MOVIE TECH

A PROGRAM IN TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS

A Movie-Making Program
for Club Members
Ages 13 to 18 years

Program Guide/
Leader's Guide

clubtech

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

Microsoft

Important Guidelines for Photocopying

Acknowledgments

Boys & Girls Clubs of America gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, corporations and organizations for their invaluable support and contributions to the development of *Movie Tech,* a Club Tech Digital Arts Suite Program.

Sponsor

Microsoft Corporation

Organizations

- Boys & Girls Club of Union County, N.J.
- Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh, Wis.
- Boys & Girls Club of the East Valley, Ariz.
- Boys & Girls Club of Metro Atlanta, Ga.
- Hutchinson Boys & Girls Club, Kids After School, Inc., Kan.

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Contents

Introduction

Objectives of Movie Tech

Movie Tech, developed by Boys & Girls Clubs of America with funding from Microsoft, is designed to introduce Club members ages 13 to 18 to the principles and practice of filmmaking, from script writing through film production. It is the fifth component of the Digital Arts Suite, the Club Tech programs combining technology and the arts.

Studies by the Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities have shown that youth who participate in arts programs outperform other students in every subject in school and demonstrate positive attitudes about their communities. Studies of after-school programs have also linked participation in the arts to educational achievement.

Movie Tech and the Digital Arts Suite, all Club Tech programs, also introduce members to skills needed for specific, technology-related careers.

In addition to educational enhancement and exposure to potential careers, the Digital Arts Suite programs offer members a unique outlet for creative talent. Combining arts and technology results in a powerful opportunity for Club members' self-expression. *Movie Tech*, along with other Digital Arts programs, may attract members into the Club's tech center who might not otherwise be intrigued by technology.

Components of the Program

Movie Tech includes two tracks: *Screenplay Writing* and *Video Production*. The two components of the program are designed to be used in succession, but each track can also stand alone if group members are interested in one or the other of the two topics.

Screenplay Writing Track

The Screenplay Writing Track is designed to give group members a working knowledge of the scriptwriting process, by guiding them through the steps of shaping their ideas, developing believable characters, understanding the structure of a story and writing treatments, individual scenes and complete screenplays. Eight sessions are included:

Session One	Developing a Movie Eye
Session Two	Starting Out with Stories
Session Three	Using Character and Plot to Tell the Story
Session Four	Describing the Action on Screen
Session Five	Delivering the Goods of a Good Story
Session Six	Shaping Documentary Stories
Session Seven	Putting Scenes on Paper
Session Eight	Refining Our Final Scripts

Video Production Track

In the Video Production Track, participants learn the process of filmmaking, from pre-production planning through post-production editing. Hands-on activities allow them to learn and practice the use of camera equipment, the principles of composition, the components of visual storytelling and the basics of editing and sound techniques. Ten sessions cover the following topics:

Session One   Developing a Movie Eye
Session Two   Planning Scenes and Shots
Session Three   Learning to Compose and Shoot
Session Four   Putting Scenes Together
Session Five   Pre-Production – Planning and Working as a Team
Session Six   Production – Shooting the Film
Session Seven   Post-Production – Editing the Film
Session Eight   Post-Production – Fine-Tuning the Edit
Session Nine   Putting Together the Final Film
Session Ten   Screening and Reviewing the Final Project

Implementation Guidelines

Using the CD-ROM

As you use this CD-ROM, you will notice an outline of its contents on the left-hand side of your computer screen. This is your navigation bar. Under each level will appear a list of the sessions it comprises; under each session there will be a list of the handouts you will need to complete the activities.

Simply click on a session name to view its instructions. (Clicking on Session One under Screenplay Writing Track on the navigation bar will bring up the first session on the center of your screen.) If you wish, you can print the session you are viewing. Each session will print as a separate document; pages are numbered accordingly.

Before beginning each session, you should also print and duplicate any necessary handouts. Simply click on the handouts listed under the session on the navigation bar and print when they appear on your screen. Each handout will print as a separate document.

Scheduling the sessions

Leaders can schedule the sessions in varied ways, in order to meet the demands of the membership and your Club's technology center. Some possibilities for completing each of the tracks include:

- Complete each track with one 60- to 90-minute session per week (a total of eight weeks for Screenplay writing and 10 weeks for Video Production).
- Complete each track with two 60- to 90-minute sessions per week (a total of four weeks for Screenplay writing and five weeks for Video Production).
- For younger members, divide each session into two or three 30- to 45-minute sessions rather than one longer session.

Conducting the activities

Both tracks of the program consist of sessions organized in an easy-to-implement format. The various sessions integrate film viewings, group discussions, individual exercises, group activities and hands-on practice. Sessions in both tracks include the following components:

Suggested time. The Screenplay Writing Track is organized into eight sessions, and the Video Production Track has ten sessions, each 60 to 90 minutes in length. If time does not allow for 90-minute sessions, certain portions of the activities may be combined or omitted. Specific instructions for shortening the sessions are included in the Leader Notes accompanying the activity directions.

Overview. Each activity includes a bulleted list of steps to be completed, allowing for quick reference by leaders when previewing the sessions.

Materials. The list of materials should be reviewed well in advance of the session so that all the necessary supplies, films and equipment are available. (A complete list of materials for both tracks of the program is included at the end of this section.)

Activity directions. Every activity includes step-by-step directions, providing easy-to-use guidelines for leaders conducting the sessions. Also included is all background information needed for leaders to help participants understand important concepts.

Key terms. Key terms are highlighted in bold throughout the activities (and included in the "Glossary" in the Appendix section of this guide).

Definitions and core concepts. Definitions of key terms, important concepts and helpful tips are highlighted throughout the guide.

Leader notes. Marginal notes provide additional background information and preparation for leaders, as well as guidelines for tailoring the session according to age level, size of group or level of experience.

Encouraging hands-on, group learning

Movie Tech's approach to learning about filmmaking is designed to engage Club members in hands-on activities that allow them to learn by doing. As members complete the activities, they will learn new skills and build confidence in their ability to write film scripts and produce their own short films.

Most of the activities are written so that group members can work individually, in pairs or in larger teams. Depending on the size, level of knowledge and interests of your group, you can vary the groupings from one activity to the next. It is important, however, to make sure that every participant has a chance to practice individually the discrete skills taught in the program. Ideally, it is a good idea to intersperse one group activity for every two individual activities.

Demonstrating techniques and skills

The Video Production Track was written for use with Microsoft products, specifically Microsoft Windows Movie Maker. Apple computer users may want to purchase the Macintosh version of Microsoft Office Tools Suite. However, the sessions in *Movie Tech* can be used as a guide for developing basic skills with any video editing software.

You will need to be at least moderately familiar with Microsoft Windows Movie Maker or another video editing software package, especially the tools and menu options in order to demonstrate film editing and assembly techniques and to answer Club members' questions as they work with the program themselves. Before beginning the *Movie Tech* program with members, read through the course and practice the editing techniques described. You will be better prepared to run sessions and answer members' questions.

For some of the activities in the Video Production Track, particularly those having to do with using the video editing software to edit group projects, it will be necessary for you to first demonstrate certain techniques to the entire group. In order to learn film editing and assembly techniques, participants will benefit from seeing you complete the steps for them at least once before asking them do it themselves. Because you will be guiding and showing participants how to do the techniques during the regular program sessions, it is important to allow ample opportunities – and time – for group members to practice what they have learned on their own. Although your guidance and support is a necessary part of the program, the goal for participants is to learn to complete the pre-production, production and post-production steps independently.

Enhancing technology skills

Many of the activities – in both the Screenplay Writing Track and the Video Production Track – include written exercises that require group members to record ideas, outlines, lists, treatments and plans. Although the activity directions suggest asking participants to do these tasks using pen and paper, leaders are strongly encouraged, whenever possible, to have them complete the exercises using Club computers. Group members can gain additional practice in using word processing software such as Microsoft Word or a spreadsheet application such as Microsoft Excel.

Tailoring the program for different age groups

Movie Tech is flexible enough to be used with group members aged 13 to 18. Within the Leader Notes accompanying the activity directions are specific suggestions for adapting the activities for younger members. If you have a particularly young group of participants, you can modify the terminology, the software editing process and other aspects of the program to meet the group's specific needs.

The most important thing to remember in considering younger members is the selection of short films, documentaries and feature film excerpts you present to them. Regardless of age level, it is essential for leaders to preview *all* films before bringing them to the group.

Selecting films for group viewing

Several films have been selected as models for demonstrating the principles, techniques and skills presented in *Movie Tech*:

- "Lunch Date," directed by Adam Davidson, winner of the Academy Award for Best Short Subject in 1990
- "Liar Liar," produced by Universal, 1997
- "Four Little Girls," produced by HBO/40 Acres and a Mule, 1998
- "Hoop Dreams," produced by Fine Line/Kartemquin, 1994

Many of the activities in the program refer to one of these four films as examples of techniques participants are learning and practicing, however, you may want to include other short films or feature film excerpts that are more closely aligned with the interests of your group.

To build a collection of videotapes, check with parents or local libraries; they may be willing to donate old tapes they do not use anymore. For quality works, you may want to check the Web site of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (www.oscars.org) for a list of award-winning films. In addition, "Film Recommendations" in the Appendix section of this guide suggests several good short films suitable for viewing. It is important for Clubs to abide by all copyright guidelines when renting films for group viewing.

Be sure to preview in advance the films or scenes you will present. Previewing will help you prepare to discuss the aspects of film production or scriptwriting the selections illustrate. It will also ensure that only appropriate material is shown and discussed.

Choosing the right equipment

If your Club does not already own a video camera, you can refer to the detailed guidelines in "Equipment Review" in the Appendix section of this guide. Suggestions are included for purchasing camera, accessories, and all software and hardware.

Providing ongoing recognition

Recognition and motivation. Members' self-esteem and learning are reinforced through ongoing recognition, which can occur through a number of planned and spontaneous actions:

- Listen carefully to what group members say and record their opinions and insights on flip chart paper for them "to see in print."
- Regularly display the work they create as a part of the program.
- Promote program activities and accomplishments through articles in the Club's newsletter, news releases to the media, and presentations before Board members, Club staff or community organizations.
- Provide refreshments at meetings and group sessions.
- Organize field trips, film viewings or other special activities.

The Completion Certificate. In the final sessions of both the Scriptwriting Track and the Video Production Track is a time to provide the Completion Certificate to group members for participation in *Movie Tech,* and to acknowledge participants' success in the program. Facilitators also may wish to acknowledge group members who have completed all of the sessions by awarding certificates at a special celebration session. Family members, friends, mentors, teachers and others who have a significant impact on participants' lives should be invited. Serve refreshments and make sure the emphasis of the session is on fun and celebration.

The following are some guidelines for a celebration:

- Begin the session by welcoming those present. Give an overview of the *Movie Tech* program content.
- Acknowledge the group members (and any peer leaders who participated in the program).
- Acknowledge any other individuals who have helped with the program: parents, mentors, resource persons, donors, administrators or volunteers.
- Present or display the final scripts created by the screenplay-writing group, and screen the final film produced by the video production group.
- Encourage participants and others present to get to know each other better, and discuss any future projects they might collaborate on.

Internet Safety

As with all programs, Club professionals need to be vigilant about members' safety on the Internet. Before using the tech center, all members must be oriented to the general rules of technology usage. Working with Club leadership, you should develop an appropriate-use policy that suits your Club. It is also important that you obtain and keep on file a signed parental permission form for every member who uses the Internet. A sample parental permission form is included in the Appendix section of this guide.

Two good places to start are *Stay Safe! Online*, available at www.staysafeonline.com and *NetSmartz*, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's comprehensive Internet safety program developed with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (Contact B&GCA National Supply Service at (404) 487-5702 to order more copies of *NetSmartz.*)

However, it is important that each local Club determine whether these sites are appropriate for its members. **Please review each site carefully before instructing members to visit.** And remember to actively assist members as they navigate the Web. Keep in mind, too, that many Web sites change frequently, so a site that is safe or appropriate one week may look different the next. Continuous review will ensure that your members have a quality experience on the Internet with the opportunity to explore topics that interest them.

Scope and Sequence of Skills

Screenplay Writing Track

	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5
Session One	Concepts of plot and story	Ideas for stories; story planning	Outline of scriptwriting process		
Session Two	Overview and components of story structure	Purpose of a film's set-up	Using the set-up		
Session Three	Character development	The inciting incident	The act break; purpose of the second act		
Session Four	Story treatments	The first growth; the midpoint			
Session Five	The apparent defeat or victory	The third act; moment of self-realization	Summary of story structure and story components	Outlining scenes; creating a step sheet	
Session Six	Making documentary films; research and planning	Documentary outline; tape log; interviewing	Components of documentary films	Subtext	Ethics in Filmmaking
Session Seven	Script format	Writing scenes			
Session Eight	Documentary scriptwriting	Revising and rewriting			

Video Production Track

	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5
Session One	Production elements	Use of camera equipment	Program goals		
Session Two	Basic camera functions; shot definitions	Basic camera positions	Using visual storytelling		
Session Three	Principles of visual composition	Continuous action; varying camera angles	Varying the composition; the 180° rule	Practicing shooting for the edit	
Session Four	Scene coverage and vocabulary	Planning shots; making shot lists	Using the external microphone		
Session Five	Ethics in Filmmaking	Production timeline; shooting on location	Crew member roles and responsibilities	Equipment handling	Selecting group projects
Session Six	The Hollywood Method	Set vocabulary and directions	Scene numbers; sound effects; camera notes	Production guidelines	
Session Seven	Basic editing guidelines	Logging, organizing, importing and naming clips	Storyboarding; importing sound clips		
Session Eight	Rough assembly; trimming shots	Special effects and transitions	The fine cut	Sound techniques	Re-shooting and pick-ups
Session Nine	Sound effects; adding credits	Exporting to video	Planning a screening		
Session Ten	Evaluation	Equipment check			

Screenplay Writing

SESSION ONE
DEVELOPING A MOVIE EYE

*"It's all one story really. The story of who we are and how we relate
and how we get it wrong."*

Ron Bass, Screenwriter
"Snow Falling on Cedars," "Stepmom," "Waiting to Exhale," "The Joy Luck Club,"
"Dangerous Minds," "Rain Man," "How Stella Got Her Groove Back"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Watching Movies With a Critical Eye (45 minutes) **Activity 2** Generating Ideas for Stories (30 minutes) **Activity 3** The Scriptwriting Process (15 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • Index cards • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

PREPARATION
Be sure to preview in advance the films or scenes you will present. Previewing will help you prepare to discuss the aspects of film production or scriptwriting the selections illustrate: it also will ensure that only appropriate material is shown and discussed. You may want to show a new short film during each session, as well as scenes from feature films with which Club members are familiar. It may be necessary to use different film selections for each new group of members who participate in the program, selections that reflect their particular interests. It is important to stay in touch with the types of films participants are making and watching. To build a collection of videotapes, check with parents and local libraries; they may be willing to donate old tapes they do not use anymore. For quality works, you may want to check the Web site of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (www.oscars.org) for a list of award-winning films. As the program progresses, try to select feature film clips similar to the topics presented in participants' projects, so they can see that established professionals are using ideas similar to their own.

ACTIVITY **1**

WATCHING MOVIES WITH A CRITICAL EYE

TIME

45 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Show "Lunch Date" (or another short film).
② Discuss the plot of the film.
③ Distinguish between plot and story.
④ Conduct the story exercise.
⑤ Summarize plot and story.

NOTE ABOUT FILM SELECTION
A good choice for the first session is "Lunch Date," directed by Adam Davidson. The movie, which won the Academy Award for Best Short Film in 1990, is about a woman's chance meeting with a homeless man in Grand Central Station.

This is a beautiful and well-made film - in fact, you may not be able to find comparable films for all of the sessions. It is important to remember, however, not to show only well- crafted films. It may be more helpful to show selections that have flaws so that members can see and critique work other than their own. You may want to also show films made by former participants, the hits as well as the misses. Keep an updated library of Club member work, so you will have samples to show.

1. Show "Lunch Date" (or another short film). On the first day of the *Movie Tech* program, set the tone with a dramatic introduction. As Club members make their way into the session room, stand quietly to the side. Let the room fill up, then dim the lights. Arrange to have the group watch a short film as soon as the session begins, one you have previewed and selected for just this occasion.

2. Discuss the plot of the film. After the group has finished watching the film, ask participants to describe the PLOT of "Lunch Date." You may hear comments such as "The plot is that of a woman who goes to the train station, misses her train, goes to eat lunch, sits down with a stranger, shares a cup of coffee and then forgets her bags," or "The plot involves a woman who walks into a train station, misses the train, buys lunch, thinks a homeless man has stolen her lunch, sits with him and shares the lunch, leaves without her bags, then returns."

The plot is the major event, the outer structure used to tell the underlying story.

As you discuss the plot with the group members, they will begin to understand that plot is just the outer structure used to disguise what the story really is. Aspiring filmmakers, like professional writers, often will have a basic plot in their minds before they start the hard work of developing the real message the film is trying to tell.

3. Distinguish between plot and story. Ask group members to describe the STORY of "Lunch Date," and record each of their ideas on a flip chart. After a few minutes, you may have recorded three or four different viewpoints of the story line. Are these observations from Club members more about plot than story? In other words, are they simply relating the events that occur rather than the underlying story the events are designed to represent?

Explain to the group that the *story* of "Lunch" Date is that of a woman who must face the fears she has developed from years of living a secure, isolated life. By making her come face to face with her worst fears, and getting her to laugh at herself in the end, the filmmaker has found a way to tell a profoundly moving story in an entertaining way.

The story involves what is happening to the characters, both internally and in the larger context of their lives.

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4. Conduct the story exercise. Distribute paper and writing utensils to participants and ask them to answer the following questions. Make a habit of asking these questions about every story, including the ones the group members will be creating themselves.

- Who is the main character? *The older woman is the main character.*

- How long does it take us to learn who the main character is? *We learn who the main character is almost immediately. We see a woman walking in Grand Central Station, and then we cut to a medium shot, confirming that she is the person on whom the story will concentrate.*

- What do we know and learn about the main character without the use of dialogue? *She wears a fur coat, which indicates she has some economic means. We also notice that a fur coat is an insulator, which suggests to the viewer that the woman is insulating herself against a*

TECHNOLOGY TIP
You may choose to have members complete this exercise on the computer, to give them practice in using a word processing application such as Microsoft Word.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit the story exercise, but highlight for the group the ways in which the story is advanced through the use of:

- *Characters' behavior*
- *Wardrobe and props*
- *Camera angle and usage*
- *Visual action and cues.*

world she fears. She has come into the city to go shopping and carries a Bloomingdale's bag. She likes to stay "among her own kind." Explain how wardrobe, props and behavior work together to tell the story.

Wardrobe, props and behavior – without the use of dialogue – provide a lot of information about characters.

- Why is it important to know about the internal workings of the character? *If we are to understand what a story is really about, we need to know who the lead character is. We do this by witnessing the individual in action, not because we are told about him or her in dialogue. In "Lunch Date," the woman's actions tell us that she is scared and has become set in her ways.*

- How is the story advanced? Do viewers rely on dialogue or the use of visual action? *The story is advanced almost entirely through action, not action as in car crashes, but dramatic action — what happens as we watch people behave in the world. When the woman is sitting in the booth with the homeless man, a simple series of close-ups tells the story of their developing relationship: She does not express her fear, but we see that she is afraid. We see her well-mannered ways and her growing comfort in his presence. They do not talk about their new friendship; he simply gets up and comes back with two cups of coffee. By relying on images rather than dialogue, the audience is allowed to participate in the drama. Drama occurs when we watch characters make decisions that will have great impact on their lives or the lives of those around them. The woman in the film decides to stay and sit with the man, and he decides to accept her. Since she is the lead character, her decisions carry more weight: in the end she realizes that her assumptions about him, and the situation, were all wrong.*

Once participants have finished answering the questions on their own, discuss their responses as a group.

5. Summarize plot and story. Explain to the group that, for characters to face their fears and overcome weaknesses, we need to place them in a crisis of some sort, even in comedic stories. Discuss the fact that what we make happen in the plot of a story must relate to the character's needs and desires, and should not be arbitrary.

A good plot forces the lead characters to face their fears and weaknesses.

ACTIVITY 2

GENERATING IDEAS FOR STORIES

TIME

30 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Select a current or popular film.
② Demonstrate creating an idea for a film.
③ Give other examples of ideas for films.
④ Conduct the story planning exercise.

1. Select a current or popular film. Ask the group to select a current or popular film that you will use as an example to show them how to begin planning for a film. Once a film has been selected, explain to participants that an idea for a film often begins with a brief description of the challenge, the action and the primary emotions involved. Tell group members that during this activity they will be generating their own ideas for film projects they would like to create.

2. Demonstrate creating an idea for a film. So that participants will have a clear idea of what you are asking them to do, demonstrate creating an idea, using the popular film selected by the group. This example demonstrates the index card idea with the film "Cast Away" (Twentieth Century Fox/2000).

Example 1, *Cast Away*

An efficiency expert, a man who prides himself on time management and being a team player, finds himself stranded alone on an uninhabited island. He must find the patience and strength to survive and develop an ability to live alone. These new qualities will slowly enable him to gain the knowledge he needs to attempt an escape that will allow his return to society.

Write a brief description of the idea on the flip chart, keeping it to two or three sentences. Be sure to include the challenge, the action and the primary emotions involved.

Story ideas should outline the challenge, the action and the primary emotions involved.

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3. Give other examples of ideas for films. After you have outlined the idea for the film selected by the group, give participants one or two additional examples of ideas. The following are index-card ideas for two short films.

Example 2, *Flirting with Trouble*

A small boy wants to prove he is one of the guys, but to be accepted, he must agree to pull a dangerous prank. He is forced to decide what is more important to him, the feeling of belonging or his own conscience and the safety of those who will be endangered by the prank.

Example 3, *All Dressed Up*

A shy young girl wants to go to the school dance but does not have a date or a dress. When she spends all of her money to buy the dress, she must decide which of her boyfriends she can convince to go to the dance with her.

4. Conduct the story planning exercise. Tell the group that they are now going to do a story planning exercise. Explain that the goal of the exercise is to help us keep our stories clear and concise, no more than two or three

sentences, emphasizing a simple action and one primary internal emotion on which the story touches.

• Ask each participant to talk briefly about an idea he or she has for a film project. Encourage them to give broad outlines rather than lengthy descriptions that include every detail of the story.

• Distribute index cards and writing utensils to all participants.

• When everyone has had a chance to speak, ask them to write their ideas on the index cards. Remind them to keep their ideas to two or three sentences.

• Remind participants that, as they observed in the film "Lunch Date," often the very thing a character wants most to avoid *must* be the very challenge he or she faces in the story.

• Once group members have completed their index cards, ask them to read aloud their ideas to the group.

• Give each group member feedback, especially if the overall point of his or her story is getting bogged down in plot. Remind the group that the simpler the idea is, the better it will be.

NOTE ABOUT AGE LEVEL
When working with a younger group of Club members, you will most likely want to complete the entire exercise during the session, so you can guide them in thinking through their story ideas.

