

MAKE IT COME TOGETHER

EDITING

IN THIS GUIDE

THE WORKFLOW

What are the stages of putting a film together? What do you use? Where do you start?

EDIT

You've got a bunch of footage, how do you make it into a story?

MAKE IT BETTER

Your basic story is there, now what? How do you take your edit to the next level?

GRADE

Now your story works, make the visuals shine.



EDITING SOFTWARE

There are so many different pieces of software to edit with, so we can't get into technical detail here. Instead, we'll focus on the broad approach to editing, and you can use the help files that come with your editing software to figure out the specifics. A piece of editing software is called a **Non-Linear Editor**, so we'll refer to your editing software as your **NLE** from here on.

Here's some software you might already have at home or at school. Search for them on the web if you'd like to know more.

iMovie
Windows Movie Maker
Sony Vegas
Pinnacle Studio
Final Cut Pro
Avid Media Composer

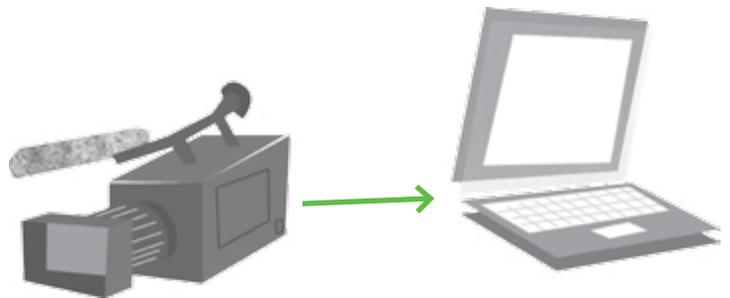
THE WORKFLOW

No matter what you use to edit, you should follow the same basic stages to edit your film.

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INGEST

This is where you take the footage from your camera, get it into your NLE, and organise it ready to be edited. If you're using an older tape-based camera, you might need to capture the footage by playing the tapes from your camera into your NLE. Most cameras now use memory cards, so you can just copy the footage over to your computer.



Before you start editing, it's a good idea to watch **all** of your footage through. Make notes as you do on what takes you like best, or what shots won't work because of technical problems.

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THE EDIT



Once your footage is ready, you can piece your film together. The first edit is called a **roughcut**, which just means it's a draft. Getting the whole story out in a rough edit first is a good idea, to let you see how your whole film is looking.

Hopefully you read MAKE IT LOOK AWESOME before you shot your film, so you have some good coverage. If you didn't, you should have a read anyway to get up to speed on some of the shot types we'll be talking about.

It can be a bit overwhelming at first, so just approach it scene by scene. Don't worry about doing anything tricky, just pick the simplest shots to tell the story of the scene.

One approach you can try is putting in your master shot of the scene, then going through and replacing sections with relevant closeups where it makes sense, such as when a character is talking.

Avoid **jumpcuts** - this is where you cut between very similar shots. That might mean two closeups in a row of the same character, or jumping ahead within the one take. Jumpcuts feel unnatural and jarring when you watch the film back.



Watch a scene in a film you like. What do they choose to show at each point in the scene? What moments do they choose to cut between shots?

Once you've got a roughcut of your film, watch it through. Don't be disappointed if it's not very engaging yet, roughcuts usually aren't. From there, you can make some decisions about how you should edit it.

MAKE IT BETTER

Look at your scenes and try to find the most interesting way of showing what's happening. What does the audience want to see? Are there closeups of key items in the scene you can use to make sure the audience knows what is going on?

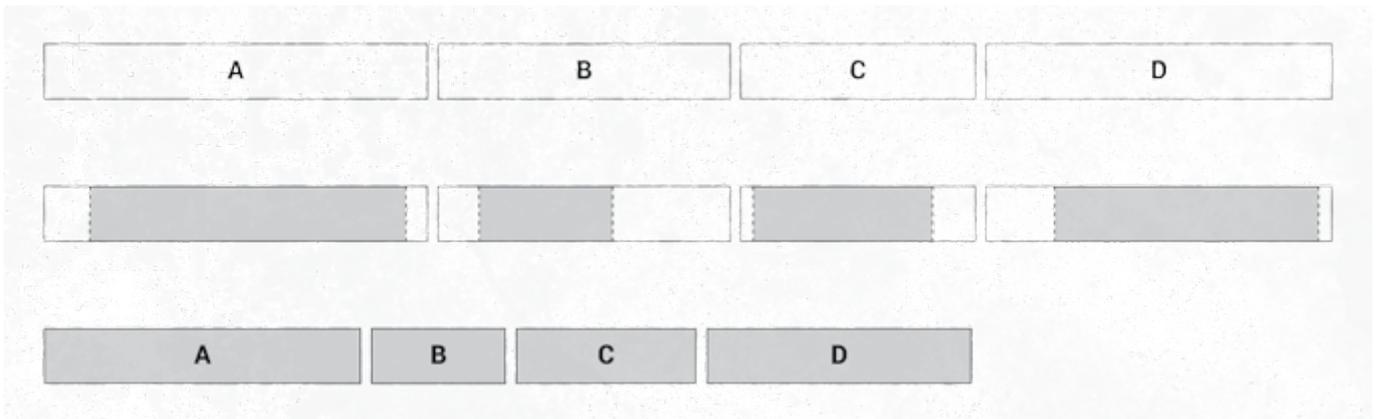
People like to see how characters react to things. If you've got two people talking in a scene, try spending more time on the person listening than the one talking.

