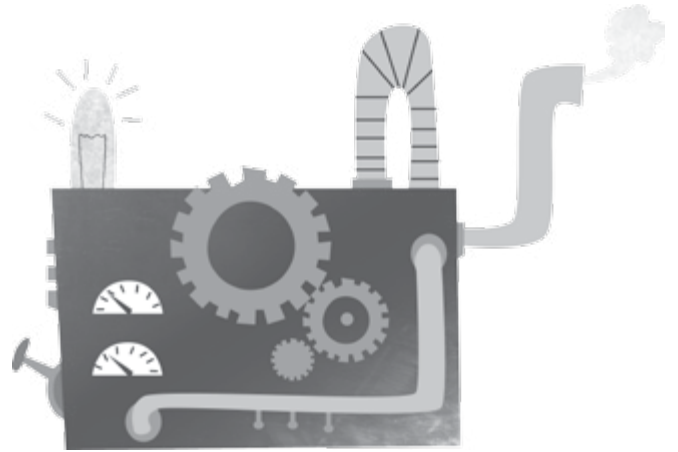


THE CREW

A film crew is like a finely-tuned engine: a number of individual parts that all do their set jobs, and by working together make something big happen.

The size of a crew varies greatly between films. If you're making a short film, you only need a few people. Ultimately, it could just be you pointing a camera at some actors with no one helping - but that would leave you with a lot to do on your own, and it'd be pretty boring.

It's up to you to decide how big your crew should be, and which roles are necessary for the film you're making. Here's some key crew roles you should consider for your film.



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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The Assistant Director, or AD, is not just someone who helps the Director. They actually run the set. On your film, it might just be the Director doing the job of the AD, but it's important they fulfil the AD's role.

It's the AD's job to keep the film shoot running. They schedule the day, and allocate time for each shot. They keep everyone aware of what's happening throughout the day. They make sure the other crew members are getting their individual jobs done in time. They organise to have actors on set for each shot they're needed. They are responsible for making sure everyone is working safely.

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The Director of Photography, or DP, is responsible for the cinematography. Cinematography is the look of the film, such as what kind of shots you get and how they are lit.

On a smaller production like a short film, they usually operate the camera. With the Director, they figure out the best way of shooting the film to support the story.

Sometimes with short films the Director will also be the DP. This can work fine, but most directors find they can focus on the film as a whole better if someone else is handling the cinematography.

You can read more about how you shoot your film in MAKE IT LOOK AWESOME.



SOUND RECORDIST

The Sound Recordist makes sure the key audio elements are recorded well on set. Their first priority is dialogue, as that is the hardest to re-record later. They'll also record as many individual sound effects around the set as they can to save time when editing the sound later.

You can read about how to get the best sound possible in **MAKE IT SOUND SWEET**.

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PRODUCTION DESIGNER

The Production Designer is responsible for all the props and sets. They'll talk to the Director and the DP about how the film is going to look, and make sure everything they put in the film fits. They usually have a team of people working for them in a variety of different roles, but on a short film it might just be the one person.

However many you have, it's important to have someone on set making sure everything is as it should be at the start of each take. The person doing this is called Standby Props. Does an actor take a book off a shelf and put it on the table during the scene? After cut is called, Standby Props will put the book back on the shelf, ready for another take. If they can't remember exactly how things are meant to be, they'll talk to Continuity.

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CONTINUITY

When you're on set, you'll get a lot of different shots and takes that you have to edit into a single scene later. The role of Continuity is to make sure things stay the same between shots. Does your actor open the door with his left hand or right hand? How much water is in that glass at the beginning of the scene? Which way does the cereal box face? Continuity will make notes and take photos constantly throughout the shoot, and it's their job to speak up if something isn't going to match in the edit. Don't worry about getting your continuity perfect - you'll need to decide which things will cause a problem, and which things won't get noticed.

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MAKEUP & WARDROBE

Actors are usually the most prominent thing in a film, so crews have a lot of people dedicated to making sure they're always looking how they should. Just like with props, on set there will be a Standby Makeup and Standby Wardrobe person. They'll check each actor at the start of a take to make sure their makeup and costume are as they should be.



RUNNING YOUR SET

Because you'll have a number of people doing different jobs, you need to have a method of working together quickly and efficiently.

When you're shooting, try to keep in mind what other people need to get done. For example, are you shooting in a different room in the afternoon? Make sure your production designer has time to get it ready.

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01. The AD calls "**Standby to shoot**", which means everyone gets in place to do the take.
02. The AD calls "**First positions**", which means actors should all move to the place they start the scene.
03. If you have makeup & wardrobe crew, the AD will call "**Checks please**", which is when Standby Makeup and Standby Wardrobe will quickly check each actor to make sure they're how they should be.
04. When the AD thinks everyone is ready, they'll call "**Quiet on set**," at which point everyone needs to go silent.
05. Once it's quiet, the AD will call "**Turnover**". That's the signal for the Camera Operator to press record.
06. When the Camera Operator is happy the camera is recording okay, they'll call "**Rolling**".
07. After that, when the Sound Recordist is happy it's quiet enough, they'll call "**Speed**".
08. If you're using a **slate**, this is the point you can hold it in shot. Call out the take number, and clap it.
09. When the Camera Operator is happy the shot is correct and there's nothing in the way, they'll call "**Frame**".
10. Now the AD will look around and make sure the actors are all ready, and the Director is watching. When the AD is happy everyone is ready to go, they'll call "**Action**".
11. The actors will begin the scene.
12. Even if the scene finishes, everyone needs to continue doing their jobs until the Director calls "**Cut**".
13. At this point, if a crewmember noticed something they are responsible for was wrong, they'll inform the Director.
14. If the Director is happy with the take, the AD will call "**Moving on**", and the crew will prepare for the next shot on the list.
15. If the Director wasn't happy with the take, the AD will call "**Reset**", and the crew will get everything ready to do the same shot again.

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You should experiment to find the best method for running your set. Everyone works slightly differently, and the most important thing is that you're getting good footage, not that you're following a procedure correctly.

A film shoot is basically a series of **takes**. A take is a single recording of a shot. For each shot you set up, you'll keep doing takes until you have one that you're happy will work.

You should have an established process for takes to make sure everything needed happens every time. The AD is the one who oversees that process. Here's an example process that might work for you.





SUMMARY

Put together a great team, make sure everyone knows what they are responsible for, and you'll get some awesome footage. It'll be fun, too.

01. Know who your **key creatives** are
02. Don't demand, be able to **compromise**
03. Put together a **crew**
04. Make sure everyone understands their role
05. Figure out an on-set **process**

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To find more filmmaking information, resources and helpful links on the MyState Student Film Festival website: mystatefilmfestival.com.au and on our Facebook page: facebook.com/mystatefilmfestival