• Encourage participants to think more about their ideas and bring to the next session a completed index card with a simplified version of their stories.

Tell the group that, once they have completed their index-card ideas, they are ready to move to the next step in the scriptwriting process: learning more about story and developing the ideas.

ACTIVITY 3

TIME

OVERVIEW

THE SCRIPTWRITING PROCESS

15 minutes

① Outline the scriptwriting process.
② Review the steps completed in this session.

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1. Outline the scriptwriting process. Discuss with the group where they will end up once they work through the steps in the program. Let participants know that they will write a complete script using a step-by-step process. Explain that the same steps apply whether the film is a fiction or a documentary story. Outline the following steps in the scriptwriting process for them, and describe each one briefly:

- *Index card ideas* – recording brief ideas for stories
- *Treatment* – a longer version of the entire story
- *Step sheet* – an outline of scenes
- *Screenplay* – the final story in screenplay format.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Remind participants of the steps they have already taken towards creating a story for their project. Participants have:

- Viewed "Lunch Date" or another other short film.
- Discussed and learned the differences between plot and story.
- Identified the plot and story of the film they viewed.
- Seen examples of how wardrobe, props and behavior can advance the story.
- Begun presenting their ideas for projects.
- Begun creating index-card story descriptions.
- Learned the basic steps involved in the scriptwriting process.

SESSION TWO
STARTING OUT WITH STORIES

"Screenplays are not dialogue. Screenplays are structure; that's all they are. The reason we can't quote many lines of dialogue . . . is because the dialogue doesn't matter that much. For the most part, you have to have the scene in its proper place in the structure of the piece."

William Goldman, Screenwriter
"The General's Daughter," "Princess Bride," "Marathon Man," "Misery," "All the President's Men"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Story Structure (15 minutes) **Activity 2** Beginnings – The Set-Up (45 minutes) **Activity 3** Learning to Use the Set-Up (30 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • "Liar Liar" (Universal/1997) • Another feature film to use as an example of set up

PREPARATION
"Lunch Date" (or whatever short film the group viewed during Session One), will be the touchstone throughout the program. Although "Lunch Date" is referred to in many of the sessions, it is a good idea to bring in new selections, short films, and feature films that group members know and like, and, if possible, to show new material in every session. You may choose to show a new short or a new scene during each session, one that relates specifically to the day's topics. For Session Two, be sure to select a film that has a beginning sequence with a great deal of impact.

ACTIVITY 1

TIME

OVERVIEW

STORY STRUCTURE

15 minutes

① Introduce the idea of story structure.
② Review the components of story structure.

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1. Introduce the idea of story structure. Talk to the group about story structure. Begin by telling them that when we talk about writing, plot or ideas, we are really talking about STORY STRUCTURE. Explain that all films, whether fiction or documentary, have a structure that helps to guide the viewer through the experience. Let the group know that, as they move through the *Movie Tech* program, they will learn about and discuss each aspect of story structure in detail. They also will have the opportunity to practice applying the elements of story structure to their own story ideas.

Remind group members that the rules they will learn about story structure are intended to be used as guidelines rather than absolutes. Explain that, in general, aspiring scriptwriters need to learn the rules in order to more effectively break them.

A screenplay has a structure, consisting of specific components designed to tell the story.

NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
For younger participants, some of the terminology may be difficult to remember. In talking about the components of a story, it may be helpful to substitute more simple terms such as:

- *Introduction (Set-Up)*
- *Beginning (First Act)*
- *Middle (Second Act)*
- *End (Resolution).*

2. Review the components of story structure. Briefly highlight for the group some of the basic components of story structure, including the following:

- **SET-UP:** Helps us get to know the main character, the world of the story, and the tone of the story.

- **FIRST ACT:** Introduces the new situation the main character is now facing.

NOTE ABOUT STORY STRUCTURE
If time allows, you may want to give very brief examples here of each of the components. However, because each of them will be explored in depth in future sessions, it is not necessary to go into much detail in this activity.

- **SECOND ACT**: Shows us the goal of the main character, how he or she will resolve the challenge, and provides a way for the character to face the challenge.

- **RESOLUTION**: Shows us how the character has moved forward, has changed, and is now ready to meet the ultimate challenge.

ACTIVITY 2   BEGINNINGS – THE SET-UP

TIME   45 minutes

OVERVIEW
① Review the beginning sequence of "Lunch Date."
② Define the set-up.
③ Show the start of "Liar Liar" and discuss the set-up.
④ View another film's set-up.

*TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 1, and begin with Step 2.*

1. Review the beginning sequence of "Lunch Date."
Before you review the beginning sequence of "Lunch Date" (or another short film the group viewed in the first session), remind group members that in any film, the first few minutes are critical, but in a short film, the first few moments are especially important.

Remind the group that viewers may be restless, and may have a lot on their minds. Moviegoers want to settle down and feel that the film will take them away from their everyday lives.

Show the beginning of "Lunch Date," then ask participants to discuss the following questions:

• How long does it take for the audience to learn who the main character is? *About five seconds into the movie, the audience knows who the main character is.*

• How does the filmmaker accomplish this? *The film opens with a shot in the great hall of Grand Central Station, and in the very next shot we see the woman who is the story's main character.*

2. Define the set-up. Tell the group that the beginning of a film must introduce viewers to the story, using a series of story points we call the SET-UP.

The set-up gives the audience the answers to a few basic questions:

- Who is the main character?

- In what type of environment does the story take place (real or imaginary)? *If the story is not set in the "real" world, the filmmaker must show us what the rules of the world are in our story.*

- What is the tone of the story (comedy, drama, musical)?

The set-up tells us who the main character is, defines the world of the story, and introduces the tone.

NOTE ABOUT SET-UP
By viewing a popular film, "Liar Liar" (Universal/1997), participants can begin to understand that a few things are always *accomplished very early, in the set-up, of most feature films.*

3. Show the start of "Liar Liar" and discuss the set-up. Show the beginning sequence of *"Liar Liar"* (or the beginning of another film you have selected for this session). Discuss the following questions with the group, and explain any topics participants do not understand.

- Who is the first character we get a good glimpse of when "Liar Liar" begins?

Jim Carrey, in the role of Fletcher Reede. He is the lead character, and the director chooses to show this to the viewer in the first few minutes of the film. What does this mean for group projects? It suggests that, for 2- or 4- or 6- minute productions, only a few seconds (10 to 20 seconds at most) should elapse before letting the audience know who the main character is. Viewers need to know quickly whom they should care about.

- What type of world does "Liar Liar" present to us?

The world of "Liar Liar" is very much like the world in which we live; the film takes place in the present, and the setting could be any town or city in America. It is an ordinary place, a good counterpoint for the extraordinary behavior we eventually see from Jim Carrey's character. Almost immediately, we're shown Fletcher Reede in action, and we know that he is a fast-talking, unprincipled

lawyer who is so accustomed to lying to everyone around him, including his young son, that he does not think twice about it.

- What is the tone of "Liar Liar"?

"Liar Liar" is first and foremost a comedy, but it is also a heartwarming story about a man who is transformed by the love he has for his son. It combines wild, physical slapstick, subtle humor about how difficult it can be to live in our world without ever telling a lie, and poignancy about the importance of being honest with those we love.

Explain to the group that, in movies, characters are introduced to us through action (not car-chase action, but *dramatic* action). In "Liar Liar," we are not *told* that Jim Carrey is a liar; we see it for ourselves. Tell participants that it is often effective to open a film right in the middle of conflict, and get to the heart of the story right away. This can be done using the set-up.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 4, and move directly to Activity 3.

4. View another film's set-up. If time allows, select another feature film appropriate for the group, and show the beginning sequence of that film. After the group has viewed the beginning sequence, discuss with participants the basic questions that should be answered by the set-up. You may want to write the group's responses on the flip chart as you discuss the film's set-up.

Review with the group what the set-up is designed to accomplish. State that the set-up can introduce its three elements in any order, but it always includes the same three elements:

- Introduces the lead character.
- Defines the world of the story.
- Introduces the tone of the film.

ACTIVITY 3

LEARNING TO USE THE SET-UP

TIME

30 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Conduct the story set-up exercise.
② Assign ongoing structure practice.
③ Review the steps completed in this session.

1. **Conduct the story set-up exercise.** Ask participants to take out the index cards on which they have written ideas for a story to work on as their project. Encourage them to think about the following questions:

- Who is the main *character*?
- What *world* does the story take place in?
- What is the *tone* of the film?

After group members have had time to think about their ideas in light of the questions, ask each of them to talk about their story idea and what comprises the set-up.

2. **Assign ongoing structure practice.** Let group members know that they will continue to discuss structure in future sessions. Tell them that you would like for them to follow up on each session by bringing in examples from their favorite films of the topics just learned. Each week, one or two participants can bring in movies of their choosing, identify the segments that pertain to the topics the group has discussed, and show them to the group. Usually this involves looking at only a few minutes of film, but it helps demonstrate to group members how easy it is to identify critical moments once they have begun to learn the new vocabulary of story.

By the end of the program, each student should have had the opportunity to make at least one presentation to the group. This will help strengthen participants'

NOTE ABOUT GROUP PRACTICE
To make this activity more fun for Club members, divide the group into teams of two. Ask them to come up with names for their teams based on famous movie scriptwriters, directors, cinematographers or producers. For example, a team could be named Junior Hitchcocks or Junior Spielbergs.

understanding of the components of a story, as well as their public speaking and presentation skills.

3. **Review the steps completed in this session**. Review with the group the steps they have taken towards understanding basic components of a story. Participants have:

- Learned to identify the components of story structure.
- Discussed story structure and set-up by viewing the opening sequence of a movie.
- Created a set-up for their own stories.

SESSION THREE
USING CHARACTER AND PLOT TO TELL THE STORY

"Any time you have a story about an ordinary person in an extraordinary situation, you are in business."

Aaron Sorkin, Screenwriter
"A Few Good Men," "Malice" (shared credit), "The American President,"
"Sports Night" (TV-creator/ writer), "The West Wing" (TV-creator/writer)

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Building Character (25 minutes) **Activity 2** The First Act – The Inciting Incident (25 minutes) **Activity 3** Act Break – First Act to Second Act (40 minutes)	• "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • "Liar Liar" (Universal/ 1997) or other feature film to use as example • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		
Make photocopies of the "Story Structure" worksheet following this session, enough for everyone in the group to have a copy. You may also want to create – with help from interested members - a flip chart or poster illustrating the sequence of story components.		

ACTIVITY **1**   BUILDING CHARACTER

TIME   25 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Review the basics of building character.
          ② Conduct the character development exercise.

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1. Review the basics of building character. Discuss with the group the basic elements of building a believable CHARACTER.

• *Use character flaws*. Explain to the group that, in building character, it is important to make use of a character's flaws. Flaws are the weak points of a character, those traits that make individuals behave in imperfect, yet human, ways. Be sure to point out that sometimes the things we think of as strengths in a character may actually be weaknesses. For example, the woman in the film "Lunch Date" may at first appear confident and self-contained, but these may also be qualities that keep her isolated and distant from other people.

• *Reveal character traits through behavior*. Remind the group that we are not told of the woman's character traits through dialogue; instead we witness it for ourselves through the way she behaves, the action and events that take place in the film.

• *Have characters face their own weaknesses*. Stories are strengthened when a character has to fight, not only against external forces, but also his or her own nature or weaknesses. For this reason, when we introduce characters, we want to see them in action and find out what they are made of: both the good and the bad qualities that make them human.

Seeing both sides of human behavior – both positive and negative – makes for good drama.

In "Liar Liar" (Universal/1997), Jim Carrey's character, Fletcher Reede, is a father who is also a compulsive liar. Because his son needs a trustworthy dad who keeps his word, Carrey's character will have to fight against his own nature to overcome his weaknesses.

NOTE ABOUT GROUP PRACTICE
The character development exercise can be conducted in groups of three or four members. Give each group flip chart paper and markers, and ask them to record their ideas on the flip chart.

2. **Conduct the character development exercise.** In this exercise, group members have the chance to identify the character traits in a favorite movie character, then assign traits to a main character in their own scripts. Distribute paper and writing utensils to the group, and ask them to complete the following steps:

• Write the name of the main character from a favorite movie on a sheet of paper.

• Divide their papers in two columns. They then should write the positive qualities of the character in the first column, and the character's flaws in the second column.

• Do the same thing for the main character in their own scripts. Ask them to think about what his or her possible strengths and flaws might be.

Ask for volunteers to share with the group the traits they have chosen for their characters or the traits they identified from their favorite movie character.

Explain to the group that the ways in which the characters behave – the character traits they exhibit – make up much of the action or the plot of a film. When we create human beings who have to face a challenge in order to resist temptation, avoid personal difficulty, or become stronger, we involve the audience. Viewers want to see themselves as equals in terms of the character's good qualities; they also see the character's flaws in themselves as well.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this exercise, do not ask participants to identify the qualities of favorite movie characters; instead, ask them to identify the qualities of main characters in their own stories.

The ways in which the characters behave – the character traits they exhibit – make up the action or plot of a film.

ACTIVITY **2**   THE FIRST ACT – THE INCITING INCIDENT

TIME   25 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Discuss the inciting incident.
                                 ② Conduct the inciting incident exercise.

NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
For younger participants,
some of these terms may be
too sophisticated. You may
want to substitute terms
such as crisis *or* event *for*
inciting incident*.*

1. Discuss the inciting incident. Explain to the group that what sets the story in motion in a film is something called the INCITING INCIDENT.

Remind them of the scene in "Lunch Date" when the woman bumps into the man and drops her purse, which causes her to miss her train. Tell them that this is what is known as the inciting incident. Without it, the character is not placed in trouble or forced to confront any of her weaknesses. The inciting incident usually occurs at about the 10-minute mark in a feature film. In a short film, the inciting incident probably will occur in the first minute.

In "Lunch Date," if the woman *doesn't* miss her train, she doesn't meet the homeless man. If she *doesn't* meet the homeless man, there is no story. The inciting incident is the unexpected event that jump-starts the action in the story. Without it, the film is just another day in the life of the characters, and we rarely make movies about ordinary events. We do, however, often make movies about ordinary people in extraordinary situations.

The inciting incident is the unexpected event that jump-starts the action in the story.

Remind participants that the set-up of the movie, and the inciting incident, let the audience know who the main character is, what drives him or her, what kind of world he or she inhabits, what flaws need to be overcome, and what kind of trouble or new situation he or she faces.

2. Conduct the inciting incident exercise. The following exercise helps group members identify for the characters in their own stories the challenges that will drive the action and create the inciting incident. Distribute paper and writing utensils to participants, and ask them to complete the following steps.

- *Choose two flaws from the lists of strengths and flaws* they created for their main characters in the first activity, flaws that might present the primary challenge for the character and that will drive the action of the story (for example, Jim Carrey's compulsive lying).

- *Create a short list – for each flaw selected, of the problems or obstacles* that might occur for the character because of that particular flaw.

- *Discuss their scenarios* and decide which choices are more compelling, and why.

ACTIVITY **3**

ACT BREAK – FIRST ACT TO SECOND ACT

TIME

40 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Discuss the act break - first act to second act.
② Explain the second act.
③ Give examples of strong second acts.
④ Conduct the writing exercise.
⑤ Review the steps completed in this session.

*NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
Some of the terms - and concepts - may be too advanced for younger participants. It may be helpful to skip the detailed descriptions and talk generally about what happens during each portion of a film (introduction, beginning, middle and end.)*

1. Discuss the act break - first act to second act. Explain to participants that, after the inciting incident occurs, something significant happens to help viewers understand the goals of the main character in the story. This is the ACT BREAK, when the second act begins.

For example, in "Lunch Date," when the train pulls out of the station without the woman aboard, that is the end of the first act. The second act begins when the woman walks into the small restaurant after missing her train. She cannot turn back now and regain the position she was in when she first entered the train station.

The inability of the lead character to go back to where he or she was when the story began is what defines the act break – and a strong start to the second act.

2. Explain the second act. Emphasize to the group that, when the SECOND ACT begins, there is no simple way out of the situation, and there should not be, if the story is going to hold the viewer's attention.

*NOTE ABOUT SECOND ACTS
"Lunch Date" uses the classic definition of a second act; it is the train the lead character must board, or is forced to board, if there is to be a story.*

At the beginning of the second act, the audience needs to be clear about the goal of the lead character. A character can start off a movie with all kinds of vague wishes, but by the start of the second act he or she must have one clear goal.

In "Lunch Date," the woman's goal is to get home, and to do so she will have to do one of two things: wait for the next train or find another way to get there.

3. Give examples of strong second acts. Remind participants of the sample story you discussed in Session One, about the young boy who wants to feel like he belongs.

> Example 2, *Flirting with Trouble*
>
> A small boy wants to prove he is one of the guys, but to be accepted, he must agree to pull a dangerous prank. He is forced to decide what is more important to him, the feeling of belonging or his own conscience and the safety of those who will be endangered by the prank.

Let participants know that, in this story, the end of the first act might be the invitation to join the popular crowd. The beginning of the second act is the point at which the boy decides to accept, taking the first step to join, and winds up starting down the path toward trouble. Explain that we, as viewers, will be more fearful for him if it has been shown, early in the story and through action (not dialogue), that this group often takes part in dangerous pranks. We also would want to see that the boy himself is not bad, so we will know which direction would be a new one for him. We will be pulling for his good sense to take over before it is too late.

Tell the group that, in "Liar Liar," the second act begins when Fletcher Reede realizes he is unable to tell a lie. He struggles to *force* a lie, he thrashes about trying to keep his mouth shut, and he fights with himself trying to say that a blue felt-tip pen is red. He finally understands that he has no control over his condition and that he must go forward and figure out how to do his job and make his way in the world without the ability to lie.

4. Conduct the writing exercise. For this exercise, use the blank story structure chart provided at the end of this session, or create your own for the group to use. Whatever you use, keep copies handy, because you will return to them time and time again during the program. Ask members to:

- Refer to their index card ideas.
- Note the inciting incidents of their stories.
- Indicate the act break, when the second act begins.
- Note the goals of their lead characters at the start of the second act.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this exercise, omit these questions and move directly to Step 5.

Discuss the stories participants are working on and ask them the following questions:

- Does the action fit the story structure goals?
- Is the start of the second act clear and dramatic?
- Is the lead character embarking on a journey that the audience will understand?

Make sure group members understand the difference between characters' goals and needs as they create their stories. For example, in "Liar Liar," Jim Carrey is trying to stop lying, but what he is really trying to do is win the trust of his son. The first is a goal, which has to do with the plot, and the second is a need, which has to do with the real, underlying story, the character's internal strengths and weaknesses.

5. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group the steps they have taken towards learning more about story structure. Participants have:

- Learned how to build good, but flawed, characters.
- Identified strengths and weaknesses in their favorite characters.
- Understood more about story structure, including the inciting incident and the end of the first act.
- Begun to apply principles of story structure to their own stories.

Story Structure Worksheet

Ask group members to create a structure for their stories using this worksheet.

SET UP

- Main Character

- World of the Story

- Tone of the Story

FIRST ACT

- Inciting Incident

- Act Break: First Act to Second Act

SECOND ACT

- First Growth

- Midpoint

- Apparent Defeat or Victory

RESOLUTION

- Act Break: Second to Third Act

- Moment of Self-Realization

SESSION FOUR
DESCRIBING THE ACTION ON SCREEN

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*"Generally speaking, if you don't set everything up in the beginning,
you'll pay for it in the middle or in the end. So, I would rather pay for it
at the beginning. It's not television, and they're not going to go off into
the icebox or they're not going to change channels. An audience in a
movie will forgive you for just about anything [at the beginning].
But really nothing at the end."*

Robert Towne, Screenwriter
"Mission Impossible" (I and II), "Days of Thunder," "Without Limits," "The Firm,"
"Chinatown," "Bonnie and Clyde," "Shampoo," "Heaven Can Wait," "The Last Detail"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
60 minutes	**Activity 1** Writing Story Treatments (30 minutes) **Activity 2** The Second Act – The First Growth and the Midpoint (30 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Liar Liar" (Universal/1997) or other feature film to use as example • Paper • Pens and pencils
PREPARATION		

The films discussed in earlier sessions will continue to be used as examples to demonstrate the various aspects of story structure. It is always a good idea, however, to bring in other feature films you prefer to use with the group.

ACTIVITY **1**	WRITING STORY TREATMENTS
TIME	30 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Talk about story treatments.
	② Give examples of various story treatments.
	③ Assign the story treatment exercise.

1. Talk about story treatments. Explain to the group that a STORY TREATMENT describes what we see on the screen, through images, sound, character and action. Let participants know that what treatments should *not* do is simply supply information. Everything in the story treatment should contribute to the reader's understanding of the story.

2. Give examples of various story treatments. Share several examples of story treatments with the group, so participants can see how stories can be translated into more complete descriptions of the action of the story, as it will actually happen in the film. Lead the group through the following examples.

Story: Outside of school, a girl breaks up with a boy.

- **Sample Treatment 1.** Here is one example of how this story might be written in treatment form.

> A boy who goes to high school thinks his girlfriend is cute. When he sits in class, he thinks about meeting her after school. She also has plans for their afternoon meeting, but he doesn't know this. She is shy, but feels he's not right for her. He decides to buy some flowers and wait for her after school.

Remind group members that we can only know what we see on the screen, so we will only know that the boy goes to high school if we see him in class. Similarly, the treatment mentions the boy buying flowers, but this action is not part of the sequence. Finally, we also read that the boy thinks his girlfriend is cute, but there are no actions to communicate this fact. Emphasize to participants that viewers must be shown everything in a film, and the treatment should describe the action of a story, in the order it will unfold on the screen.

Let group members know that, audio, apart from its use as dialogue, is also an important element in storytelling. For instance, if we are looking at a very tight shot of the boy's face, perhaps the sound of the class around him could be one way to let viewers know that he is in school.

- **Sample Treatment 2**. The second example is decidedly more "cinematic" than the first, which provides only background information. Instead, this one clearly describes the action of the story.

A young boy stands outside of a school building. He holds a bouquet of flowers and shifts his weight back and forth nervously. A young girl, about his age, comes out of the school and approaches him slowly. He holds out the flowers to her, but she doesn't take them. They lean close to each other for a few moments, and then the girl takes a few steps back. They face each other, she quickly gives him a little kiss on the cheek, and then she turns around to walk away. He watches her go, and then throws the flowers on the ground. Then, he also walks away, but in the opposite direction.

Emphasize to the group that the goal of a story treatment is not to describe every movement in detail, but to describe the important scenes in chronological order, and in a manner that gives us only information we will be able to get on screen. In order to know what characters are thinking, we need to see what they see and reach the same conclusions on our own.

Be sure to explain to Club members that it is possible to communicate a character's internal thoughts, but it always must be done through action. For example, if we see a homeless man peering through a glass window at a family feast, we will know what that most likely means. However, if we see the same man sitting in a pile of fast-food trash, left by someone else we have not seen, we may think he has eaten too much, unless the film tells us more about his particular situation.

A story treatment describes exactly what we see on the screen, through images, sound, character and action.