Look for pieces of your footage that show **change**. When is the moment a character **changes** from happy to sad, or confident to scared? Showing those changes helps keep the audience

connected to your characters.

Pace is one of the most important things you control in the edit. Which bits of your film feel slow? Where were you losing attention when you watched it? See what you can do to raise the pace.

Cutting down space between lines of dialogue can help a lot. You can also get away with cutting a lot of action without losing your audience. Does your character get out of a car and walk in to a house? Try just cutting from them getting out of the car, to closing the front door of the house behind them.



Energy is another key element you control with how you edit. Having long shots keeps the energy low, while quickly cutting between a lot of shots makes things energetic. You'll find your film is the most engaging if you use both. Pick which parts of your film should be relaxed, and which parts energetic.

It's a good idea to get people who aren't involved with the film to watch it. Pay attention to them as they're watching. How they react will tell you which bits are and aren't working.

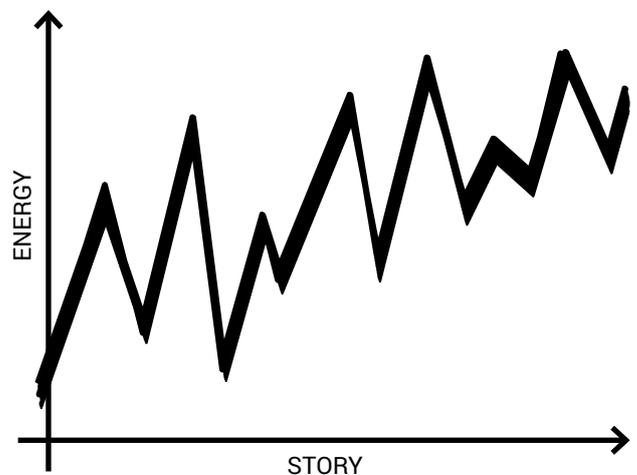
The great thing about editing is experimenting. By saving multiple versions of your project, you can try as many things as you like without losing your work, and compare versions to see what works best.

Whatever you do, always come back to the story. Your edit should support the story you're trying to tell. If you've done your job well, no one will notice the editing - they'll just be engaged in your story.

Once you're happy with the edit, you're at a stage called **picture lock**. From this point, you should make sure your edit doesn't change at all, so any work you do on sound and music stays in time and lines up with everything correctly.



Watch a scene in a film. How does the scene feel? How have they controlled the pace and energy? What kind of shots do they use, and how often do they cut between them?



SOUND MIX

When you've reached picture lock, you can add sound effects and music. You can read about how to do that in MAKE IT SOUND SWEET.

GRADE

If you're feeling adventurous, you can try grading your film. This is where you use the colour correction tools in your NLE to change the look of the film. The simplest thing you want to do is make sure your footage all matches. But you can also use the grade to stylise your footage. You could make your film look dark and menacing, or bright and warm.



Watch a scene in a film, and pay close attention to the colouring of the shots. Do they feel cold? Warm? Dark? Colourful? Pale? What have they done to get that feeling?



OUTPUT

Your film is done! But not many people will be able to watch your film if it stays in your NLE, so you'll need to get it out of there. That will often mean uploading to a website like YouTube or Vimeo. Or you might like to make a DVD.

To upload your film to a website, you'll need to output a compressed version. Some NLE's have presets for YouTube which you can use. Otherwise, try to save to a MPEG4 file, which will compress it fairly well without losing a lot of quality.

To enter the MyState Student Film Festival, you can upload your MPEG4 file through the website:

<http://mystatefilmfestival.com.au/>

TO THE FESTIVAL!



SUMMARY

Editing is where you decide exactly what you're going to show the audience each step of the way, so make sure you choose the elements that will best engage them in your story. Once you're finished editing, you've got a finished film!

01. **Ingest** your footage
 02. Make a simple **roughcut**
 03. Experiment with your footage to control the **pace** and **energy**, and showing **change**
 04. Once you're finished editing, add **sound effects** and **music**
 05. **Output** your film
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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