TECHNOLOGY TIP
You may choose to have members complete this exercise on the computer, to give them practice in using a word processing application such as Microsoft Word.

3. Assign the story treatment exercise. Tell group members that in this exercise, they are going to write one-page treatments of their own stories. Ask participants to:

- Take out their index cards with their story ideas, as well as the notes on story structure they have been working on. By now, their notes should include set-up, inciting incident, character flaws, second act goals and obstacles.

- Begin writing their treatments in narrative form, using simple language.

Remind the group to follow these guidelines as they begin to write their treatments:

- *Make sure to stay in the present tense*. In movies, the "time and place" is always in the present; even dream

sequences and flashbacks are not experienced by the character as past. They appear as if happening now.

- *Stick to the action viewers will see on the screen.* Only action that can be conveyed through images, sound, and characters should be included; what characters are thinking should not be included unless it can be demonstrated to the viewer.

- *Present the action in the order it will be seen on-screen.* The treatment should describe the action in the same order it will be seen in the film.

Ask group members to work on the treatments on their own, and bring in completed versions for the next session.

ACTIVITY 2   THE SECOND ACT – THE FIRST GROWTH AND THE MIDPOINT

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Explain the first growth.
                                   ② Define the midpoint.
                                   ③ Conduct the first growth/midpoint exercise.
                                   ④ Review the steps completed in this session.

NOTE ABOUT FIRST GROWTH
If there is time during the session, show an excerpt from "Liar Liar" or another feature film that demonstrates when the first growth occurs for the lead character.

1. Explain the first growth. Introduce the group to the topic of FIRST GROWTH, the point at which the character begins to understand what is possible if he or she had already learned the lessons needed to be learned.

Let the group know that, in a 120-page script, the first growth would come at about page 45, or not quite the middle of the story. In a five-minute story, it might have to come at about the two-minute mark.

For Fletcher Reede in "Liar Liar," the first growth might be the momentary trust of his son, which he promptly ruins by lying again or showing up late. He gets a quick glimpse of what that trust and love will feel like if he is able to really earn them.

The first growth occurs when a character sees what is possible if he or she had already learned the lessons needed to be learned.

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2. Define the midpoint. Tell the group that the MIDPOINT is characterized by what is called a *re-commitment to the goal*. What this means is that the filmmaker does something to remind viewers of the point the story is trying to communicate.

It might be easier for participants to understand this point in the story if we refer to it as a moment of doubt, followed by a resumption of the quest or struggle. The midpoint comes at about the 60-page mark of a feature film, and about halfway through any short film story that group members might be producing.

The midpoint is defined by a character's recommitment to the goal, to facing the challenge before him.

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3. Conduct the first growth/midpoint exercise. Give group members a few minutes to review their own stories in light of the discussion topics. Ask participants to:

- List the moments in their stories that correspond to the first growth, midpoint or re-commitment to the goal.

- Discuss the growing structure of their stories as a group, and offer suggestions to help others with these important points in their stories.

4. Review the steps completed in this session. Briefly review with participants the steps they have completed towards writing their first script. Participants have:

- Written cinematic story treatments from their index card ideas, taking care to keep time and place in the present and show, not tell, the moments of drama.
- Learned several aspects of story structure: first growth, midpoint and a character's recommitment to the goal.
- Applied the aspects of story structure to their own stories.

SESSION FIVE
DELIVERING THE GOODS OF A GOOD STORY

*"No writer I know, knows literally what he is going to write until the
first stumbling scenes of the first act have been written and his
characters have begun to assume a physical reality to him. Scenes that
I reckoned to be eight pages in length turn out to be six lines, and scenes
I never conceived of suddenly demanded to be written . . . Outlines serve
a vital function for the writer in that they keep him from plunging
into the actual writing before he has thought out a general line
for his story."*

Paddy Chayefsky, Screenwriter
"Network," "Altered States," "The Hospital,"
"Paint Your Wagon," "Marty"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** The Second Act – The Apparent Defeat or Victory (15 minutes) **Activity 2** The Third Act – The Moment of Self-Realization (15 minutes) **Activity 3** Review of Story Structure (15 minutes) **Activity 4** Developing Scenes on a Step Sheet (45 minutes)	• Group story treatment prepared in Session Four • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

ACTIVITY **1** THE SECOND ACT – THE APPARENT DEFEAT OR VICTORY

TIME 15 minutes

OVERVIEW ① Explain the apparent defeat.
② Discuss the apparent victory.

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1. Explain the apparent defeat. Introduce the group to the topic of the APPARENT DEFEAT, which occurs at about the 75-page mark in feature films, or at about the 3½-minute mark for short, five-minute films.

This point in the film makes us feel as if the challenge may have defeated our lead character. If we are emotionally involved in the story, we will be even more engaged when the character somehow summons the courage to move forward and accept the ultimate challenge, which occurs in the third act.

The apparent defeat usually leads to the final challenge and the last decision the character needs to make.

Fletcher's apparent defeat in "Liar Liar" comes when he is trying to defend his client without telling any lies. He is fighting an internal battle, because he must tell the truth, but if he does he will surely lose the case, and most likely, his job. At this point in the film, we are almost certain that he will be defeated by this struggle, as he resorts to literally beating himself up as a way to delay the trial and find a way out of his dilemma.

2. Discuss the apparent victory. Remind participants that, in tragedies, as opposed to heroic tales, this same moment in the story is an APPARENT VICTORY.

A character who will be defeated in the end is likely to experience a moment when it seems as if he will emerge a conquering hero, just before his final fall begins.

NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
For younger participants, some of these terms may be too sophisticated. You may want to substitute terms such as win *and* loss *for* apparent victory *and* apparent defeat*.*

ACTIVITY 2

THE THIRD ACT – THE MOMENT OF SELF-REALIZATION

TIME

15 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Discuss the third act and the moment of self-realization.
② Ask participants for examples.

NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
For younger participants, you may want to talk about the character's awakening, rather than the moment of self-realization.

1. Discuss the third act and the moment of self-realization. Tell participants that, once the third act begins, there are no more decisions for the character to make. This is the final commitment to action, and the story should simply move forward to a point of resolution. This is known as the MOMENT OF SELF-REALIZATION.

The moment of self-realization occurs when the character finally understands the challenge and is changed by it.

In "Liar Liar," Fletcher experiences his final challenge in the courtroom when he tries to convince the judge that the man who has just lost custody of his children is a good father. When Fletcher is taken off to jail – as a result of telling the judge he was wrong – it is at this moment in the film that Fletcher realizes how important his own son is to him. This is the moment of self-realization, when Fletcher understands what a bad father he has actually been, and in that single moment, he is a changed man. He is transformed into a loving and caring father.

2. Ask participants for examples. Ask participants to volunteer examples of moments of self-realization they have noticed in favorite films.

ACTIVITY 3	REVIEW OF STORY STRUCTURE
TIME	15 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Review the components of a story.

1. Review the components of a story. Let the group know that they are now able to identify the structure in almost any story. They are also ready to look at their own stories and determine where they might need improvement in order to become better as dramatic tales. Remind participants to use these points as guideposts to improve their stories and keep them on track, rather than as rigorous rules to follow. As you review the components of story structure with the group, see if they can recall the individual components in order as you list them on the flip chart:

NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY
For younger participants, some of the terminology may be difficult to remember. In talking about the components of a story, it may be helpful to substitute more simple terms such as:

- *Introduction (Set-Up)*
- *Beginning (First Act)*
- *Middle (Second Act)*
- *End (Resolution).*

With some younger groups, you may also want to omit any detailed discussion of story structure and generalize about what happens to the character during each of the four stages mentioned above.

- **The Set-Up.** The set-up contains three basic elements:

a. Introduction of the main character (who the story is about)
b. The world of the story (where the story takes place)
c. The tone of the story (comedy, musical or drama)

- **The First Act.** The first act tells us more about the main character – including flaws and weaknesses – and introduces the new situation he or she is going to face in the movie.

a. The inciting incident
b. Act break: first act to second act

- **The Second Act.** The second act reveals the goal – the journey the character will make – and provides a way for the character to face the weaknesses revealed in the first act.

a. The first growth
b. The midpoint and re-commitment to the goal
c. The apparent defeat or victory

- **Resolution**. In the third act, the challenge is clearly defined, and only one hurdle, the largest one, remains to be overcome.

a. Act break: second to third act
b. Moment of self-realization.

The moment of self-realization brings the film to the ultimate resolution, the point at which we have a sense of the character's future, and we have understood the underlying story or message the film is trying to convey.

ACTIVITY 4	DEVELOPING SCENES ON A STEP SHEET
TIME	45 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Explain what a scene is.
	② Introduce the use of a step sheet.
	③ Practice creating a step sheet.
	④ Conduct the step sheet exercise.
	⑤ Review the steps completed in this session.

1. Explain what a scene is. Briefly explain to the group that screenplays are made up of a description of each SCENE in the story. Make sure participants understand that a scene is any segment of the story that takes place in one place at one time. Any time the location changes, it signals a new scene.

A scene is a segment of the story that occurs in one place over one period of time.

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2. Introduce the use of a step sheet. Explain to the group that a STEP SHEET tries to simplify the story by separating it into separate scenes and describing each scene as concisely as possible.

Participants should know that, when writing a step sheet, it is important to limit the description of each scene, so as many scenes as possible can be fit on one page. Typically, scriptwriters use no more than one line for the *physical* description of each scene and one line for the *emotional or psychological* point of each scene.

A step sheet outlines the individual scenes in a movie, and serves as a blueprint or a roadmap for the screenplay.

---

3. Practice creating a step sheet. Ask participants to look again at the treatment the group created in Session Four.

Tell the group that they will be using this story treatment to create a step sheet, which is a blueprint and roadmap for writing the screenplay.

A young boy stands outside of a school building. He holds a bouquet of flowers and shifts his weight back and forth nervously. A young girl, about his age, comes out of the school and approaches him slowly. He holds out the flowers to her, but she doesn't take them. They lean close to each other for a few moments, and then the girl takes a few steps back. They face each other, she quickly gives him a little kiss on the cheek, and then she turns around to walk away. He watches her go, and then throws the flowers on the ground. Then, he also walks away, but in the opposite direction.

Ask participants to help you outline the scenes for this treatment; use a flip chart to record their responses.

Step Sheet for FIRST DATE

1a. boy stands outside school
—carries flowers
—nervous, seems to be expecting someone
—young girl emerges from school

b. boy tries to hand girl the flowers
—she doesn't take them
—won't meet his eyes
—his movements become more awkward

c. she walks away
—he holds flowers a moment
—throws them away, walks away

d. flowers lay on ground

As you walk participants through the steps in creating the step sheet, explain the following techniques:

- *Use a new scene number for different scenes*, either a change in location or a change in time. If the action moves from being by the side of the road to inside a car, that means a change of scene, and it requires a new scene number. Similarly, a significant change of time is a scene change. If the scene is in a kitchen at noon, when the sun is high, and then cuts to later that night when it is dark outside, this is a new scene even if we pick up the action in the kitchen.

- *Use the letters a, b and c to indicate BEATS or moments* in the scene. Because the story used in this example only has one scene, the letters indicate the moments in which it feels as if the action changes a lot. If the action had moved from the school to a park, numbers could have been used instead. Writers often use the word beat to indicate an extra moment.

4. **Conduct the step sheet exercise.** Tell group members that this exercise will help them learn to create step sheets from story treatments. Ask participants to:

- *Review the story treatments they have written* for their project ideas.

- *Work on creating step sheets for their projects*, using the story treatments.

- *Keep descriptions very brief*, even truncated, being careful not to mix scenes or location, and being sure to start with a new scene number when locations change.

- *Show their completed step sheets to the group*, and to talk about whether they have kept their notations as brief as possible, and if they mixed locations or confused scenes.

Ask group members to work on the step sheets on their own, and to bring in their completed copies to the next session.

5. Review the steps completed in this session. Briefly review with the group what they have learned in this session. Participants have:

- Learned about the apparent defeat or victory that occurs in the second act.
- Learned about the third act and the moment of self-realization.
- Reviewed the basics of story structure.
- Learned how to write step sheets as a way to stay on track throughout the scriptwriting process.

SESSION SIX
SHAPING DOCUMENTARY STORIES

"I work under the same rules that a spy master works with his agents. They have a rule called 'Need to Know.' You tell the spy only what he needs to know – nothing more. And I feel the same way about writing for the screen. You tell the audience only what they need to know – no more. And that's as little as possible. I feel that a great deal of tension can be given to any scene, any character, by keeping information to a minimum."

Walter Brown Newman, Screenwriter
"The Big Carnival," "Man with the Golden Arm,"
"The Magnificent Seven," "Cat Ballou," "Bloodbrothers"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Documentary Story Rules (20 minutes) **Activity 2** Creating a Documentary Outline (25 minutes) **Activity 3** Recognizing the Components of Documentaries (20 minutes) **Activity 4** Subtext – The Unspoken Strength of Every Story (15 minutes) **Activity 5** Ethics in Filmmaking (10 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Four Little Girls" (HBO/40 Acres and a Mule/1998) • "Hoop Dreams" (Fine Line/Kartemquin/1994) • Video camera • Blank videotapes • Paper • Pens and pencils • Scissors • Tape • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		

"Four Little Girls" is an important and compelling film, but one that includes images that may not be appropriate for younger members. Be sure to preview the film before showing it to the group.

ACTIVITY **1**

DOCUMENTARY STORY RULES

TIME

20 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Describe the basics of documentaries.
② Show the beginning of "Hoop Dreams."
③ Identify the apparent defeat or victory.
④ Explain the importance of research and planning.

1. Describe the basics of documentaries. Introduce a discussion of DOCUMENTARY films. Tell the group that although we often think of documentary, or nonfiction films, as entirely different from fiction films, from a creator's point of view they are quite similar. Explain that a documentary film tells about true events in story form, similar to a fiction film.

A documentary is a film that dramatically shows or explores real-life news events or social conditions.

Walk group members through the elements and process of documentary filmmaking.

• *The elements of drama are the same.* Story elements are utilized in a successful documentary in precisely the same way they are used in an effective piece of fiction. Although the script format may be a bit different in documentaries (we will learn more about this in the next session), the foundation of a good story always remains the same.

• *The process of writing ideas is identical.* Recording ideas on index cards, then transforming those ideas into treatments and step sheets, is the same for either documentary or fiction films. The kind of planning and writing we do to prepare for either kind of story, fiction or documentary, is essentially the same.

2. Show the beginning of "Hoop Dreams." Ask the group to view the beginning sequence of "Hoop Dreams." Early on in this film, we meet the two main characters: both young, promising basketball players who place their hopes for the future on their games. In the second act, their common goal will be the pursuit of an elusive college scholarship and eventual professional recognition. However, obstacles of increasing difficulty will mark their journeys: injuries, crises of confidence and family pressures.

In dramatic terms, we call these ever-increasing obstacles that challenge any character the RISING ACTION. This means that the main character should face ever more difficult circumstances as the story moves along, requiring increasingly more effort and more ingenuity.

3. Identify the apparent defeat or victory. Introduce a discussion with participants about "Hoop Dreams" and the apparent defeat or victory they can identify.

In the end of the second act of the film, we see an apparent defeat for one player in the form of a severe injury, and an apparent victory for the other: a higher level of play and a new opportunity. By showing us the expectations of the players' parents and the enormous pressure the young boys place on themselves, the film gives us a sense of a larger story, one that says maybe these young men are missing out on the real value of being young: the ability to enjoy things without so much at stake, without so much stress.

Point out to the group that the plot, the story of two teenagers trying to use basketball to further their dreams, is set against the backdrop of a stronger and more important story: the loss of youth.

4. Explain the importance of research and planning. State that, although documentaries make use of traditional story structure, writing a documentary often involves a couple of unique steps. The first has to do with *research*. Highlight the following points about research:

- *Research can be fun*. To be a writer means being able to indulge our natural curiosity. Whatever it is that interests us, as writers, we have the ability to find out more about it. Research does sometimes involve going to the library and reading about a topic. But it also can mean interviewing people whose lives and knowledge can give us special insight.

- *Both documentary and fiction stories need research*. In preparing a documentary, we often have the opportunity and privilege to visit the people and locations that form the basis for our stories, as well as to see for ourselves the details that attracted us to the story in the first place. But fiction writers conduct research, too. How often have we heard about a mystery writer who spends time riding in the back of a police car to learn about investigating a crime?

- *Research allows for better planning*. We often can pre-interview the "players" who we think will be in the film. Some filmmakers do not like to do this because they consider it meddling; they want everything to be "new" when they show up with the crew to shoot the film. Although some filmmakers work this way, it is best to plan ahead. Whenever there is an opportunity to pre-interview, it is wise to take advantage of it. Research allows us to be like a journalist who interviews several people but decides to quote only a couple of them in an article. It always helps to find out early, when it is only you and a tape recorder, who the boring subjects are and who the exciting ones are, rather than wait until you are loaded down with a full crew.

ACTIVITY 2	CREATING A DOCUMENTARY OUTLINE
TIME	25 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Explain the documentary outline. ② Show an example of a tape log. ③ Conduct the interview exercise. ④ Provide an example of a documentary outline.

1. Explain the documentary outline. Talk to the group about the DOCUMENTARY OUTLINE. A documentary outline allows us to compile our pre-interviews in preparing a prospective treatment and script. The process for creating a documentary outline involves the following steps:

- Writing the details of the interviews
- Listing the important points made, in the order they may be used in the documentary
- After the pre-interviews are completed, logging the tapes, or ordering the notes taken.

The goal of the outline is to create a working blueprint that can guide the actual production of the documentary.

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2. Show an example of a tape log. Tell participants that a TAPE LOG is made whenever we review material, whether taken from a pre-interview on a documentary, or scene information on a fiction project. Either way, the log guides us to where the best material is in our raw notes. Show the group this example of a tape log.

Tape #	Time	Subject	In Cue	Out Cue
1	10:30	Scholarship	When I Get to College	chance to graduate
1	16:00	Family	Sometimes it's too much	to provide for them

Point out to the group the log's main features.

- *Tape #*: The tape number, so we know which of many tapes the material can be found on.

- *Time*: Use of a counter, or timer, on the recorder helps us determine where on the tape the material occurs.

- *Subject*: A quick reminder of the main point of the section.

- *In Cue:* An exact transcription of the first three or four words of a quote or reference. This allows accuracy when we begin to edit the material.

- *Out Cue:* An exact transcription of the last three or four words of a quote or reference, so we can know where the quote ends.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 3 and move directly to Step 4.

3. **Conduct the interview exercise.** This exercise gives group members the chance to practice interviewing and creating logs of the interviews. Distribute paper and writing utensils to group members and ask them to:

- *Form pairs, and have them interview each other* about a subject of their choosing. Ask them to bring the taped material back to the next session.

- *Make logs of the interviews*.

NOTE ABOUT GROUP PRACTICE
You may want to have the entire group try creating an interview log together before participants work on their own. Group members can use scissors and clear tape to re-arrange the interview material; they can move the material around several times before they tape it into place.

- *Cut and paste their logs* to create a new order of the interview so the material tells a story.

- *Decide what additional material*, such as supporting visual material, might be needed to fill out the story.

Group members should write out their logs following the example you have shown them.

Remind group members that they can always change things later, as they move through the research and production of the film. Starting with a strong outline, however, like having a good script, is useful for keeping on track. During the production, the outline is helpful for remembering what was most interesting during the planning stage.

4. Provide an example of a documentary outline. Show the group an example of a professionally written documentary outline. Write the following on a flip chart:

Sample Documentary Outline: The Policeman

The policeman gets out of his car at 5 in the morning, still carrying his uniform in a bag he slings over his shoulder. He walks inside the police station and says hello to the night shift. He signs in and turns to speak to the sergeant, who's about to go home.

"Anything unusual tonight, Sarge?"

"Couple of fights, no injuries. Looks like we might get lucky and have a quiet morning."

The policeman ducks into the locker room and emerges in his uniform. As he's walking out to get in his squad car, the sergeant calls out to him.

"Have a safe, morning, Roger."

The policeman exits into the early signs of dawn, gets into his car, fires up the lights, and drives off.

ACTIVITY **3**   RECOGNIZING THE COMPONENTS OF DOCUMENTARIES

TIME   20 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Discuss "Hoop Dreams."
                                  ② Show the documentary "Four Little Girls."
                                  ③ Talk about the components of the story.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 1 and move to Step 2.

1. Discuss "Hoop Dreams." Peter Gilbert and Steve James spent more than five years making "Hoop Dreams." When they started, they did not know what was going to happen to their two subjects many years down the road. They did know, however, that among the several college-age players they were following, drama would emerge as the athletes followed their dreams of becoming professional ballplayers. What they did know was that their 14-year-old subjects would become 18-year-olds, and time would change some of their dreams.

NOTE ABOUT FILM SELECTION
In "Four Little Girls" (HBO/ 40 Acres and a Mule/1998), the families of those who died in a Birmingham, Alabama church bombing are living testaments to dignity and strength. It is a powerful and compelling film, but one that includes disturbing images. Be sure to preview it before showing it to the group; it may not be appropriate for younger members.

2. Show the documentary "Four Little Girls." This is a documentary that chronicles an event that occurred in 1963. However, it still manages to present its story in a dynamic fashion. In this case, the filmmaker presents the drama in the form of a mystery.

3. Talk about the components of the story. After viewing the film, discuss it with the group. Ask participants to identify the various aspects of the story that they identified earlier with fiction films. You may want to post the flip chart sheet or chart that lists the story components for them.

- **The Set-Up** (character, world, tone of the story)

- **The First Act** (inciting incident)

- **The Second Act** (first growth, midpoint, apparent defeat)

- **Resolution** (moment of self-realization)

ACTIVITY 4

SUBTEXT – THE UNSPOKEN STRENGTH OF EVERY STORY

TIME

15 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Explain subtext.
② Provide a demonstration of subtext.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this session, skip Activity 4 and move directly to Activity 5.

1. Explain subtext. Introduce a discussion of SUBTEXT. Just like plot and story, there is text and subtext. The text, whether script or outline, is what is written for the actors to say, or the subject of the documentary we are producing. Subtext refers to what is not said, but it is even more important than text, because it is unspoken. For example, when the beautiful woman tells her suitor to "be careful," the unspoken subtext may actually be "I love you."

The subtext of a film is the unspoken message, what the story is really about .

It is often the things we do not say outright that have the most strength and impact. Subtext is what the movie is really about, and that is precisely why it remains unspoken.

2. Provide a demonstration of subtext. Ask participants to recall the documentary, "Four Little Girls," because there is a moment that is an excellent example of subtext.

About one hour into "Four Little Girls," the sister of one of the girls killed in the bombing says she cannot remember things very well because the years and the hurt have obscured the details. As she continues, the woman recounts coming home from school in the days after the bombing and how she would find herself thinking, "I want to play with my sister," only to realize that her sister was dead. This moment hits the viewer like a ton of bricks. There is a silence that follows this statement, and we realize it is *not* that she can't recall the details, which is what she tells us. It is that she cannot *stop* recalling them.

ACTIVITY 5	ETHICS IN FILMMAKING
TIME	10 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Discuss ethics in filmmaking.
	② Review the steps completed in this session.

1. Discuss ethics in filmmaking. Talk to the group about ethics in filmmaking and what it involves.

• *Be considerate of others.* No matter what kind of film we are making, it is important to get in the habit of treating our co-workers well and being nice to those in the community with whom we come into contact. Filmmakers unfortunately have a reputation for marching right through to what they want to shoot, without regard for what stands in their way. This is not a good way to work, and worse, it makes it harder for those who come after us to do their work.

• *Be professional.* Sometimes we want that shot so badly, or we see someone working in a way we think we can do better, and it just seems like the easiest thing to do is to be rude, humiliate or embarrass someone. We should always resist this temptation. Although some people may be talented enough to get away with this kind of behavior, it is not professional and it is not necessary. It is better to be the kind of artist who is known for being civil, working with his or her crew well, and allowing people to do their jobs.

• *Be honest.* When you work in the community, be honest with shopkeepers and homeowners about how long you will be at their facility or place of business. Be prepared when you arrive, and take the time to treat their property with care. Return things to the same condition in which you found them. In making documentaries, it is a good idea to begin by asking permission to film and record the subjects you have chosen for your project.

A sample release form is included at the end of this session; it can be used to obtain permission from subjects and property owners involved in a film.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group the knowledge they have gained during this session. Participants have:

- Learned that documentaries tell stories in the same way fiction films do.
- Discussed documentary research and turning pre-interview material into outlines and treatments.
- Watched and discussed selections from the documentaries "Four Little Girls" and "Hoop Dreams," and paid particular note to the use of subtext.
- Learned about ethics in filmmaking.

On-Camera Release

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

    This On-Camera Release is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 2_____, by and between _____ and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Producer.

    I irrevocably assign and grant unto Producer the irrevocable and unconditional right and permission to use my name, likeness, voice and image for the purpose of production of the film/video/photography (thereinafter the "Program"), including the right and permission to copyright, use, produce, publish any such Program including but not limited to film, videotape, photographic pictures, portraits or other likenesses of me, in which I may be included in whole or in part, in color or black and white, made through any medium, including the use of any printed matter in conjunction with the promotion, advertisement or commercial use of said Program specifically including any broadcast and/or distribution throughout the world.

    I further authorize Producer to edit, to telecast, to rerun, to duplicate, to use, to syndicate, to license and to distribute in any medium, form or forum said Program in any other program or format in which all or part of said Program is incorporated. I understand and agree that Producer has no obligation to use said Program if they elect not to do so.

    I acknowledge and agree that, under the terms of my appearance as a work-for-hire, that any Program in which I appear and all rights pertaining thereto, specifically including all copyright rights, are entirely the property of Producer, their licensees, successors and assigns, absolutely and forever, for any and all copyright terms and all extension and renewal terms of copyright whether now known or hereafter created throughout the world, and for all uses and purposes whatsoever.

On-Camera Release (page two)

I further agree that I shall receive no compensation for participating in said Program in conjunction with my appearance therein. I waive any and all right to inspect or approve the finished Program, advertising copy or printed matter that may be used in conjunction with the Program, or to approve the eventual use for which it may be applied. Producer has explained the purpose and Producer agrees that I will be used for purposes explained, and will not be depicted in any degrading or illicit manner and that all uses are lawful. I irrevocably release and discharge Producer, their assigns, and all persons acting under Producer's permission or authority or those for whom they are acting, from and against any liability as the result of any distortion, blurring, alteration or optical illusion that may occur in the production of the Program, or processing, production or reproduction of the finished Program. I warrant that I am not a minor, am competent to contract in my own name, and that I have read the foregoing On-Camera Release and warrant that I fully understand the contents herein.

If any provision of this Release or application of it to any person or circumstance shall to any extent be invalid, the remainder of this Release or the application of any provision to persons or circumstances other than to those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected and each provision of this Release shall be valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law. This Release contains the entire agreement of the parties and any representation, warranties, promises or agreements or otherwise between the parties not included, shall be of no force and effect. This Release shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. This Release may be amended or terminated only by written instrument signed by both parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this On-Camera Release the day and year first above written.

_____

_____

Date:

On-Camera Release (page three)

PRODUCER: (Boys & Girls Club Representative)

_____

I certify that I am the parent or guardian of _____,
named above, and I do irrevocably give my full consent and authorization without reservation
on behalf of said minor.

_____

PARENT/GUARDIAN Signature

_____

Date

_____

WITNESS Signature

_____

Date

SESSION SEVEN
PUTTING SCENES ON PAPER

*"You shouldn't be doing it in order to speculate, hoping to get rich.
You're not a prospector in the hills of California in 1849. In my experience,
when a writer tries to figure out what the market wants, tries to think of
the ideas that are most likely to sell, and writes those ideas, the results
are not very good and no one buys it. But if the story you are compelled to
write really excites you, inflames your imagination, and continues to hold
onto you – tenaciously – that's the story that you can write best."*

Nicholas Kazan, Screenwriter
"At Close Range," "Frances," "Reversal of Fortune," "Bicentennial Man"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
75 minutes	**Activity 1** Introducing Script Format (15 minutes) **Activity 2** Writing the Scene (60 minutes)	• Participants' story treatments prepared in Session Four • Group step sheet prepared in Session Five • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		
Make photocopies of the "Sample Script" following this session, enough for everyone in the group to have a copy.		

ACTIVITY **1**	INTRODUCING SCRIPT FORMAT
TIME	15 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Review the step sheet.
	② Show an example of a script format.

1. Review the step sheet. Ask the group to recall the step sheet prepared in Session Five, and show the flip chart on which you recorded the group's outline of steps.

Tell the group that, by keeping the step sheet in front of us as we write the screenplay, we will not stray too far from the point of the scene. A writer can write from one emotional point to the next and stay on topic. Using a step sheet is easier than facing the blank page all over again, when so much work has already been done to get the story in shape.

Step Sheet for FIRST DATE

1a. boy stands outside school
—carries flowers
—nervous, seems to be expecting someone
—young girl emerges from school

b. boy tries to hand girl the flowers
—she doesn't take them
—won't meet his eyes
—his movements become more awkward

c. she walks away
—he holds flowers a moment
—throws them away, walks away

d. flowers lay on ground

---

2. Show an example of a script format. Tell the group that not only will they be writing the actual scenes of their movies, they will learn to do so in the correct screenplay format.

Distribute copies of the "Sample Script" included at the end of this session, and ask participants to review it. Explain that scripts have a format all their own, and but it is easy to learn the process. Tell participants that in the next activity, they will learn the separate steps in the process, and begin to create screenplays for their own movie projects.

ACTIVITY **2**	WRITING THE SCENE
TIME	60 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Outline the first section of the scene. ② Conduct the script format exercise. ③ Review the steps completed in this session.

1. Outline the first section of the scene. Demonstrate to the group that, when writing a scene, the first thing to do is drop the numbers (1, 2, 3) or letters (a, b, c) used to mark the scenes or beats within a scene in our treatments. Show how the first scene will look.

---

boy stands outside school
—carries flowers
—nervous, he's expecting someone
—young girl emerges from school

Explain and demonstrate for the group the steps in the process of creating the fully developed screenplay.

- **Using Scene Headers**. Scripts use a shortcut to indicate where a scene takes place.

✓ INT. for interiors
✓ EXT. for exteriors

For the first scene, which takes place "outside school," the SCENE HEADER is created by writing a brief description of the location and time of day the scene takes place in. Scene headers always appear in all caps at the left margin of the page. The scene header contains *only* the setting, location, and time of day.

The scene header tells the setting, location, time of day.

```
EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
boy stands outside school
—carries flowers
—nervous, he's expecting someone
—young girl emerges from school
```

- **Recording Description and Action.** The next step is to add description to the scene. The style calls for skipping a line before placing descriptive information, or anything else, such as dialogue, beneath a scene header.

The scene description is always single-spaced.

The script format now looks like this.

```
EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
A young boy, ERIC, 12, walks out of the
school building and descends a flight of
stairs as the bell rings to end the school
day. Other students walk by, also carrying
books.

Eric wears a backpack and carries a
bouquet of flowers.

boy stands outside school
—carries flowers
—nervous, he's expecting someone
—young girl emerges from school
```

New elements can be added during the process. In this example, in order to give this boy a bit more action, instead of finding him already standing outside, he can exit the school to give a bit more action to the scene. He can also be identified by name, so viewers can tell he is an important-enough character to deserve a name.

The first time a character is mentioned in the description, his or her name appears in ALL CAPS.

After the first mention, we write the name in lowercase letters, which is what we see in the second paragraph of description. If the character is not a major figure, he or she is referred to as a YOUNG BOY or a YOUNG GIRL.

- **Adding Dialogue**. Sometimes scenes begin with dialogue. Just as with description, a line should be skipped after a scene header before placing a character's name and dialogue in a scene.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
A young boy, ERIC, 12, walks out of the school building and descends a flight of stairs as the bell rings to end the school day. Other students walk by, also carrying books.

Eric wears a backpack and carries a bouquet of flowers.

While he's balancing his things, another YOUNG BOY comes up to him.

          YOUNG BOY

Hey, Eric.

          ERIC

Hi, Rob.

          ROB

Looks like you got more than homework on your mind. Who's the lucky girl?

Once a character is given a name, even if it comes up in dialogue, the name is used from that point on. Rob entered the scene before we knew his name, but Eric used it when he spoke to him. At that point Rob went from being referred to as the YOUNG BOY to being referred to as ROB.

Eric has already been introduced, so his name does not need to be capitalized in the following description.

EXT. SCHOOL – DAY
A YOUNG BOY runs up to his friend.

                    YOUNG BOY
Hey, Eric.

Eric wears a backpack and carries a bouquet of flowers.

While he's balancing his things, another YOUNG BOY comes up to him.

When a script is continued from one page to the next, a page should not end with just a character's name, and no dialogue. The same is true of scene headers.

- **Identifying Characters Above Dialogue.** In correct screenplay format, names are always capitalized when used above dialogue. This style, which indicates that dialogue is to follow, comes after skipping a line and is tabbed to a column just left of center. All names begin from the same tab spot. Dialogue follows on the line following the character name and is indented left and right.

In starting a new scene, the style calls for skipping another line before listing the new scene header. The next step is to finish writing the scene.

EXT. SCHOOL—DAY

A young boy, ERIC, 12, walks out of the school building and descends a flight of stairs as the bell rings to end the school day. Others carry books.

He wears a backpack and carries a bouquet of flowers.

While he's balancing his things, another BOY comes up to him.

>   BOY
>   Hey, Eric.

>   ERIC
>   Hi, Rob.

>   ROB
>   Looks like you got more than homework on your
>   mind. Who's the lucky girl?

>   ERIC
>   Get out of here.

>   ROB
>   No, man, I think I'll hang around, catch the action.

>   ERIC
>   Rob, you hang around and I'm gonna throttle you.
>   Now get the heck out of here.

Rob doesn't seem to be going anywhere very fast.

>   ERIC
>   And make it snappy.

Rob offers a weak buddy shake and takes off, like the good friend he is.

Eric, left alone, shuffles nervously from one foot to the other. He looks around, waiting for someone to appear. Finally, he looks up expectantly.

Across the schoolyard, we see whom he's been waiting for. Among the bevy of students is one very beautiful GIRL. She's just his height and wears a pristine white dress.

Eric approaches and loses his balance, sending a small puddle of mud onto the girl's dress. Not a very good start!

In writing scripts, just as in writing treatments, too much time should not be spent on background information. Everything included should, ideally, be something the audience will be able to experience. Things they can hear, see, or in some way feel, are the things to include, rather than what is unseen. At the same time, it is important not to include every moment or every gesture.

TECHNOLOGY TIP
You may choose to have members complete this exercise on the computer, to give them practice in using a word processing application such as Microsoft Word.

2. **Conduct the script format exercise**. The script format exercise will help group members practice translating their scenes into a formal script. Ask participants to:

- Work together as a group to write one of their scenes in script form.

- Once finished, comment on the completed scenes and script format.

Instruct participants to bring to the next session their entire stories in proper script format. For those doing documentaries, let them know that they will learn that format in the next session.

3. **Review the steps completed in this session**. Briefly review with the group what they have learned in this session. Participants have:

- Used their step sheets to keep them on track as they begin writing scenes for their screenplays.
- Been introduced to screenplay format.

Sample Script

INT. KEVIN'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Kevin gives a tour of the apartment to a FAMILY OF FOUR. Mother, father, and two sons. Daniel, still feeling the effects of seeing Jodie, follows slowly behind the group.

MOTHER
It seems a little small for us.

KEVIN
Nonsense. For a family like you it's cozy.
Isn't that right, Daniel?

The family turns to a distracted Daniel. Behind them, Kevin silently prompts his son, mouthing "cozy".

DANIEL
Very... cozy.

The parents smile. Kevin stares at his son.

INT. APARTMENT DUSK

Daniel sits on the window sill, watching the (Family of Four) get into their car and drive off ...and then notices the girl next door, Jodie, also watching from her window, as she hangs up some WIND CHIMES.

Daniel and Jodie are on the same floor level. He might even be able to touch her if he reached out... but he doesn't.

Jodie disappears inside her apartment. Daniel backs into his apartment (hitting his head on the window frame) He turns to see Kevin watching him.

KEVIN
Dinner's defrosting.

Daniel rubs his head and walks into the kitchen. Suspicious, Kevin looks out the window and finds...

...Rachel running her fingers through the CHIMES as she passes by her window, talking on her cellular phone.

SESSION EIGHT
REFINING OUR FINAL SCRIPTS

🎬

"I think you only do what sort of thrills you, and you have to hope you reflect what other people will respond to."

Eric Roth, Screenwriter
"Forrest Gump," "The Horse Whisperer," "The Insider" (shared credit)

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Documentary Scriptwriting (30 minutes) **Activity 2** Revising Stories and Scripts (60 minutes)	• Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		

Keep in mind that good writing means rewriting. Ask group members to do a bit of writing during every session. Once a first draft is completed, do not hesitate to ask participants to do a bit of rewriting; ideas, treatments, step sheets and scripts can all be improved with a little, or a lot, or rewriting.

It is also important to help participants set goals they are able to reach. Perhaps their first draft of a script should be three or four pages, and later they can work up to longer drafts.

ACTIVITY **1**   DOCUMENTARY SCRIPTWRITING

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Introduce the topic of documentary scriptwriting.
                                  ② Show two forms of documentary scripts.
                                  ③ Conduct the documentary scriptwriting exercise.

1. Introduce the topic of documentary scriptwriting.
Acknowledge to the group that writing a script of any kind
can be difficult, and developing scripts for documentaries
can seem especially daunting. Most of the time we associate
documentaries with something that happens right before our
eyes and, therefore, impossible to script. As we saw in
Session Five, however, research can help focus what the
documentary will include, and it can provide a start towards
developing a script for a non-fiction project.

Ask participants if any of them has seen any documentaries
recently that they thought were particularly effective or well
done. You might want to show a short clip of a documentary
film at this point, to make sure all members are clear about
the characteristics of a documentary film.

2. Show two forms of documentary scripts. Tell the group
that there are two primary ways to script a documentary.
The first is simply to use the form we saw earlier, where we
mix in quotes from our research with our outline. This can
become even more developed, so the advanced form of
outline essentially becomes our script.

There is also a second form for documentary scripts, usually
seen more in television writing. In this format, the picture
elements are kept on the left side of the page, and the
spoken elements on the right. Demonstrate the form on the
flip chart for the group.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE	(Tour Guide) The President usually gets to his office around 7 o'clock in the morning, and the first meeting begins promptly at 8. Now, if you walk with me to the next room, I'll show you the Presidential gym!
INT. WHITE HOUSE GYM	

The shots needed are listed on the left side, and the on the right side is the information provided by a narrator or on-screen subject. If there is no pre-interview to quote from, all that is included is the subject that will be discussed. Imaginary dialogue can be used, if desired. Doing so will allow us to think about what the subjects will discuss, and will help us prepare our questions in advance.

TECHNOLOGY TIP
You may choose to have members complete this exercise on the computer, to give them practice in using a word processing application such as Microsoft Word.

3. Conduct the documentary scriptwriting exercise. This exercise gives group members the chance to practice writing documentary scripts on topics they have already researched. Ask participants to:

- *Select a project they researched during Session Five*, and ask them to write a few pages of a sample script for the proposed project.

- *Divide into two groups*; one group to use the "outline" form and the other half to use the "split-page" script format.

When participants have completed the excerpts of their documentary scripts, ask them to exchange their drafts with the members of the other group. Let them read over each other's scripts and make suggestions for improvement.

ACTIVITY **2**

REVISING STORIES AND SCRIPTS

TIME

60 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Introduce the topic of revising and rewriting.
② Conduct the script and production exercise.
③ Act out selected scenes.
④ Make covers for final scripts.
⑤ Review the steps completed in this session.
⑥ Congratulate group members on completing the program.

---

1. Introduce the topic of revising and rewriting. Tell the group that the rest of the scriptwriting work involves working with other group members to make their scripts better. This gives them the opportunity to work hand in hand with others working on the production side to improve their work and to collectively select scripts that the group wants to produce.

Make sure group members understand that all writing involves reviewing, revising and rewriting. Let them know that this is a normal part of the process, and help them learn to accept constructive feedback on their scripts.

2. Conduct the script and production exercise. This exercise helps group members get constructive feedback about their scripts from their peers, and gets them thinking about the production end of filmmaking. The exercise consists of the following steps:

NOTE ABOUT FILM SELECTION
Whenever possible, keep up with group work and bring in films that are similar to members' projects. Whether that similarity is visual style or subject and theme, it is always helpful to have participants watch a film excerpt in each session, and discuss how the professionals handled material and subject matter they themselves are now working with.

• *Arrange a meeting with Club members* working on the production track.

• *Allow scriptwriting group members to discuss* their story ideas and scripts, and exchange suggestions with production track members about how to improve them.

• *Ask the production track members* to discuss production methods and ideas that might best serve selected stories.

3. Act out selected scenes. Ask group members to act out scenes from their scripts, or arrange to bring in young actors from a neighborhood theater or school program to act out selected scenes. It is always helpful to allow young writers to hear their words and scenes interpreted by others. Make sure to ask questions, and allow the actors to ask the writers some questions too, before and after the rehearsals.

4. Make covers for final scripts. As the scriptwriting track of *Movie Tech* approaches completion, spend some time making individualized covers for group members' scripts. Encourage them to create colorful title pages with the title of the script and the author's name. A title page might look like this:

The Greatest Script in the World
by
Joe Smith and Liza Young

A Boys & Girls Club Scriptwriting Project
© 2002, Chandler Arizona Branch

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5. Review the steps completed in this session. Briefly review with the group what they have accomplished during this session. Participants have:

- Learned script format for documentary projects.
- Reviewed their stories to see where there is still work to be done.
- Made cover pages to make their scripts appear professional.
- Completed scripts, or will be completing scripts, that can be chosen for production by participants in the video production track.

6. Congratulate group members on completing the program. Acknowledge to the group all the hard work they have put into the program, and recognize their individual projects and ideas. Let them know that they are all scriptwriters now, and the work they have done may be chosen by video production group members to make into a big screen project.

Distribute a completion certificate to every participant in the program, and invite each individually to participate in the video production track of *Movie Tech*.

Video Production

Session One   Developing a Movie Eye

Session Two   Planning Scenes and Shots

Session Three   Learning to Compose and Shoot

Session Four   Putting Scenes Together

Session Five   Pre-Production – Planning and Working as a Team

Session Six   Production – Shooting the Film

Session Seven   Post-Production – Editing the Film

Session Eight   Post-Production – Fine-Tuning the Edit

Session Nine   Putting Together the Final Film

Session Ten   Screening and Reviewing the Final Project

SESSION ONE
DEVELOPING A MOVIE EYE

"I spent hours and hours looking at film. But I also spent hours and hours living and looking at real life. That is what I try to infuse into my filmmaking. The only thing filmmakers can use is what they've got. I think it's better to develop a wealth of experience and talent and have something to say before you pick up that camera and try to say it."

Taylor Hackford, Director
"Proof of Life," "The Devil's Advocate," "La Bamba"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Watching Movies With a Critical Eye (45 minutes) **Activity 2** Making a One-Minute Movie (30 minutes) **Activity 3** Program Goals (15 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • Video camera • Tripod • Blank videotape • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		

Be sure to preview in advance the films or scenes you will present. Previewing will help you prepare to discuss the aspects of film production or scriptwriting the selections illustrate: it also will ensure that only appropriate material is shown and discussed.

You may want to show a new short film during each session, as well as scenes from feature films with which Club members are familiar. It may be necessary to use different film selections for each new group of members who participate in the program, selections that reflect their particular interests. It is important to stay in touch with the types of films participants are making and watching.

ACTIVITY **1**

WATCHING MOVIES WITH A CRITICAL EYE

TIME

45 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Show "Lunch Date."
② Discuss production elements of the film.

NOTE ABOUT FILM SELECTION
A good choice for the first session is "Lunch Date," directed by Adam Davidson. The movie, which won the Academy Award for Best Short Film in 1990, is about a woman's chance meeting with a homeless man in Grand Central Station.

This is a beautiful and well-made film – in fact, you may not be able to find comparable films for all of the sessions. It is important to remember, however, not to show only well-crafted films. It may be more helpful to show selections that have flaws so that members can see and critique work other than their own. You may want to also show films made by former participants, the hits as well as the misses. Keep an updated library of Club member work, so you will have samples to show.

1. Show "Lunch Date." Explain to the group, that even though this track of *Movie Tech* focuses on production skills, it is important to remember that these skills are developed to *support* good storytelling. One of the first things to learn, and one of the most surprising things for beginners to accept, is that the very best craftsmen and craftswomen are the ones who understand not only the technology of what they do, but also the story they are trying to tell. The reigning wisdom in filmmaking is *story, story, story*.

Video production involves not only a working knowledge of the *technical* aspects of film, but also a firm understanding of the *story* the film is trying to convey.

"Lunch Date" is a great learning tool for beginning filmmakers because it is so simple and beautifully made, yet it illustrates many of the story and craft elements that even the most technically oriented member of the crew should recognize. Participants will be able to imagine themselves achieving what the director of "Lunch Date" achieves.

2. Discuss production elements of the film. Introduce the idea of PRODUCTION ELEMENTS – technical aspects of the film that are used to help tell the story:

- *Set/location* – the place where a scene is shot
- *Camera* – the position, moves and composition of a shot
- *Lighting* – direction and balance of light on a shot
- *Props* – the items needed by characters in a scene
- *Wardrobe* – the costumes worn by the characters
- *Sound* – music or other sound effects

All of the production elements of a film work together, along with the dialogue, to tell the story.

Ask participants to answer the following questions about some of the production elements used in "Lunch Date." You may want to record their responses on flip chart paper.

• How is the CAMERA used to introduce the characters clearly? *By following the woman's actions with the camera for a few minutes, we learn almost immediately that she is the primary character. Close to medium shots of her – and the homeless man – let us know the story involves both.*

• At key emotional points in the movie, how is the camera used to allow us insight into the character's thoughts? *We get a glimpse of the woman's thoughts primarily through close-up shots of her expressions, but also by the camera moving to observe the things she observes and focuses on.*

• How are WARDROBE and PROPS used to give us information about the characters and the story? *We can tell by the woman's clothing (wardrobe) and her shopping bags (props) that she is comfortable financially. We can also tell by the way the homeless man appears (wardrobe) that he most likely lives on the street.*

ACTIVITY 2

TIME

OVERVIEW

MAKING A ONE-MINUTE MOVIE

30 minutes

① Provide instruction for shooting the movie.
② View the one-minute movie.

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1. Provide instruction for shooting the movie. Begin this activity by telling the group that the one-minute movie exercise will help them learn several important skills:

- Use of the equipment
- The basic vocabulary of filmmaking
- Some of the ways the camera is used to tell a story.

Lead the group through the following steps for making the one-minute movie:

- *Demonstrate camera operations*. Show participants the basic steps for setting up and operating the video camera:

- ✓ Set up the tripod
- ✓ Attach the tripod adapter to the camera
- ✓ Attach the camera to the tripod
- ✓ Connect the battery or AC adapter
- ✓ Turn the camera on
- ✓ Select the focus (auto focus for this exercise)
- ✓ Press the record button to begin recording.

NOTE ABOUT AGE LEVEL
If you have a group of younger members, you may want to accompany them during this exercise.

- *Select a small group to shoot the first movie*. Give the camera to a group of three to five participants, and let them know that, as they shoot the one-minute movie, they will be holding the camera by hand rather than using a tripod. If the total group is more than five participants, have the remaining members observe and make comments later about how the crew worked together.

- *Direct the group to record four or five shots.* The shots should tell a brief story, not longer than one minute. The group's task is the get the shots in sequence so that the story is edited "in camera."

- *Allow participants to choose what to shoot and what story to tell.* There may be some participants who have "good eyes," or others with a natural ability to tell a story. When you find group members with these abilities, allow them the freedom to explore what they are able to do on their own.

During the first three or four sessions, each group member should have the opportunity to participate in making an *in-camera* movie. This exercise will give group members the chance to see their own work on screen soon after the program begins. The lessons they are about to learn will come to life for them, because it will be their own work the group is discussing.

2. View the one-minute movie. As a group, view the first one-minute movie shot during today's session. Ask participants to answer the following questions, and discuss them as a group.

- Is the story clear?
- Who is the main character?
- Is the character established clearly?
- How do the shots tell the story visually?
- Does the story rely on dialogue?
- Are the shots well composed and selected?
- Should a tripod have been used for camera stability?
- Is there too much camera movement?

The answers to these questions will become clear to group members as they move through the program. These same questions can and should be asked of almost every film selection viewed by the group. You may even want to post them on a flip chart page and post it in a prominent place.

ACTIVITY **3**

PROGRAM GOALS

TIME

15 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Discuss the program goals.
② Review the steps completed in this session.

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1. Discuss the program goals. Review with the group the goals that the video production track of *Movie Tech* is designed to accomplish. The purpose of the program is:

- To learn to make movies.
- To learn how to share production work.
- To learn to work as part of a crew.
- To learn pre-production, production and post-production responsibilities.

Ask participants to talk about any other goals they would like to accomplish as they complete the sessions in the program.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Remind participants of the steps they have already taken towards producing a video. Participants have:

- Begun to watch movies with a critical eye.
- Become familiar with the basics of video equipment.
- Shot a one-minute movie (not all participants will have shot a one-minute movie during the first session, but all will have a chance within the first several sessions).

SESSION TWO
PLANNING SCENES AND SHOTS

🎬

"For me it's all about creating this reality out of nothing . . . so that an audience member can sit inside of it and be completely surrounded, and forget who he is and where he came from, and only be with the people on the screen."

Jodie Foster, Actor/Director/Producer
"The Silence of the Lambs," "Contact," "Taxi Driver"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Using the Camera Lens (40 minutes) **Activity 2** Practicing Different Shots (20 minutes) **Activity 3** Using Visual Storytelling (30 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • Video camera • Tripod • Blank videotape • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		
At the end of the session, be sure to ask participants to pack up the equipment after they are finished using it. This should become a habit for group members who use the equipment, something they do at the end of every session. When participants routinely set up and pack equipment, they become comfortable with it and confident of their ability to handle it responsibly.		

ACTIVITY **1**   USING THE CAMERA LENS

TIME   40 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Demonstrate basic camera functions.
                                   ② Prepare for the shoot.
                                   ③ Conduct the scene exercise.
                                   ④ Review the scenes.
                                   ⑤ Discuss improvements to the scenes.

NOTE ABOUT CAMERA FOCUS
Depending on the camera equipment your Club has, you may want to omit this discussion about camera focus, and simply use the auto-focus feature.

1. Demonstrate basic camera functions. Tell the group that they are again going to make one-minute movies, but this time with a specific goal in mind. Ask participants to get the camera ready to shoot, following the steps they learned in Session One. Demonstrate for the group the options for camera focus, explaining when it may be appropriate to choose one or the other:

- *Use* AUTO-FOCUS *when shooting an action scene,* or any scene in which there is a lot of movement.

- *Use* MANUAL FOCUS *for scenes in which the subject stays fairly stationary* and near the center of the frame.

Demonstrate for the group these two additional steps:

- *Find the* WIDE ANGLE *setting by holding down the* "W" on the zoom control until the zoom control stops moving and the image has become the widest possible composition, given the subject-to-camera distance.

- *Find the* TELEPHOTO *setting by holding down the "T" on the zoom control* until the zoom control stops moving and the image has become the tightest possible composition, given the subject-to-camera distance.

Zooming allows the camera operator to take a variety of shots at different focal lengths and widths.

2. Prepare for the shoot. Help participants prepare to make their one-minute movie by following these steps:

- *Remind participants of the importance of planning work in advance* and to move from discussion to writing plans on paper. With this practice, participants eventually will be able to plan and share their work with the crew. When everyone knows what needs to be accomplished on a given day, the work will proceed more smoothly.

- *Explain the scenario they will shoot.* Tell participants they will meet in their groups and prepare to shoot a scene using the following scenario.

A boy and a girl are talking. He is trying to work up the courage to ask her out, but she is not interested in the boy.

- *Direct participants to discuss the scene and make a shot list.* Group members should discuss the scene they want to shoot and make a list of the shots they want to get in order to make the one-minute movie. Tell them to limit the number of shots to no more than four or five.

- *Describe the following* SHOT DEFINITIONS *and write them on the flip chart.* As participants make their shot lists, they should use these abbreviations to designate the kind of shot or composition they would like to see.

WS – Wide shot; people are small compared to the landscape

MWS – Medium wide shot; we see a person from head to toe in the frame

MS – Medium shot; we see a person from waist to head in the frame

CU – Close-up; used for a face or an object

ECU – Extreme close-up; exaggerates the size of a face or an object.

3. Conduct the scene exercise. Direct participants to complete the following steps in the scene exercise (shooting another one-minute movie).

- *Ask for volunteers to role-play the boy and the girl* in the scenario described above.

- *Tell group members to tape the selected scene four times*, in four different ways, by following these instructions:

  ✓ *Use the widest lens setting at a distance of 15 feet.* Place the camera 15 feet away from the action, and record the scene with the lens at its *widest* setting.

  ✓ *Use the full telephoto position at a distance of 15 feet.* Place the camera 15 feet away from the action, and record the scene with the lens at its *full telephoto* position.

  ✓ *Use the widest lens setting at a distance of five feet.* Place the camera five feet from the action, and record the scene with the lens at its *widest* setting.

  ✓ *Use the full telephoto position at a distance of five feet.* Place the camera five feet from the action, and record the scene with the lens at its *full telephoto* position. At this distance from the subject, the telephoto lens setting will make everything an extreme close-up.

4. Review the scenes. When group members have finished the exercise, review the scenes they shot. Have them note the effects of lens selection to the action on the screen, and make a list of these effects on the flip chart as you discuss them with the group:

- *It is difficult to maintain focus when using a telephoto lens.* The DEPTH OF FIELD (how much of the image, in terms of distance from the camera, can be kept in focus), is generally less when using a telephoto setting. When characters move through the depth of the frame, it is far easier to maintain focus with a wider lens setting.

• *Wider lens settings are not as flattering when used for extreme close-ups.* Wider lenses tend to exaggerate shapes, including faces, when placed very close to the subject. This is why "fish-eye" lenses are used to create distortion in horror movies and dream sequences.

• *Wide (or medium) lens settings can be very useful for beginners, because action tends to stay in focus and camera movement is not accentuated.* Although using a wide-angle lens makes it easier to maintain focus, it places more importance on movement within the frame to bring impact or interest to the composition. When using a wide-angle lens, it may be important to use blocking – the movement of actors within the scene and the frame – along with carefully planned camera movement, to create a sense of action.

5. **Discuss improvements to the scenes**. After group members have watched the completed one-minute movies, and identified the effects of the various lens selections, ask them to discuss the following questions:

• Were all of the shots necessary?
• How would the use of only one extreme wide shot, or one close-up, have changed the movie?

ACTIVITY **2**

PRACTICING DIFFERENT SHOTS

TIME

20 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Explain basic camera positions.
② Direct participants to shoot another one-minute movie.
③ Compare movies to those shot earlier.

NOTE ABOUT CAMERA POSITION
Group members should use a tripod from now on unless they are choosing the hand-held camera for dramatic reasons.

1. Explain basic camera positions. Explain to the group that they have already used the three basic camera positions available for shooting a movie:

- *Stationary* – shooting with the use of a tripod
- *Hand-held* – holding the camera in your hand as you shoot
- *Moving* – shooting while moving from place to place.

Let participants know that, when shooting scenes, a camera operator may choose from any of these camera positions, depending on the desired effects. The action, however, especially when happening very quickly, tends to be difficult to follow or can become too shaky to watch comfortably when the camera is hand-held. This can be avoided by using a tripod, particularly when using a telephoto lens.

2. Direct participants to shoot another one-minute movie. In this exercise, participants have the chance to try out different alternatives, such as using close-ups and very wide shots. They begin to see how scenes are affected by using different kinds of shots.

- *Ask a new group of participants to use a different method* for telling the same story the first group made earlier in the session. The scenario used earlier was:

A boy and a girl are talking. He is trying to work up the courage to ask her out, but she is not interested in the boy.

- *Tell the group that this story also can be told in at least two additional ways*, each perhaps more interesting than the conventional approach. Instruct participants to try shooting the scene in each of the following ways.

✓ *Use only a close-up, and focus on the boy.* He is waiting to meet the girl. When she arrives, she takes up a very small part of the frame in front of him; we are looking over the shoulder (this is a common film term) of her character. As she speaks (and seeing her speak is not important in this approach because we see her body language), she runs her fingers through her hair and acts a little nervous. As the girl continues to speak, we see the boy's face change from a smile to a frown. Her movements slow down as well. In the course of a few seconds, even if we do not hear the dialogue, we know what is happening by watching the movements and the facial expressions of the characters. This is all done in one shot. (Participants can come up with other ideas for the girl's body language, which can help give clues as to what she is feeling in this particular situation.)

✓ *Shoot the scene using only a very wide shot.* We see the boy standing alone in front of a school. He is very small in the frame, dwarfed by the school building that stands far behind him. It is clearly the 3 o'clock bell because no one else is around. A young girl walks up to him, and they begin to speak. Even though they are very far away, and very small in the frame, we can tell the conversation is getting serious. The animated way in which they greeted each other is replaced by more nervous gestures, and then the girl walks away. The boy is left alone in the frame. This is done in one shot.

3. Compare movies to those shot earlier. Ask participants to compare the effects of using the camera in these ways on the scene; how do these movies compare to the ones shot earlier? Discuss these questions as a group.

ACTIVITY 3	USING VISUAL STORYTELLING
TIME	30 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Show "Lunch Date" (or another film you have selected). ② Define visual storytelling. ③ Identify the use of visual storytelling in "Lunch Date." ④ Review the steps completed in this session.

1. Show "Lunch Date" (or another film you have selected).
Using the short film, "Lunch Date," review the sequence where the well-dressed woman and the homeless man sit together in the restaurant booth.

Tell participants that you would like them to notice the ways in which the story is told without the use of dialogue.

2. Define visual storytelling. Explain to the group that, when we speak of "action" in film, we mean character action, not just car crashes and chase scenes. Filmmakers always look at the goal of a scene and challenge themselves to find a way of staging and filming it that will add meaning to any dialogue. Let the group know that this technique is referred to as VISUAL STORYTELLING.

Visual storytelling involves the use of facial expression, movement, action and character.

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3. Identify the use of visual storytelling in "Lunch Date."
After participants have viewed "Lunch Date," ask the following questions about the use of visual storytelling:

- How much dialogue is there?
- How is the woman and man's relationship told visually?
- What do their facial expressions and movements tell us?

NOTE ABOUT VISUAL STORYTELLING
David Lean is quoted in Kevin Brownlow's biography (St. Martin's Press, 1996) as saying, "Film is thought." In every important moment in the films we love, we can tell what characters are thinking, or are about to do. We have come to know what they want, and not because we are simply given information through dialogue, but we have learned about them through visual cues that tell us what the story is all about.

Highlight the visual storytelling in the film, the ways in which the director of "Lunch Date" has used techniques other than dialogue to convey the story:

- *Through facial expression and movement.* Initially, the woman's fear is expressed through her facial expressions, her movements, gestures and mannerisms, and by her automatic responses to the events unfolding in the film. Later, even though the shots are simple, mostly medium shots of the characters, it is also their facial expressions and movements that tell us they are becoming something like friends.

- *Through simple action.* When the homeless man gets up from the booth, returning with two cups of coffee, the director has found a way, through action rather than dialogue, of confirming that they are now on good terms with one another.

- *Through character.* The lead character is introduced without dialogue. Her key moment, when she realizes that she ate the man's lunch, is also without dialogue.

Discuss these techniques with the group, and ask participants to offer any other instances they noticed in "Lunch Date" of visual storytelling.

3. Review the steps completed in this session. Remind the group of what they have learned during this session. Participants have:

- Learned how to describe shots in terms of wide, medium, close-up and extreme close-up.
- Learned the characteristics of different lens focal lengths (wide, medium and telephoto settings) and how to use them.
- Been introduced to the use of visual storytelling.
- Been encouraged to plan their shooting approach with the use of shot definitions.

SESSION THREE
LEARNING TO COMPOSE AND SHOOT

*"Photography originally meant 'writing with light' and it is the term
I prefer for what I do. It's writing with light in the sense that I am
trying to express something within me: my sensibility, my cultural
heritage, my formation of being. All along I've been trying to express
what I really am through light. When I work on a film, I am trying to have
a parallel story to the actual story so that through the light and color,
you can feel and understand, consciously or unconsciously,
much more clearly what the story is about."*

Vittorio Storaro, Cinematographer
"Dune 2000," "Dick Tracy," "Apocalypse Now," "The Last Emperor,"
"The Sheltering Sky"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Principles of Visual Composition (35 minutes) **Activity 2** Shooting a Scene (20 minutes) **Activity 3** Varying the Composition (15 minutes) **Activity 4** Shooting for the Edit (20 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • Short films for viewing (films well known for their cinematography) • Art and photography books • Video camera • Tripod • Blank videotape • Flip chart • Markers

ACTIVITY **1**	PRINCIPLES OF VISUAL COMPOSITION
TIME	35 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Explain visual composition.
	② Discuss basic principles of composition.
	③ Demonstrate the "rule of thirds."
	④ Show examples from several films.
	⑤ Conduct the composition exercise.

1. Explain visual composition. Familiarize the group with the idea of COMPOSITION. Start by showing them paintings and photographs by well-known artists, using images from the books you have gathered for this purpose.

Composition refers to the way in which objects, people, buildings and landscapes are positioned in the frame.

NOTE ABOUT COMPOSITION
You may want to have group members create a small "frame," cut out of paper, which they can use to practice framing the composition of the shots they want to take.

2. Discuss basic principles of composition. Review with the group the basic rules or principles of composition. Make sure participants understand that composition is one more element that is important to telling the story.

• *Framing* – Framing, the most important element of composition, has to do with where in the frame the subjects appear, and whether the shot is close-up, medium or long. A long shot tends to give the viewer an overview, the "big picture," while a close-up shot is used more often to convey emotional impact.

• *Balance* – Balance refers to the way the composition is weighted. For example, an intentionally off-balance shot can suggest humor or an unconventional look at something.

• *Distance* – Distance can convey different impressions to the viewer. If something is far away from the camera, it will appear less important, forgotten or abandoned.

3. Demonstrate the "rule of thirds." Explain to the group that the RULE OF THIRDS is a simple rule that is often used when composing or framing shots within the camera's viewfinder. This rule is a guide to make sure that important features fall in "hot spots" located at certain points in the frame. These points correspond to the one-third and two-thirds points, horizontally and vertically, within the frame. Give the group some examples:

- *In a portrait shot*, the close-up of the face would take up either one third or two thirds of the frame, and the eyes would be placed at about two-thirds the height of the frame.

- *In a wide shot* in which a person stands on rolling hills against a big sky, the horizon line would be placed at the one-third or at the two-thirds mark, vertically in the frame, The person, no matter how small, would be placed either one third or two thirds from the left edge.

Remind the group that the rule of thirds is a guide, not an absolute, but it will help them begin to see the world in a way that is a bit more pleasing in terms of composition and impact. There is no reason *not* to place things dead center occasionally, but it should be a conscious choice to do so.

The rule of thirds suggests placing subjects at the one-third or two-thirds mark, horizontally or vertically.

Use the books of photography and well-known paintings to demonstrate the rule of thirds to the group, so they will begin to look at works of art with this principle in mind.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 4 and move directly to Step 5.

4. Show examples from several films. Select several excerpts from the films you selected for today's session to show to the group. Point out the use of the basic principles of composition in the sequences you show.

5. **Conduct the composition exercise.** This exercise gives participants the chance to practice shooting a variety of shots using different compositions. Ask participants to:

- *Place the camera on a tripod* and load a blank tape.

- *Compose and shoot a variety of shots*, including wide, medium, long and close-up.

- *Compose each shot with important elements centered* in the frame, and hold the shot for several seconds.

- *Move the camera to reset the composition*, and using the rule of thirds, compose each shot again, with the important elements at either the one-third or two-thirds mark. Hold the shot for a few seconds before cutting.

Watch the footage with the group and discuss the differences between the compositions. Connect the camera to a television set, or use the camera's LCD screen, and have the group comment on each composition.

ACTIVITY 2

TIME

OVERVIEW

SHOOTING A SCENE

20 minutes

① Explain continuous action.
② Discuss the use of overlap.
③ Explain varying camera angles.

1. Explain continuous action. Let participants know how filmmakers create the illusion of continuous action by shooting a scene a number of times from different angles.

In shooting a scene, filmmakers choose camera angles so they can cut them together to create the impression of CONTINUOUS ACTION. This is a technique they use to "trick" the audience. When done well, continuous action creates the illusion that the audience is always in the right place for viewing the action. In reality, a crew moves the camera around, recording the same scene — or pieces of the scene — numerous times and from different angles. Another crew, the editors, cuts the scene so that it looks like continuous action.

2. Discuss the use of overlap. Initiate a group discussion about OVERLAP and how it is achieved. Explain that new camera angles do not merely pick up the action from where it left off in the previous camera position. The timing of a cut can be critical, so even if a new camera angle will carry the action from Point A to Point B, it is safer to begin Shot B with a little of the "tail" of Shot A. This is known as overlap.

For example, if the goal of one shot is for a character to walk up to a door and knock on it, the shot might continue through the action of the door opening, and the second shot might begin before the door opens. This way, editors have the option of making the cut where they want it — anywhere between the time the character reaches the door in the first shot, and the point where the door begins to close in the second shot.

Overlapping the action on both sides of a shot allows for smooth cuts and flexibility in editing the scene.

3. **Explain varying camera angles.** Talk to the group about how shooting one scene using varying camera angles – or MULTIPLE SET-UPS – gives filmmakers a choice of shots to use when the film is being edited.

For example, if two people are having a conversation, and there are going to be three shots to cover it, the camera is not moved each time an actor speaks a line. Camera operators would be moving back and forth all day if they shot that way, and miss a big part of the drama, which involves eye movement, silences, and response time between lines.

Here is how the scene would be shot using varying camera angles or multiple set-ups:

- *Shoot the wide shot first*, allowing the action to take place without a cut.

- *Shoot one of the tighter shots*, a medium shot or close-up of one actor.

- *Turn the camera around and shoot the third set-up*, the corresponding medium or close-up of the *other* actor.

Shooting with multiple set-ups (varying camera angles) creates a scene that can be edited in a number of ways.

If the action is quick, it is often better to keep things simple. However, many scenes, particularly scenes that include dialogue, will require multiple set-ups. For these situations, it is important to be able to cut with no visible loss or change of action. The goal is to achieve a seamless editing style.

ACTIVITY **3**

TIME

OVERVIEW

VARYING THE COMPOSITION

15 minutes

① Describe how to vary the size of a composition.
② Discuss use of the 180° rule.

1. Describe how to vary the size of the composition. Tell the group that changing the *size* of the composition in a particular scene is an important element in filmmaking. Here is how this technique works:

- *Start with a wide shot to set the scene.* In the classic Hollywood style of cutting, a wide shot sets the scene and gives the audience a feel for the geography of the setting.

- *Use medium shots and close-ups on the actors.* If the camera were to cut from a wide shot to a shot that is almost as wide, an accidental JUMP-CUT might be created, a place in the scene where the action is interrupted and does not match properly. It would appear to be a new shot, but the audience might not be sure. The transitions are smoother if the camera moves from a wide shot to a medium shot, one in which the subject takes up a larger portion of the screen.

In the wide shot, the actor might be seen from head to toe. In the medium shot, the actor would be seen only from the waist to the top of his or her head.

2. Discuss use of the 180° rule. Explain to the group that, in addition to varying the size of the composition in a scene, it is important also to change the *angle* of the new shot, but not more than 180°. Here is how the **180° RULE** works:

In a wide shot, for example, one character named Johnny, looks to his left when facing his friend. This is screen right. The other character, Frankie, looks to his right when facing Johnny, or screen left.

NOTE ABOUT THE 180° rule
The 180° rule is a bit complicated to explain, and easier to understand visually. You may want to ask two volunteers to role-play speakers to demonstrate how the rule works, or show a short excerpt from a film in which the rule is illustrated.

If a character looks to the left in one shot, it is important to maintain that direction unless there is a good reason for changing it. The audience can be confused easily if, in one shot, Johnny is looking left and Frankie is looking left as well. This can be especially confusing if both shots are medium shots or close-ups that do not show the setting around the two people.

The 180° rule helps the camera operator keep track of audience perception. It simply states that, when two characters are looking at one another, any camera shot within 180° of the line between them will maintain screen direction. This means that, when shooting, it is important not to "cross the line" – the camera should always stay on the "audience" side of the characters.

The 180° rule keeps filmmakers from confusing viewers by "crossing the line" – and maintains the same screen direction that the characters are facing.

ACTIVITY 4

SHOOTING FOR THE EDIT

TIME

20 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Conduct the camera exercise.
② Demonstrate the effect of different camera positions.
③ Review the steps completed in this session.

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1. Conduct the camera exercise. This exercise gives group members practice in shooting scenes using some of the rules they have learned. Ask participants to do the following:

• *Get the equipment ready* by setting the camera on the tripod and loading a tape.

• *Set up and shoot a conversation between two people*, with angles that follow the 180° rule. To do this, they should maintain the screen direction that the characters are facing.

• *Set up shots that purposely "cross the line."* To cross the line, participants should make sure the characters face different screen directions in some of the shots. They also should try shooting a conversation with three people, too; it is a bit easier to confuse the audience when more people are included in the action.

After filming is complete, watch the footage with the group. Ask them to consider the following questions:

• Would an editor be able to cut effectively between the shots?
• Would an audience be confused by the change in screen direction?
TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit the questions and move to Step 2.
• Which shots would cut together best?
• Is it easier to follow the action of the conversation in the wide shots?

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2. Demonstrate the effect of different camera positions. Use illustrations on the flip chart to help participants understand the effect on scenes of using different camera positions.

• *First, draw two people speaking while standing in front of a river.* If the camera is moved to the other side of the river, the characters would switch places on screen; the person on the left would now be on the right, and vice-versa.

• *Now draw a new camera position, in front of the people and the river.* In this example, the camera could cut back and forth any number of times and the audience would not be confused, as long as the camera stays on the audience side of the characters and the river.

The danger lies in trying to take a short cut and ask the actors to turn around and switch sides so the camera and lights do not have to be moved. This would result in the river being on the wrong side of the people. It may seem obvious, but when it comes to screen direction, it is easy to become confused.

For more on camera, composition and lighting, see "Video Camera Basics" in the Appendix section of this guide.

3. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group what they have learned during this session. Participants have

• Learned about the rule of thirds and other aspects of visual composition.
• Begun to understand how to create the illusion of continuous action.
• Learned how to vary the size and the angle of the composition.
• Understood the 180° rule.
• Learned how to shoot for the edit.

SESSION FOUR
PUTTING SCENES TOGETHER

"The main problem was realizing that nothing happens by chance. If you want to see a certain image you've got to build it, you've got to prepare it. It may be a simple little image one has in mind but to realize it takes probably four weeks work and preparation."

Neil Jordan, Director
"The Butcher Boy," "Interview with a Vampire," "Michael Collins,"
"We're No Angels"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Scene Coverage and Vocabulary (30 minutes) **Activity 2** Planning Shots and Making Shot Lists (30 minutes) **Activity 3** Using the External Microphone (30 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • "Lunch Date" or another short film on videotape or DVD • Video camera • Tripod • External microphone • Boom pole • BeachTek adaptor • Cables • 25-foot XLR-XLR extension cord • AA battery and other accessories • Blank videotape • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

ACTIVITY **1**   SCENE COVERAGE AND VOCABULARY

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW
① Show a scene from "Lunch Date."
② Point out the sequence of shots.
③ Outline a shot list for "Lunch Date."

1. Show a scene from "Lunch Date." Select a section of "Lunch Date" to view, or select a scene from a movie you have chosen for today's session.

2. Point out the sequence of shots. Take notes as you go through the scenes, in "Lunch Date," and use a flip chart page to note the succession of shots.

• *Medium-wide shot.* When the woman returns to the booth to find the homeless man eating "her" salad, the director uses a medium-wide shot. Remind the group that wide shots establish, or re-establish, the geography and atmosphere of a scene. The director found it helpful to remind the audience that no one else is sitting in a nearby booth. This helps the viewer make sense of the fact that there is no one to point out another salad nearby, and no one to interfere on the woman's behalf, thinking that the man is bothering her.

• *Medium shots.* From here, the director uses a series of medium shots of both characters, but the camera is a bit closer to the woman, emphasizing her story because she is the main character.

• *Close-up shot.* The woman's hunger is established by using a close-up of the salad shot from precisely her POINT OF VIEW (POV). Point of view shots are used primarily for the lead character at two or three key points in the story and help place the audience quite literally in the character's shoes. Sometimes, a point of view shot is used for a supporting character, but this is usually when the audience

needs to be given information about the lead character: perhaps he or she is in danger because someone can hear or see what they cannot. In this case too, the use of a point of view shot is still linked to a key piece of information relating to the lead character.

3. Outline a shot list for "Lunch Date." Work with the group to make a shot list for the scene you have viewed in "Lunch Date." The *shot list* might look like this:

- Medium-wide shot: Woman walks back to booth, sees man eating salad.
- Medium shot: Woman looks at man.
- Medium shot: Man eats salad, tries to ignore woman.
- Medium shot: She insists it is her salad.
- Medium shot: He laughs.
- Close-up: Salad from her POV

When creating shot lists, it is important to recognize that individual shots are often cut, and used more than once in constructing a scene. Shots 2 and 4 listed here are the same shot, as are Shots 3 and 5. Since we are making a shooting list, and not a list of shots used in a finished movie, our list would actually consist of the following *camera set-ups*:

- Wide shot: Woman walks to booth, sees man eating salad
- Medium shot: Woman tries to eat salad; entire scene
- Medium shot: Man defends salad, then shares it; entire scene
- Close-up: Woman's POV

ACTIVITY **2**   PLANNING SHOTS AND MAKING SHOT LISTS

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Conduct the shot planning exercise.
                                 ② Guide participants in planning a scene.
                                 ③ Practice creating a shot list.

TECHNOLOGY TIP
You may choose to have members complete the shot planning exercise using the computer, to give them practice with a word processing application such as Microsoft Word.

1. Conduct the shot planning exercise. This exercise gives participants a chance to look at how scenes are put together and then plan how to shoot their own. Follow these steps in conducting the exercise:

• *Select one or two scenes from participant projects* and have the entire group work together to plan camera coverage for the scenes.

• *Ask them to think about how will shoot the scene.* Where will they place the camera? Which shot compositions will they use?

• *Ask group members to make shot lists* and draw sketches of the plans they make for their scenes. They may do this individually, then discuss their plans in the large group, or volunteer responses as a group and take turns drawing the sketches on the flip chart.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit the movie excerpt and move to the sample story outlined on the next page.

2. Guide participants in planning a scene. Present a short scenario, taken from a movie, and ask participants to suggest ways to plan camera coverage for the scene or sequence they have viewed.

After participants have made their suggestions, look at the material again, to see how the director handled things. It is not uncommon for participant plans to be just as valid as those decided upon by professionals. Discuss the differences and similarities between the group's suggestions and the director's techniques.

- *Direct the group's attention to the story* used in the scriptwriting track of this program, in which a young girl wants to ask a boy to the school dance. Tell participants that they are going to plan the scene in which she asks him to attend the dance with her.

> A shy young girl wants to go to the school dance, but does not have a date or a dress. When she spends all her money to buy the dress, she must decide which of her boyfriends she can convince to go to the dance with her.

- *Explain to participants that they are going to look at one scene* that might be part of the story being told:

The girl emerges from school to find the boy she wants to ask to the dance talking with a group of his friends.

- *Ask group members to think about questions* such as how the girl is going to get him alone, or whether she will risk asking him while he is with his friends. Remind them not to make resolution too easy for the characters. For example, if someone suggests having the girl call the boy on the telephone and ask him to the dance, you might want to recommend changing that scene so that the character has to show more fortitude to reach her goal.

Write notes on the flip chart as participants outline what will happen in the scene between the boy and the girl.

3. **Practice creating a shot list.** Walk the group through creating a shot list based on the scene just described. Remind them that the action is the same, now matter how it is shot. (One reason the action of the scene is rehearsed and set before it is finalized is that new ideas may come out of seeing the rehearsal on set.) Write the following shots on the flip chart one at a time, so group members can see the process of creating the list.

- *Shot 1/MEDIUM SHOT*: The girl emerges from school, walks toward the camera so that the composition becomes a close-up. She remains somewhat far from the group of students she wants to join.

- *Shot 2/POV*: The girl's view is of the group of students in front of her; the guy she is interested in is there among them.

- *Shot 3/WIDE SHOT*: The girl takes a deep breath and begins to walk toward the group; camera stays with her as she passes right by the groups on her way to talk to the boy. She stops.

In this shot, it is also possible to place some of the other students between the camera and the girl, so that they become foreground obstacles, partially obscuring our view from time to time and giving us the appearance of a world with depth and dimension. Even though it is possible to cut to another shot here, one possibility is to continue filming the scene from this angle, because it will be helpful to have this footage later on; it can be extra coverage while the two characters have their conversation.

- *Shot 4/MEDIUM-WIDE SHOT*: The shot is from behind the girl, as she is stopped in front of this group of people. The group parts, and the boy walks forward. He waits.

- *Shot 5/CLOSE-UP*: The girl almost begins to speak, then notices the group is watching her.

- *Shot 6/POV*: The girl's view is of the guy, waiting.

These might be all of the shots needed, because Shots 3 and 4 can cover the actual exchange between the boy and girl. Because this is probably the pivotal scene in the movie, it might be good also to use several set-ups to cover the action.

ACTIVITY **3**

USING THE EXTERNAL MICROPHONE

TIME

30 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Explain microphone set-up.
② Review the steps completed in this session.

NOTE ABOUT MICROPHONES
As participants begin to do the one-minute movie exercise for today's session, make sure they take the external microphone with them. They should begin to get used to setting up the microphone and running the cable from the microphone to the audio adaptor on the camera.

Participants should also begin to routinely use the boom pole to mount the microphone when they record sound. This will involve rehearsing scenes and practicing camera moves so that the boom operator is familiar with the flow of action, and is prepared to follow and anticipate the movement of a scene.

1. **Explain microphone set-up**. Tell the group that the microphone included in the video camera is good for making basic videos, but they need to learn to use an external microphone with their projects. Using an external microphone will result in much better sound.

Familiarize the group with use of the external microphone set-up by guiding them through the following steps:

- *Place an AA battery in the power supply section* of the microphone and screw the two parts of the microphone together.

- *Thread the microphone through the shock mount*. Screw the shock mount to the top of the boom pole.

- *Make sure the microphone is in the "on" position*. The tiny power indicator light on the microphone will illuminate for only a moment when turned on; it does not remain illuminated at all times.

- *Connect the microphone to the female end* of the 25-foot XLR–XLR extension cord.

- *Plug the male end of the XLR extension cord* into the female XLR connector on the BeachTek adaptor.

- *Set both volume controls on the BeachTek adaptor* to approximately level 8.

- *Set the BeachTek adaptor to the "mono" position.* This will assign the sound recorded by the microphone to both channels on the videotape.

- *Insert the miniplug from the BeachTek adaptor* into the camera's "mic" input. This is located near the front, and on the side, of the camera. The camera will now default to the input of the external microphone.

For more on sound equipment and recording, see "Sound Recording Guidelines" in the Appendix section of this guide.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group the topics they have learned about in this session. Participants have:

- Practiced planning shot coverage for their scenes.
- Practiced working in groups to make shot lists and draw scene coverage diagrams to indicate camera positions.
- Become comfortable with the vocabulary of shots and coverage.
- Had a chance to use the camera with the external microphone while shooting a one-minute movie.

SESSION FIVE
PRE-PRODUCTION – PLANNING AND WORKING AS A TEAM

*"My position as the cinematographer is like playing cards. You are
the only one who sees what's in the director's hands—you deliver
the goods to help him make his plays."*

László Kovács, Cinematographer
"My Best Friend's Wedding," "Multiplicity," "Five Easy Pieces,"
"Paper Moon"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
70 minutes	**Activity 1** Ethics in Filmmaking (10 minutes) **Activity 2** Producing and Shooting on Location (10 minutes) **Activity 3** Crew Responsibilities (20 minutes) **Activity 4** Equipment Review (15 minutes) **Activity 5** Selecting Group Projects (15 minutes)	• Video camera • Tripod • External microphone and cable • Blank videotape • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers
PREPARATION		
Make photocopies of the "Basic Production Timeline" and "Crew Member Responsibilities" following this session, enough for everyone in the group to have a copy.		

ACTIVITY 1	ETHICS IN FILMMAKING
TIME	10 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Discuss ethics in filmmaking.

1. Discuss ethics in filmmaking. Talk to the group about ethics in filmmaking and what it involves.

- *Be considerate of others.* No matter what kind of film we are making, it is important to get in the habit of treating our co-workers well and being nice to those in the community with whom we come into contact. Filmmakers unfortunately have a reputation for marching right through to what they want to shoot, without regard for what stands in their way. This is not a good way to work, and worse, it makes it harder for those who come after us to do their work.

- *Be professional.* Sometimes we want that shot so badly, or we see someone working in a way we think we can do better, and it just seems like the easiest thing to do is to be rude, humiliate or embarrass someone. We should always resist this temptation. Although some people may be talented enough to get away with this kind of behavior, it is not professional and it is not necessary. It is better to be the kind of artist who is known for being civil, working with his or her crew well, and allowing people to do their jobs.

- *Be honest.* When you work in the community, be honest with shopkeepers and homeowners about how long you will be at their facility or place of business. Be prepared when you arrive, and take the time to treat their property with care. Return things to the same condition in which you found them. In making documentaries, it is a good idea to begin by asking permission to film and record the subjects you have chosen for your project.

A sample release form is included at the end of this session; it can be used to obtain permission from subjects and property owners involved in a film.

ACTIVITY 2

TIME

OVERVIEW

PRODUCING AND SHOOTING ON LOCATION

10 minutes

① Talk about the production timeline.
② Discuss locations needed for current projects.
③ Stress guidelines for shooting on location.

1. Talk about the production timeline. Distribute to the group copies of the "Basic Production Timeline" included at the end of this session. Provide a brief overview of a typical production schedule, by walking participants through the steps outlined on the timeline.

Explain that today's session has to do with PRE-PRODUCTION, an important element in shooting a film. Whether planning a documentary film or a fictional one, there is always a time for methodically planning shoots.

Pre-production planning is the key to a smooth project.

Tell the group that in today's session, they must decide on where to shoot the film. They will consider the following topics as they plan the project:

- The location for the film
- Gaining permission to shoot in public or private places
- Providing equipment, services, and protection to the cast and crew.

2. Discuss locations needed for current projects. Using examples from prospective member projects, list on a flip chart the locations needed to produce these films. Discuss with the group how these locations might be secured, and what they would need to do in order to gain permission.

3. Stress guidelines for shooting on location. Once participants have discussed potential locations, emphasize to them the guidelines for shooting on location:

- *Approach people and organizations in advance* about shooting in their homes or places of business. It is often surprising how many people, even though they are busy running businesses and dealing with daily responsibilities, are eager to help.

- *Consider the amount of time and the number of people* you will be bringing to the location, and make sure the location can handle these intrusions with a minimum of disruption.

- *Select places that are safe and near resources* you will need, such as food, phones and bathrooms.

- *Keep the number of locations to a minimum.* Filmmakers shooting a project that is going to be no more than a few minutes long should limit shooting to no more than three or four locations. It takes time and organization to transport crews and actors to new places; directions, equipment, and communication all must be coordinated flawlessly if things are to go smoothly.

- *Assign a Location Scout/Coordinator*. Make sure that there is one person, and only one person, whose chief responsibility is the coordination and communication for all location information, schedules, and changes. Typically, this position is called the LOCATION SCOUT/COORDINATOR.

ACTIVITY **3**   CREW RESPONSIBILITIES

TIME   20 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Explain the Certificate of Merit.
                             ② Describe crew responsibilities.

1. Explain the Certificate of Merit. Let group members know that, as they progress in the program, they may gravitate naturally to certain areas that hold greater interest to them. As the program expands, Clubs can offer these participants a way to continue working on new video projects without repeating the entire basic course.

If a participant establishes a proficiency in one or more areas, he or she can earn a Certificate of Merit that would qualify the group member to act in that craft or capacity on upcoming projects. To work on future projects, however, a participant would be expected to attend all crew and session meetings for the project he or she is working on.

2. Describe crew responsibilities. Describe the following roles to the group, and make sure participants understand that any of the following may be made up of teams, and are not necessarily the job of one person.

- *Producer:* The PRODUCER is responsible for overall communication and the supervision of all preparations. Producers should be reliable and be able to compile and maintain complete contact lists for everyone involved in the production. They should establish methods so that everyone is kept aware of changes and last-minute alterations in schedule, locations and transportation. Ultimately, the producer is responsible for the organization and support that allow the physical production to take place.

- *Director:* The DIRECTOR is responsible for telling the screen story in a way that is visually interesting and clear, and for getting the job done in the time allotted. This role is an unusual combination of both artistic skill (shots, performance, etc.) and grunt work (leading the crew, staying on time, relating to cast and crew members).

- *Writer:* The WRITER is responsible for inventing, or translating, the story into a form appropriate for the screen. It is important to note that most writing involves a great deal of rewriting. The best approach is to write the story first, then go back and take out everything that is overwritten. Every piece of dialogue that explains too much should be taken out, and every instance in which the writer reaches a conclusion for the audience should be eliminated, too. Professional screenwriters try to restrict their tools to those things viewers can see and hear. Good writers use visual clues and the actions of characters, so that the audience can come to its own conclusions.

- *Camera/Lighting Technician:* The CAMERA/LIGHTING TECHNICIAN is responsible for keeping the camera running, clean, and ready and makes sure the power supply and battery are prepared, fully charged and out of the way. The camera operator should be very familiar with the script so that he or she can contribute to choices relating to how to tell the story. If the camera simply remains on the outside of the action all of the time, as if watching a stage play, the audience will not be drawn into the story. The camera operator and the director should be challenging themselves all the time, asking what visual images will work best to keep the scene and the story moving forward. They select important moments in the story and emphasize their emotional importance through camera movement.

- *Sound/Editing Coordinator:* The SOUND COORDINATOR and EDITING COORDINATOR are often separate roles, but whoever does sound on the production may also be the primary editor. This often makes sense because the sound crew is in a good position to take notes on the production as it progresses.

Sound involves much more than standing next to the camera with the microphone boom pole. Because characters are not always going to speak toward the lens, sound recordists need to know the script intimately, and be able to move around with the characters to maintain a good recording position.

Not only should the sound person be working hard to record the dialogue well, but she or he should also be thinking about what sounds and effects should be recorded and gathered to support the emotional telling of the story. In a movie about waiting, it might be impossible to get the sound of a clock ticking in the same shot as one that shows someone in a waiting room. But it can be recorded separately, or another effect can be found that serves the same purpose. Thinking about the separate sound elements that will support the story is good preparation for the editing of the project.

- *Editor:* The EDITOR is responsible for putting together the pieces that will tell the story. It is usually a good idea, for group productions, to have the editor on the set, to keep an eye on the shots being gathered and to suggest others that might be needed later on.

Once you have reviewed all the primary roles with the group, ask participants to think about roles they are interested in during production of the film. Distribute copies of "Crew Member Responsibilities" (included at the end of this session) to all group members, and ask them to use the worksheet during production to record the responsibilities they have for development of the film.

For more information on these roles, see "Directing Guidelines," "Sound Recording Guidelines" and "Non-Linear Editing Techniques" in the Appendix section of this guide.

ACTIVITY 4

TIME

OVERVIEW

EQUIPMENT REVIEW

15 minutes

① Conduct the equipment exercise.

NOTE ABOUT EQUIPMENT
Although the goal is for participants to become familiar with the equipment, make sure they understand that speed in handling the camera should never come at the expense of caution and safety.

1. Conduct the equipment exercise. This exercise gives group members the chance to practice using the equipment and putting it together. Ask participants to:

• *Form into separate groups* and have each group put the equipment together, and then re-pack it.

• *Comment on the way* each group could improve its handling of the equipment.

• *Ask questions about any aspects* of the equipment they do not understand.

Explain to the group that, when the pressure and pace of production picks up, it will be easier for them – and will place less strain on the equipment – if they are thoroughly familiar with operating the camera and accessories.

ACTIVITY 5   SELECTING GROUP PROJECTS

TIME   15 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Guide participants in selecting a group project.
                                ② Review the steps completed in this session.

1. **Guide participants in selecting a group project.** If group members are working along with participants in the scriptwriting track, they can now work together to select a group project. Here are some key points to emphasize:

• *Help group members with their selections*. However you go about the process of choosing, keep in mind that some very good projects will not get chosen, and some of the projects chosen may turn out to be a little before their time. As leader, it is important to guide group members in their selections, to make sure the projects they choose are ready for production. Allowing projects to go forward when they are not ready will create problems down the road.

• *Make sure less visible participants get recognition they deserve*. This is a time when you can reward group members, who, because they are shy or less popular than others, might not normally have their work selected. There may be participants who have been working hard and deserve the opportunity to see their work on-screen, and you as leader can make sure they get the recognition they have earned.

• *Invite the group to vote on projects*. One idea is to take the votes of participants in a secret ballot; if group members vote for a piece that is ready, you can endorse the selection. This is one of the best ways to build credibility with group members, by producing the projects they want to make.

• *Allow participants to take charge of the project*. Once the projects are selected, remind participants of things that need to be done, and guide them whenever they need help.

- *Remind group members of the opportunities for learning.* Let participants know that much is learned by watching others making decisions in situations in which they will soon find themselves. If a participant wants to direct, but his or her project is not selected, it is a wonderful opportunity to see someone else make decisions and learn from it. Participants will begin to see that some things they disagree with turn out to be very successful.

- *Encourage participants to keep working on their scripts.* Time often helps those participants whose projects are not selected. By spending the rest of the session learning production skills and continuing to work on their own scripts, group members may wind up with a project that is much further along than the ones selected for production.

With these projects, participants learn not just about making movies, but also about working with others, planning, organization, responsibility and trust. Friendships are forged, and strained, when making films, just like in the world of professional filmmaking. Some of the pieces will be successful, others will not, but they will still be worthwhile.

2. **Review the steps completed in this session**. Remind group members of what they have learned about production in this session. Participants have:

- Thought about the practical aspects and logistics of shooting on location.
- Understood the ethics of filmmaking.
- Begun to understand various roles on the set and what each crew person's responsibilities are.
- Been introduced to the merit program, through which they can work on future projects without completing the entire course again.
- Reviewed the equipment.
- Selected projects to be produced.

Basic Production Timeline

The following is a timeline that includes steps for making a movie, based on an eight-week schedule. Your film might take more time, or less, but this timeline can serve as a guide.

Pre-Production: Week One

- Begin writing screenplay.

Pre-Production: Week Two

- Rewrite script.
- Choose actors.

Pre-Production: Week Three

- Complete next draft of screenplay.
- Create storyboard.
- Rehearse with actors.

Pre-Production: Week Four

- Complete final draft of screenplay.
- Continue rehearsals.
- Prepare for production.

Production: Weeks Five and Six

- Direct the actors.
- Shoot the scenes.
- Act the roles.
- Get ready to edit.

Post-Production: Weeks Seven and Eight

- Finish editing the movie.
- Choose and lay down music and sound effects.
- Hold a screening of the film.
- Have a wrap party.

Source: The Artists Rights Foundation. *Making Movies: A Guide for Young Filmmakers*. 2001.

Crew Member Responsibilities

Name _____ Date _____

Film _____ Crew Position _____

<u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>

Pre-Production: Week One

_____

_____

Pre-Production: Week Two

_____

_____

Pre-Production: Week Three

_____

_____

Pre-Production: Week Four

_____

_____

Production: Weeks Five and Six

_____

_____

Post-Production: Weeks Seven and Eight

_____

_____

On-Camera Release

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

     This On-Camera Release is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 2_____, by and between _____ and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Producer.

    I irrevocably assign and grant unto Producer the irrevocable and unconditional right and permission to use my name, likeness, voice and image for the purpose of production of the film/video/photography (thereinafter the "Program"), including the right and permission to copyright, use, produce, publish any such Program including but not limited to film, videotape, photographic pictures, portraits or other likenesses of me, in which I may be included in whole or in part, in color or black and white, made through any medium, including the use of any printed matter in conjunction with the promotion, advertisement or commercial use of said Program specifically including any broadcast and/or distribution throughout the world.

    I further authorize Producer to edit, to telecast, to rerun, to duplicate, to use, to syndicate, to license and to distribute in any medium, form or forum said Program in any other program or format in which all or part of said Program is incorporated. I understand and agree that Producer has no obligation to use said Program if they elect not to do so.

    I acknowledge and agree that, under the terms of my appearance as a work-for-hire, that any Program in which I appear and all rights pertaining thereto, specifically including all copyright rights, are entirely the property of Producer, their licensees, successors and assigns, absolutely and forever, for any and all copyright terms and all extension and renewal terms of copyright whether now known or hereafter created throughout the world, and for all uses and purposes whatsoever.

On-Camera Release (page two)

I further agree that I shall receive no compensation for participating in said Program in conjunction with my appearance therein. I waive any and all right to inspect or approve the finished Program, advertising copy or printed matter that may be used in conjunction with the Program, or to approve the eventual use for which it may be applied. Producer has explained the purpose and Producer agrees that I will be used for purposes explained, and will not be depicted in any degrading or illicit manner and that all uses are lawful. I irrevocably release and discharge Producer, their assigns, and all persons acting under Producer's permission or authority or those for whom they are acting, from and against any liability as the result of any distortion, blurring, alteration or optical illusion that may occur in the production of the Program, or processing, production or reproduction of the finished Program. I warrant that I am not a minor, am competent to contract in my own name, and that I have read the foregoing On-Camera Release and warrant that I fully understand the contents herein.

If any provision of this Release or application of it to any person or circumstance shall to any extent be invalid, the remainder of this Release or the application of any provision to persons or circumstances other than to those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected and each provision of this Release shall be valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law. This Release contains the entire agreement of the parties and any representation, warranties, promises or agreements or otherwise between the parties not included, shall be of no force and effect. This Release shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. This Release may be amended or terminated only by written instrument signed by both parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this On-Camera Release the day and year first above written.

_____

_____

Date:

On-Camera Release (page three)

PRODUCER: (Boys & Girls Club Representative)

_____

      I certify that I am the parent or guardian of _____,
named above, and I do irrevocably give my full consent and authorization without reservation
on behalf of said minor.

_____

PARENT/GUARDIAN Signature

_____

Date

_____

WITNESS Signature

_____

Date

SESSION SIX
PRODUCTION – SHOOTING THE FILM

"I like long takes, personally. I like the behavior of the actors when they relax and forget that they're acting. I think the hardest thing to do is to throw out your own prejudices. Don't be rigid, stay with the thing itself. It may take you down some road you didn't even know about. Because until you shoot it, it's really just an idea on paper."

Paul Mazursky, Director
"Enemies: A Love Story," "Moon Over Parador,"
"Down and Out in Beverly Hills," "Moscow on the Hudson"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** The Hollywood Method (30 minutes) **Activity 2** Set Vocabulary (10 minutes) **Activity 3** Keeping Records of Scenes (25 minutes) **Activity 4** Getting Ready for Filming (25 minutes)	• Video camera • Tripod • All production accessories • Blank videotape • Dry erase board • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

ACTIVITY **1**	THE HOLLYWOOD METHOD
TIME	30 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Outline the Hollywood Method. ② Discuss appropriate behavior on the set. ③ Emphasize the need for preparation.

NOTE ABOUT BLOCKING
During blocking, the director may work with the actors to make sure there is enough movement for the scene to feel natural, as well as to restrict the movement to an area or space that the camera crew can light and cover well. For example, a scene that takes place in a warehouse might be set in a corner of the large space, so the entire area does not have to be lit. When actors finalize their movements, they often place marks on the floor with tape. These marks help the camera crew know where the actors movements will take them and where they will stop, where to focus lighting (so that the actors walk into and out of proper illumination) and where to check and set camera focus.

1. Outline the Hollywood Method. Explain to the group that they have learned about the planning (pre-production) stage of filmmaking, and now they are going to learn about the actual shooting of a film, the PRODUCTION phase.

Let the group know that the HOLLYWOOD METHOD is a simple approach to shooting movies. It is simply a way to first look at scenes without recording anything on camera or the microphone. Once everyone has arrived on the set, the director gathers everyone together and the crew watches as the actors run through the entire scene (not just the first shot). By doing nothing except watching, very carefully, everyone on the crew is able to gain a clear idea of the action and movement that will take place in the scene, and the director has time to work with the actors to finalize the performance and the actors' movements.

The camera does not roll until the director is satisfied that each moment of the scene fits into the overall mosaic of the movie. No scenes are shot until the director and actors feel they are working to effectively tell the story.

The process for the Hollywood Method is as follows:

• *Block the scene.* As the actors go through the entire scene, the director pays attention to how they physically move about as it relates to their performances. This is called BLOCKING. Blocking affects final decisions about individual shots, and shot lists can be altered accordingly.

- *Light/prep the shot.* Once the rehearsal is finished, the actors can be sent to hair and make-up, or just stand aside, while the crew scouts where to place the camera and the lights, and moves the equipment into place for the first shot.

One of the most valuable outcomes of this method is that it helps avoid one of the pitfalls of shooting scenes in pieces. Without seeing the story as a whole, it is easy to wind up with shots in which the action, or the physical placement of the actors, does not match. This is much less likely to happen when each shot is understood to be a piece of the entire action, and when that action has already been linked as a whole through a rehearsal.

- *Rehearse the shot.* The rehearsal in advance of shooting is for the specific shot being set up. Before any single shot is taken, run-throughs are done with the camera and sound crews at the ready.

The scene can be performed at half-speed if the camera or sound crews need to practice a move to keep up with the action. Once the actors and the crew are comfortable with what is going to happen in the shot being rehearsed, the shot can be filmed.

- *Shoot the scene.* This is where repeated takes from the same camera position are done until the director is confident that the performance has been recorded sufficiently, and the crew can move along to the next camera position or begin a new scene.

The standard practice is to shoot scenes starting with wider shots, and then move in with tighter shots and close-ups. This is especially important, because it is easier to first prep and light a slightly larger area, and then later match the overall lighting when the close-ups are shot.

2. Discuss appropriate behavior on the set. Let participants know that there is an expected set of behaviors for working on a movie, and the same expectations apply in this group:

- *Maintain a quiet set*. A sense of calm is the goal on any set, where chaos is too often the rule. On a professional set, the crew is often asked to keep the noise level down and to speak to one another in soft voices. The crew works more efficiently, and the actors concentrate better, when everyone can hear themselves think.

- *Work together as a team*. Especially in documentary work, subjects will have more confidence, and provide better material, if the crew appears to be working together, and not in conflict with one another.

- *Relax and have fun*. Being quiet does not mean that the set has to be tense. People can relax and have a good time as they go about their work.

3. Emphasize the need for preparation. Tell the group that, on the day shooting begins, everyone should have copies of the scenes to be shot. The crew should always be well informed about the schedule for the day and the scenes and shots they are expected to complete, and they should also be told the order in which the material will be shot.

The rehearsal can begin immediately upon arrival, even while crew members are getting settled in. By the time the run-through is complete, everyone knows exactly what is expected of them and can begin work.

When the preparation period begins, the sound crew knows where they can record the best sound, the lighting crew knows where to place the lights, and the camera crew knows where to put the camera for the first shot. Everyone can do his or her work without separate instructions from the director.

For more on directing, see "Directing Guidelines" in the Appendix section of this guide.

ACTIVITY 2   SET VOCABULARY

TIME   10 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Review basic set vocabulary and directions.

---

1. Review basic set vocabulary and directions. Review the key terms and directions that participants are likely to hear on the production set.

Explain that a SLATE, or dry erase board, for the scene should be prepared in advance. The slate should list the production name, date, scene and take numbers. Whoever is holding the slate should move into position, hold the slate in front of the camera, tight enough in frame, so that it can be clearly read on screen. The editor will need to identify shots by reading the slate later on in the editing room. Here are the basic set directions participants will hear:

- *Ready*. If the slate person cannot get to a convenient spot, the camera can quickly zoom in, or PAN (a movement of the camera from one side to the other) to see it, and then the camera operator will reset before saying, "Ready."

- *Quiet*. To signal that a shot is about to be filmed the director can say, "Quiet, please."

- *Roll camera*. When everyone is ready, the director then says, "Roll camera."

- *Rolling*. The camera operator confirms the call by pressing the "record" button and saying, "Rolling."

- *Speed*. Allowing for the camera to work up to proper speed (which is essential for the material to be suitable for editing) takes a few seconds. After rolling, the camera operator should wait, or count down from 5 and say "Speed." (Usually, recording the slate allows these 5 seconds to pass.)

- *Action*. After the call of "Speed," the director should say "Action."

- *Cut*. When the action of the shot is completed, the director says "Cut," and the camera operator presses the button to stop recording. Now, the director can confer with the actors and the crew, and decide whether to do another take or move on to a new camera position.

Activity **3**   Keeping Records of Scenes

Time   25 minutes

Overview   ① Demonstrate how to identify scene numbers.
                        ② Detail how to record sound effects.
                        ③ Describe the use of camera notes.

---

1. Demonstrate how to identify scene numbers. Remind participants that a SCENE is a segment of the story that occurs in one place over one period of time. Outline for the group the process of identifying scene numbers by using a dry erase board as a slate.

Within a scene, we number each TAKE, which is a separate shot of the same scene. A master shot (wide shot of an entire scene), if used, is given the scene number only. Using the dry erase board, we would create a slate to look like this:

```
+-----------------------------+
|                             |
+-----------------------------+
|                             |
| Title of Production         |
|                             |
| Scene 6                     |
|                             |
| Take #1                     |
|                             |
|                             |
+-----------------------------+
```

For the next take of the same shot, it would be "Take 2."

```
+-----------------------------+
|                             |
+-----------------------------+
|                             |
| Title of Production         |
|                             |
| Scene 6                     |
|                             |
| Take #2                     |
|                             |
|                             |
+-----------------------------+
```

However, for the next camera set-up within the scene, no matter what piece of action it is recording, and no matter how far out of sequence within the scene it is, the slate would read (with the "a" designating a new camera set-up):

Title of Production
Scene 6a
Take #1

Within a scene, each new camera set-up progresses by one letter. Sometimes the letter "I" is not used, because it can be confused with the numeral "1". Similarly the letter "O" is not used, it can easily be confused with a zero.

2. Detail how to record sound effects. Make sure participants get in the habit of using the slate, even when recording sound effects. If the scene calls for a creaky door, even if the one on the set creaks just fine, the sound should be recorded separately from its use in the scene. The microphone should be placed very close to the door, no actors should be used, and the slate should be marked to read the following:

Title of Production
Scene 6a
SFX: Creaky Door

Often several takes are done in succession, and the slate is kept in the frame for all of them.

The slate is kept in the frame for the entire time the camera is running and recording the sound effect.

Use of the slate for sound effects means that no visual information is intended during the time the camera is running. If the editor looked at the material later and did not see a slate, he or she might think the material on screen was intended to be a shot.

3. Describe the use of camera notes. Explain to participants that CAMERA NOTES are taken on set, to record details about scenes and takes for reference during the editing phase.

If the action is moving too quickly to record, camera notes can also be compiled by watching the raw material at a later time. If a take is very good, a note should be made right away to save time later; the same is true if a take is particularly bad.

Share the following camera notes with the group by writing them on the flip chart or dry erase board:

Tape #	Counter #	Scene/ Take #	Description	Notes
1	:30 sec	6/#2	Wide shot	Great; use this!
1	1:52	4a/#1	Close up	No good
1	2:40	4a/#2	" "	Good
1	3:10	8	Wide Shot	NG
1	5:25	8	Wide Shot	Good

Camera notes help the filmmaker record which shots are good, and which should not be used.

ACTIVITY 4

TIME

OVERVIEW

GETTING READY FOR FILMING

25 minutes

① Arrange group production meetings.
② Review production guidelines.
③ Lead the filming exercise.
④ Review the steps completed in this session.

---

1. Arrange group production meetings. Allow time in each of the upcoming sessions for production groups to meet and begin planning their shoot. The more work participants grow used to doing themselves, the more the finished product will reflect their work and allow them a feeling of accomplishment. Use the rest of the session to allow groups to speak with each other about job responsibilities and a shooting schedule. Remind them to complete the following tasks:

- *Create crew contact sheets*, including each member's phone number and e-mail address.

- *Make a list of locations*, including addresses, directions and maps if necessary.

- *Discuss transportation issues*, including how to help crew and cast get to and from the set/location.

- *Develop a shooting schedule*, writing out the schedule and making sure everyone has a copy.

- *Establish a procedure for communicating changes* (phone or e-mail).

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 2 and move directly to Step 3.

2. Review production guidelines. Remind participants of the basic guidelines for making sure production goes as smoothly as possible.

- *The set should be a relaxed, easygoing place.* It should not be a high-pitched, tense, loud work environment.

- *Everyone should be familiar with his or her job*, and should arrive on time, ready to work, with a professional attitude.

- *Crew members should check in with the department head* about what is needed on a given day. They may know this automatically, if the script dictates what is going to occur in a particular set.

- *Production should be limited* to a period of one week.

- *Crew members should plan ahead to be able to react swiftly*, professionally and without panic to any unexpected events. The more planning a crew does, the better they will be able to adapt quickly when situations arise.

NOTE ABOUT FILMING
If they are shooting outdoors, participants will be using daylight as the source of light; if indoors, they will use overhead room lighting. If group members are interested in more advanced lighting techniques for future projects, you may want to give them copies of "Video Camera Basics," which appear in the Appendix section of this guide.

3. Lead the filming exercise. Tell the group that during this exercise, they will practice working as a crew and shooting a scene. The purpose is to help participants be prepared to begin shooting the project the group has selected for production.

- *Remind participants to make sure all arrangements and equipment* are double-checked before they begin.

- *Have group members set up a scene from one of the projects* they will be producing and try to shoot it as they will in the field. For fiction projects, crew members and actors can rehearse performance, scene coverage, slating and taking set notes.

- *Direct participants to employ the Hollywood Method* and get used to a system of set communication and behavior.

- *If the film is a documentary, instruct the crew to practice moving as a unit*, safety carrying the equipment and shooting while on the move. They should be able to move

quickly and in unison to keep up with a rapidly unfolding situation or a person moving swiftly through a crowd. Ask a volunteer to role-play the subject of the documentary.

4. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group the new learning they have gained during this session. Participants have:

- Learned the Hollywood Method of shooting a scene, including blocking, preparation, rehearsing and shooting.
- Been introduced to set vocabulary.
- Understood how to use camera notes to record scenes and sound effects.
- Practiced shooting a scene.

For more information about production techniques, see "Video Camera Basics" in the Appendix section of this guide.

SESSION SEVEN
POST-PRODUCTION – EDITING THE FILM

*"In fact, editing is a lot like writing. You are rewriting a film.
You have a script but you're rewriting a script with the film . . . You
become a writer, but you're writing with images, you're writing with
music, you're writing with performances, you're writing with all the
things—intangible things as well—that make an emotional event."*

Carol Littleton, Editor
"Beloved," "The Big Chill," "E.T. the Extra Terrestrial," "Body Heat"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Introduction to Editing (30 minutes) **Activity 2** Importing Production Material (40 minutes) **Activity 3** Basic Editing Tools (20 minutes)	• Computer (with Microsoft Windows Movie Maker or other video editing software package) • FireWire card (or other capture device) • Source tapes • Video camera • Tripod • All production accessories (for groups still in production) • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

PREPARATION
Before the session begins, make sure your computer is loaded with the appropriate capture device. If you are using Microsoft Windows Movie Maker, it will recognize automatically most capture devices, such as a FireWire card or an analog video capture card. Consult the documentation that comes with your capture device to make sure it is installed correctly.

ACTIVITY **1**   INTRODUCTION TO EDITING

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Define the process of editing.
                            ② Explain basic editing guidelines.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 1 and move directly to Step 2.

1. Define the process of editing. Talk to participants about the importance of EDITING in the development of a film. Highlight the following key points for the group:

Editing is the process of selecting and combining the scenes in a way that most effectively tells the story.

• *Editing is where the scene comes to life*. Editing is probably one of the least understood aspects of the filmmaking process, because it is thought of often as the place to fix problems that have occurred during shooting, but it is so much more than that. Editing is where the magic happens, where the scene a director has envisioned becomes real. There are a hundreds of decisions to make at the editing stage, and each one can change how the final film will be perceived.

• *Editing is an important element in shaping the story*. Because an image gets its meaning from those that come before and after, editing involves juxtapositions. For example, consider a shot of a man running to look out of a window. If the film cuts to a shot of a woman entering the house, it is most likely a love story. If it cuts to a shot of a police car, the film may involve a crime story. The possibilities are endless, and editing is an important element in shaping the overall story. When a filmmaker is thinking about how to shoot a scene, what he or she is really thinking about is how to edit the scene.

- *Editing is breaking a story into its smallest elements.* It is the details that are going to make a film interesting. If there is going to be a scene in which two characters are having dinner together, there are still many decisions to be made. What is really going on here? Is this a first date? Are the characters nervous?

If so, along with the standard wide shots and close-ups, the director may want to shoot what are called CUT-AWAYS or INSERTS. These are the small details, like a shot of one of the character's hands nervously playing with a napkin, or a shoe impatiently tapping under the table, or the waiter laughing at their nervousness. These are the visual clues that tell the audience what is happening without the characters having to utter a word. These are also the shots that allow the editor to tell the story in a more powerful way.

Cut-aways or inserts are the small details, the close-up shots that give the audience visual clues about what is happening in the film.

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2. Explain basic editing guidelines. Tell the group that sometimes an editor might be working simultaneously as a film is being shot, though often far from where shooting takes place. Here is an overview of the steps in the editing process, and these can serve as basic guidelines for participants to follow as they edit their projects:

- *Screen and organize the scenes.* When the raw footage, referred to as DAILIES, comes to the cutting room, it must be screened and organized, so that the editor will be ready to select from the scenes as he or she puts together the film.

- *Decide on best takes and camera angles*. An editor must look at everything that has been shot and decide on the best take and camera angle (called SELECTS), as well as the best frame to cut on.

- *Determine the pacing and the cutting based on the story.* A good editor needs to know how to use the techniques at his or her disposal to further the story and create an excitement and pace that fit the film. Often, too many effects can confuse viewers and distract them. Quick cuts may work well in action sequences, such as a car chase or fight scene, but during dramatic scenes, it is often better to slow down.

By letting the viewer watch the actors and feel what they are feeling, more drama is created. For example, it is often more dramatic to linger on a reaction shot, the face of the person who is *not* speaking. The choices that the editor makes about how long to linger on someone's face, or when to cut to a close-up, will build up or tone down the drama of each scene. The combination of all of these choices can make a film a classic or a flop.

For more information on editing, see "Non-Linear Editing Techniques" in the Appendix section of this guide.

ACTIVITY **2**   IMPORTING PRODUCTION MATERIAL

TIME   40 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Talk about how to prepare for editing.
                                 ② Demonstrate the process of logging.
                                 ③ Explain how to organize a project.
                                 ④ Outline the steps in importing clips.
                                 ⑤ Explain the method for naming clips.

NOTE ABOUT PRODUCTION
In order to teach editing and assembly techniques to group members, you will have to demonstrate the methods yourself, using the editing software loaded on the computer. Because you will be guiding and showing participants how to do the techniques during the program sessions, it is important to allow ample time for group members to practice what they have learned on their own. Although your guidance and support is a necessary part of the program, the goal for participants is to learn to complete the pre-production, production and post-production steps independently.

1. Talk about how to prepare for editing. Tell the group that in today's session, they will learn to log and import their material, review notes from the set and think about how to assemble the shots in the order they intend to use them. Explain that all of this work is an important first step in the editing process. Review with the group key points to remember when editing:

• *Keep the raw material to a minimum*. The first thing to keep in mind when importing material and editing participant projects is that the amount of raw material should be kept to a minimum. Direct participants to shoot no more than one hour of original footage. Adhering to this limitation teaches a certain discipline in approach.

• *Conceptualize in advance*. If participants have planned ahead, when the material comes up short, they will have to do only a minimum of re-shooting. Encouraging participants to conceptualize the story in their minds early on improves critical thinking skills, by encouraging them to anticipate needs and plan in advance.

• *Review material before importing*. It is important to review the material before importing *only* the selected takes into the computer. Participants should review their notes from the production, choose the best takes, and decide as best they can the material they intend to use.

All raw material should be reviewed, and then only the selected takes should be imported into the computer.

2. **Demonstrate the process of logging**. Tell participants that the process of reviewing material and organizing their notes on paper is called LOGGING. A log, which can be simply written out on a sheet of paper, might look like this:

Tape #	Counter #	Scene/ Take #	Description	Notes
1	:30 sec	6/3	Wide shot	Only beg. is good
1	2:50	3a/2	Close-up	Looks around
1	6:45	4b/1	Medium shot	Good for whole scene
1	12:00	1/2	Close-up	Best take

Before sitting down at the computer to cut the project together, editors create what is called a PAPER EDIT. For this, he or she reviews both the script and the log, and then lists the selected takes in the order they are expected to be used.

The first few shots of a paper edit might look something like this. Remember, for the paper edit, the shots will not be listed in chronological order of how they were shot, but in the order they will be used in the project.

Tape #	Counter #	Scene/ Take #	Description	Notes
2	14:00 min	1/3	Wide shot	Only beg. is good
1	1:30	1a/2	Close-up	Looks around
1	2:50	1b/1	Medium shot	Good for whole scene
2	16:30	2a/2	Close-up	Great

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 3 and move directly to Step 4.

This kind of preparation allows the editor to quickly put together a ROUGH ASSEMBLY of the project, in probably just a few hours of editing.

A rough assembly puts together the selected clips roughly in the order they will appear in the final film.

Logging is important, because it can lead you to the right place on the source tape. Although most of the material within a scene is likely to be clustered together on a source tape, this is not always the case. Often, two scenes that follow each other in the script will be shot at completely different times during production, so it is important to keep an accurate log. This will save a lot of time when the editor is ready to import clips and organize them on the desktop.

3. **Explain how to organize a project**. Tell the group that it is important for them to learn to organize the material they will be using for the project on the computer's hard drive.

- *Create a new project folder on the hard drive*, before importing material to the computer.

- *Give the folder the name of the project about to be edited*. This folder will house all of the media clips as well as the edited scenes and sequences for this project. This is an important step, because if you import clips from different projects into the same folder, you may have difficulty telling one from the other if they have not yet been given distinctive names. For instance, any two projects are each likely to have a "Scene 2, Take 1," so the name often is not enough to tell them apart.

- *Maintain the footage log and paper edit*. By keeping and updating the log that corresponds to the media clips for your project, you will be able to know which clips you would like to capture, in what order, and on which source tape they can be found.

4. Outline the steps in importing clips. Let the group know that the first step in the editing process is to import CLIPS using the editing software on your computer. Explain that clips can include video files or audio clips that you want to store on your computer so you can use them in your project. When the clips are arranged in order, they form the film you are creating.

Clips can include video files or audio files that, when arranged in order, form the final film being created.

The process for importing clips is fairly simple and straightforward, regardless of the editing software you are using. Demonstrate this process for participants, explaining the steps as you go along:

- *Make sure the camera is connected to the computer with the FireWire card* (or other capture device), and the camera is in the "VTR" mode. This allows the computer to use its remote control capability to communicate with the camera. (You will have done this in advance, but it is a good idea to show participants this step anyway.)

- *On the "File" menu, select the "Import" command.* When the "Select the File To Import" dialog box appears, it will list the default location for the "Import path."

- *Specify the "Import path" from which you want to import video clips.* Designate the appropriate drive on your computer.

- *Make sure the "Create clips for video files" option is checked.* With this option selected, the program breaks down the video file into clips. (If you want to have the video file imported as one clip, do not check the box.)

- *Save the clips in the folder you have designated for this project.* Click on the folder to import the clips into the selected folder.

Once you have browsed to the folder where you want to store your imported clips, the software will continue to place material in that same folder. As participants get more experienced and their projects become more ambitious, they may choose to create additional folders, perhaps one for each scene or segment of the project. This can simplify finding and loading clips before editing a segment, particularly in longer projects: an entire file of clips can be imported at once, rather than importing clips one at a time.

5. Explain the method for naming clips. Explain to participants that, once they have imported their clips, they should give them more descriptive names. The computer assigns generic names such as "Clip 1" and "Clip 2" and uses these labels repeatedly for different projects. This can create confusion unless the editor renames the individual clips in within each project. Here are some basic guidelines for naming clips:

- *Keep names short, but also give clips names that will help to easily identify* the various sequences during the editing process. It is often useful to include the scene or take number of a clip. For example, "5/2MS danruns.avi" can mean "Scene 5, Take 2, medium shot of Dan running."

- *Use the "Rename" command or keyboard shortcut.* Renaming clips will help keep the project organized and ready for editing at any time.

- *Do not rename clips once editing has begun.* Once clips have been imported to a project file and the editing process has begun, it is not a good idea to rename them. If the clip names have been changed, the video editing software may have trouble finding the version of the program you are currently working on.

Renaming of clips should always be done *before* editing begins on a project.

ACTIVITY 3

BASIC EDITING TOOLS

TIME

20 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Explain the purpose of storyboarding.
② Describe how to import sound clips.
③ Explain how to adjust volume on audio clips.
④ Review the steps completed in this session.

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1. Explain the purpose of storyboarding. Tell the group that STORYBOARDS, which are similar to the panels of a comic strip, show the sequence of individual clips in a film. In the editing software program, the storyboard is one of the workspaces in which editors assemble the film (the other is the TIMELINE).

Storyboards and timelines allow the editor to preview, organize, order and rearrange film clips while editing.

The storyboarding function of the software allows the editor to preview, organize, order and rearrange film clips. Stress the following points to the group as you demonstrate the storyboarding function:

- *You can add clips to the storyboard* by dragging them and assembling the shots so that they are roughly in the order you expect to use them.

- *Some shots may be used twice* and, at this point, the clips cannot be placed in perfect order. Every time you open the project, the clips will appear in the same order in the project window.

- *You can order the clips in the storyboard view* to create the first rough assembly of the film.

2. Describe how to import sound clips. Show participants how to import sound clips into their projects by walking them through the following steps:

- *Locate the audio materials on the source tapes.* Use the log to find the audio clips on the source tapes. If you used the slate technique for recording audio that was described earlier, you can also use the camera's LCD screen or viewfinder as you scroll through the material to locate the right spot on the tape. It should be easy to find the specific audio clips you are seeking by looking for the slate message displayed during the recording.

- *Follow the process for importing video clips*. Audio clips from source tapes can be imported by using the same process as for video clips.

- *Rearrange and order the audio clips in timeline view*. Use the timeline view to synchronize the sounds with the video clips. Audio clips appear on the audio track of the timeline, and cannot be edited in the storyboard view.

3. Explain how to adjust volume on audio clips. Discuss with the group the need to adjust the volume on various audio clips that are being used in the film. Because you are using both an AUDIO track (music or sound effects recorded separately from the video) and a VIDEO track (containing the normal voices and dialog in the video), the sound levels need to be adjusted so that it does not become confusing.

Most editing software programs contain an "Audio Levels" control or dialog box, that allows the sound editor to balance the various audio sources for the desired outcome. It is possible to adjust the volume so that one audio source plays louder than the other, or so they both play at the same level.

Demonstrate for the group how to use the volume adjustment feature.

4. Review the steps completed in this session. Acknowledge to participants what they have learned about editing in this session. Participants have:

- Learned about the creative choices the editor makes, to build drama and tell the story in the most effective way.
- Reviewed their notes from the production and, in preparation for editing, have made logs of their selected takes.
- Created a paper edit, with the selected takes listed in the order they plan to use them.
- Logged tapes that have been loaded into editing software.
- Storyboarded project clips to prepare the first rough assembly.

SESSION EIGHT
POST-PRODUCTION – FINE-TUNING THE EDIT

*"I think all the good ones [directors] are loose. None of them made
a scene until they thought it was any good. I've watched directors sit
on a set all morning and never do a scene. Then they'd do all the day's
work in the afternoon. Directors are storytellers. If we can't change
something, we're no good. Because you're not trying to photograph
a budget or a cost sheet. You're trying to make a scene
that's going to be good, the best you know how."*

Howard Hawks, Director
"The Big Sleep," "Rio Bravo," "Red River," "Bringing Up Baby,"
"Only Angels Have Wings"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
90 minutes Note: If time does not allow for a 90-minute session, Club leaders may omit certain portions of the activities. Guidelines are included within the activity directions.	**Activity 1** Rough Assembly (25 minutes) **Activity 2** Special Effects and Transitions (15 minutes) **Activity 3** The Fine Cut (10 minutes) **Activity 4** Sound Simplicity (20 minutes) **Activity 5** Re-Shoots and Pick-Ups (20 minutes)	• Computer (with Microsoft Windows Movie Maker or other video editing software package) • FireWire card (or other capture device) • Source tapes • Video camera • Tripod • All production accessories (for groups still in production) • Paper • Pens and pencils • Flip chart • Markers

ACTIVITY **1**   ROUGH ASSEMBLY

TIME   25 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Demonstrate how to put together the rough assembly.
                                  ② Show participants how to trim shots.

NOTE ABOUT SOFTWARE
You may have to adjust the steps described here, based on the particular video editing software program you are using. The steps outlined here are fairly generic, but may be slightly different for your editing software package.

1. Demonstrate how to put together the rough assembly.
Now that participants have learned some basic editing techniques, it is time for them to begin to put together a rough assembly, also known as a FIRST CUT. Review the process with the group:

• *Connect the video camera to the computer* using the FireWire card (or other capture device), and place the camera into "VTR" mode.

• *Open the editing software program*, then go to the project folder for the project you have begun to assemble.

• *Load and import the project clips* into the timeline window. Sometimes the software needs you to "show" it where the clips are by highlighting the individual clips you want to use. If you get a message saying the software cannot find a clip, browse through the project folder, then highlight and double-click on the clip name, or series of clip names, and they will be imported into the timeline window. You can also import an entire folder of clips, and can select more than one clip at a time.

NOTE ABOUT ROUGH ASSEMBLY
Because you have already demonstrated the process of importing and arranging clips (in Session Seven), you may choose to ask a group member to complete the rough assembly for the group project. Depending on how many computers you have access to, you also might have several group members working individually to become familiar with the video editing software, and the process of putting together the rough assembly.

• *Order the clips in the timeline*. To put together a rough assembly or first cut, simply drag the clips you intend to use onto the timeline, in the order you think they be used in the film. After you put them into the timeline, you will be able to TRIM the clips, by marking the start and end points. As you work in the timeline view, you can go into each clip and continue to shorten, or trim, the beginning and end (HEAD and TAIL) of each shot in order to fine-tune the cut.

An editor trims a clip in order to eliminate portions they do not want to appear in the final film.

- *Save the timeline.* Once you have loaded and ordered all the clips, including audio clips, save the timeline window right away. To do this, click "Save Project" in the File menu, type in the file name and click "Save."

Once you have saved a project, you can open it at any time and edit it further; if you do not save it, you will have to recreate the timeline by arranging all of the clips again. If you want to try changes but still maintain the previous version – something editors do all the time – save the timeline with a new name, using the date (or time of day) to differentiate cuts. For example, "Boy meets girl rough 1.dvl" and "Boy meets girl rough 2.dvl" are two different versions of the same project, both at the rough assembly stage.

2. **Show participants how to trim shots.** Explain to the group that they will need to trim the clips to eliminate portions that they do not want to appear in the final project. Trimming can only be done after clips have been dragged to the timeline (although some software programs allow trimming before this step). Demonstrate how to trim shots, by detailing the following steps:

- *Click on the clip you want to trim*, and then click "Play" in the monitor in order to play the clip. You can go to the "Properties" view if you want to see the start and end times for the clip.

- *Click the "Zoom In" or "Zoom Out" button,* so that the timeline shows the clip in three-second increments. By zooming in on the timeline, the increments get smaller, so you can see the timing in even more detail.

- *Play the clip again by clicking "Play" in the monitor.* When the clip reaches the point you would like to trim, click "Pause."

- *Move in small increments from one frame to the next* by using the "Previous Frame" or "Next Frame" button on the monitor.

- *Click "Set End Trim Point" on the Clip menu*, and the clip will stop playing. You can then click the last black clip near the end of the project and trim it so that it plays for a few seconds.

As you review these steps, stress to the group the importance of controlling the material, by deciding what to keep and what to cut. As each new shot is added to the project, participants will be deciding whether a shot is necessary or should be eliminated. Sometimes favorite shots have to be cut because they slow the action too much or prove confusing. This is what is known as "winding up on the cutting-room floor."

Explain to the group that, once they have placed all of the shots, in order, in the timeline, and have trimmed the shots, they have completed the rough assembly or first cut.

ACTIVITY **2**	SPECIAL EFFECTS AND TRANSITIONS
TIME	15 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Discuss the use of special effects and transitions.
	② Explain the cut and dissolve technique.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this activity, omit Step 1 and move directly to Step 2.

1. Discuss the use of special effects and transitions. Participants may want to use special effects or transitions in their projects, and there are many different types from which to choose. Review with the group some basic guidelines for using special effects and transitions:

- *Avoid adding special effects when filming.* Many video cameras have special effects and transitions features built into the camera, so it is possible to add these when filming. It is important to limit any effects used at the filming stage, however, because they cannot be eliminated later in the editing stage. If you do want to use effects or transition, cut the project first without them, so you do not waste time on shots or transitions that may later be eliminated. Make sure the project works in a very simple fashion, and then go back and insert the transitions as one of your final steps.

- *Limit transitions and effects.* For the purposes of this program, it is a good idea to limit scene transitions and effects. (Techniques for transitions will be presented next.) Special effects can sometimes be overdone and divert the viewers' attention away from the story.

- *Keep titles simple.* Participants can add visual effects to images that have already been shot, effects such as titles, animations and stills. If you want to add an effect to a film in the editing program you are using, you can use a graphics program to create the stills or animation with selected shots, then import the stills into your movie. Titles should be either simple titles over a solid background or video clips.

2. Explain the cut and dissolve technique. Let the group know that they can create a CUT or a CROSS-FADE (also called a DISSOLVE) transition between clips. Explain that, with a cut, there is no transition between the clips; a cross-fade transition gradually replaces the content of the clip that is ending with video from the clip that follows it. The length of the transition is determined by the amount of the overlap between the two clips. Demonstrate how to insert the cross-fade transition by highlighting the following steps:

- *On the view menu, go to the timeline view*. When adding transitions, you must be in the timeline view. You can see the transitions in the storyboard view, but not the length and the overlap.

- *Zoom in so that the time display shows increments of about one second.*

- *Click the first black clip*, and drag the "End" trim handle so there is a two-second transition between this clip and Clip #2.

- *Drag the start trim handle over the end of Clip #1*, so there is a one-second transition between this clip and the black clip.

Tell the group that transitions can be used with both audio and video clips. When a transition is inserted between two audio clips, both play simultaneously for the overlapping time and the volume of each is reduced to half of the normal volume.

A cross-fade, or dissolve, gradually replaces the content of the clip that is ending with video from one following it.

ACTIVITY **3**   THE FINE CUT

TIME   10 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Discuss the fine cut.

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1. Discuss the fine cut. Tell the group that, once they have completed the rough assembly, the next step is to put the finishing touches on their film to produce the FINE CUT. Review the material with the production group to guide them in making the following creative decisions:

- *Decide which shots should be used* and which, if any, should be eliminated.

- *Think about whether the order of the scenes* should change.

- *Determine whether special effects* should be added or eliminated.

- *Consider whether the transitions* are smooth and effective.

- *Evaluate whether there are any shots missing* from the film that would greatly enhance it if they were added.

- *Decide whether some scenes need to be re-shot.*

The fine cut, the next stage after the rough assembly, is an edited version of the film with all unnecessary shots and scenes removed.

ACTIVITY 4   SOUND SIMPLICITY

TIME   20 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Discuss tips for successful sound.
                                             ② Talk about sound mixing.

TIME SAVER
To save time during this session, omit Activity 4 and move on to Activity 5.

1. Discuss tips for successful sound. Emphasize the following points about creating a successful sound track:

- *Limit the sound to sync-sound only.* Sync-sound refers to the audio track recorded "live" with the picture.

- *Use a working sound track to help you visualize the final film.* This means laying any music or any sound effect – it does not have to be the final music or effect at this point – onto a sequence so you can judge the material better and have a better idea of how the final film will appear.

2. Talk about sound mixing. Remind the group that in the last session, they learned how to adjust the volume of the AUDIO track – music or sound effects recorded separately from the video – and the VIDEO track – containing the normal voices and dialog in the video – so that the overall sound track would not be confusing to the audience.

In order to do more detailed and complex sound work, it often is helpful to have more than one audio track to mix against the production track. This allows more than one sound at a time to be played on top of the production track, something very common in feature films.

Some software programs allow for more advanced mixing capabilities; if yours does not, you will need additional equipment for sound mixing:

- *Multi-track recorder* allows recording several tracks at one time.

- *An external mixer* allows you to control the overall balance of all the tracks you are recording.

- *Duplex sound card* enables you to capture the sound of the production track as it plays back.

If your software editing program has multi-track sound capabilities, you will be able to create a layered sound by placing different sound elements synchronized on multiple tracks.

For more information on sound, see "Sound Recording Guidelines" in the Appendix section of this guide.

ACTIVITY 5   RE-SHOOTS AND PICK-UPS

TIME   20 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Evaluate the need for re-shooting and pick-ups.
                                    ② Plan for transitions.
                                    ③ Review the steps completed in this session.

1. Evaluate the need for re-shooting and pick-ups. Explain to participants that, since most professional films allow time for re-shooting, the group might want to consider a re-shoot as well. As you review material with the production group, and particularly as you close in on a fine cut, consider whether re-shooting is necessary.

• *Decide whether re-shooting would improve the film*. If only a couple of shots here and there would greatly improve the final product, have participants plan to go out and get those shots. If it would take more than just a few shots, and if you feel the entire project was somewhat poorly conceived or executed, this is the time to let things stand and use the final product as a learning experience. Production schedules include enough time to get PICK-UPS, but not enough time for an entire re-shoot.

• *Consider faking the needed shots.* Remind participants that they do not have to go back to the actual location to get the needed shots. If they need a wide shot of a setting, they may have to revisit the location. If they want something tighter, which is often the case when getting inserts (a close-up, a detail of a hand, object, or facial reaction to make things more clear), it is easy to fake a shot without the audience ever knowing. The important thing in shooting inserts is to match the lighting and background.

• *Be creative in matching backgrounds*. Often, a background can be matched with the mere suggestion rather than the actual object. For instance, an antique red chair, seen in a wide shot from the original production material,

can be suggested in a pick-up shot by a red box, thrown out of focus by using a telephoto lens and placed far in the background.

2. Plan for transitions. Guide the group in planning for transitions. Work with participants to consider the following questions:

- Do the cuts match precisely?
- Do you need a dissolve or two?
- Do you need a fade-out?

It is important to use caution when using fade-outs. If too many are used, the entire piece, particularly a short one, can begin to feel episodic and lose its dramatic momentum. Until participants have more experience in editing, it is a good idea to use cuts only at this point.

3. Review the steps completed in this session. Remind participants of what they have learned in this session about the final editing process. Participants have:

- Learned how to move from a rough cut to a fine cut of the project by trimming clips.
- Noted where music and sound effects will be needed.
- Noted and planned where pick-ups or insert shots are needed.

SESSION NINE
PUTTING TOGETHER THE FINAL FILM

*"All the artists have collaborated to lay down the building blocks,
but it's in the editing room where Marty [Scorsese] is really able to see
the film come alive, and to shape and push it the way he wants:
to shape the actors' performances, get the best out of the camera moves,
experiment with a shocking new editing style . . . Here, in the editing
room, is where he can finally calm down and concentrate on getting the
best out of what he has already laid down."*

Thelma Schoonmaker, Editor
"The Color of Money," "Raging Bull," "Taxi Driver," "Casino"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
75 minutes	**Activity 1** Fine Cut to Picture Lock (40 minutes) **Activity 2** Export to Video (20 minutes) **Activity 3** Planning a Screening (15 minutes)	• Computer (with Microsoft Windows Movie Maker or other video editing software package) • FireWire card (or other capture device) • Source tapes • Video camera • Tripod • All production accessories (for groups still in production)

ACTIVITY **1**

FINE CUT TO PICTURE LOCK

TIME

40 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Conduct a spotting session.
② Talk about common sound effects.
③ Explain how to lay in sound effects.
④ Discuss adding credits.
⑤ Describe the picture lock.

1. Conduct a spotting session. Explain to the group that the purpose of a SPOTTING SESSION is to play back the film and determine where additional sound or music need to be added to help tell the story. Have the production group conduct a session in which you review the project and note precisely where sound effects are needed to help tell the story. It is usually a simple matter to go out and gather the music, effects and sound files needed to fill out the project.

2. Talk about common sound effects. Explain to participants that there are two different types of sound effects: SYNC EFFECTS, which must synchronize with action in the film, and BACKGROUNDS, which can be created to play continuously in the background. Review the common sound effects with the group:

•   *Ambience*: AMBIENCE is also called ROOM TONE. It is most useful to cover dialogue cuts that can be affected by different microphone angles. It is a good idea to make a habit of recording 30 seconds of silence in each location: it can be used later to create a bed of ambience under the scene. Additionally, ambience can be placed under dialogue cuts to cover slight mis-matches in sound quality. These are usually caused by background sound such as cars passing, which do not occur in each take, or simply when the microphone faces a different direction in the location.

- *Foley*: The FOLEY technique replaces sound made by people in films. In almost every film we see, the sounds of people walking, eating or rustling their clothes are recorded after the live-action filming and replaced during sound editing. When a scene is being shot, the most important thing to record is the voice, so there are often no clean recordings of some of the other action in the scene.

- *Walla-walla*: WALLA-WALLA is the sound of background people in a room. Whether in a restaurant or at a party, the voices of background actors usually are *not* recorded live when shooting a scene. This is because it would be difficult to control the relative volume of the background noise, which might interfere with our understanding the dialogue of the main characters. During a shoot, the background actors are usually silent, just mouthing the words. Walla-walla is later added to the scene as a separate audio track so the volume can be carefully controlled.

3. Explain how to lay in sound effects. Tell participants that, once they have completed a fine cut, they can begin to lay in sound effects and make use of the extra sound tracks they have. Outline the steps for adding sound effects:

- *Import music tracks and any remaining sound effects* you may need by importing the sound clips.

- *Place the sound clips on the timeline*. Drag the sound elements one at a time to the sound track on the timeline and place them in sync with the production track and picture. Move them by dragging right or left on the timeline.

- *Check the mix.* Adjust the balance so that sounds on the production track are even with those on the sound track.

- *Fine-tune the elements*. Adjust the audio levels until you achieve the right balance between foreground and background sounds.

Explain to the group that the reason we want to avoid working with additional audio (music, sound effects) or visual effects any earlier than needed is that keeping non-sync audio lined up correctly with the entire cut can be difficult.

4. Discuss adding credits. Remind participants that they can create titles and credits for their films, as well as simple slides that describe a location or give the audience important information about the scene.

- *Get a list of names to create titles and credits for the project.* Be sure to thank people who helped along the way.

- *Keep titles simple.* It is best to keep titles plain, either white titles over a black background, or simple colors on a white background.

- *Avoid flying titles and fancy movements of words across the screen.* There is a practical and a creative reason for keeping things simple: the content of the film should convey the message.

5. Describe the picture lock. Explain to the group that editing takes time, so if they are scrambling to finish the piece at this point, it is not unusual. Three editing sessions should be enough to enable them to move from rough assembly to fine cut. When they have added the last remaining effects, have made the titles and the film is completed, this stage is called PICTURE LOCK. No more changes will be made after this point.

The picture lock is the final version of the film, after all editing has been completed, and audio has been added.

ACTIVITY 2	EXPORT TO VIDEO
TIME	20 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Describe how to export to video.

1. Describe how to export to video. Because anything can and will happen, make sure participants export the final versions of their films to video. Remind them of the following as they do this:

- *Use the software's output tool*. Outputting is actually just the reverse of importing; you will need to once again connect the camera to the computer with the FireWire card (or other capture device).

- *Place about 20 seconds of blank* at the beginning and end of the program, once the edits are completed. You can choose the length of the clip and just drag it into the timeline.

- *Use the "black" clip* to make sure there is ample space at the beginning of videotapes, or between any projects on the videotape you are using for archival purposes. This allows for the fact that different video machines have more pre-roll or post-roll than others. It also allows an audience to have a moment's pause between watching multiple programs. Simply line up the digital tape in the camera, place it in "VTR" mode, and make sure the timeline cursor is at the beginning of the project.

- *Be careful not to record over previously recorded material*. Always make sure the videotape you are recording to is set to a position where you will not record over vital material. Double-check this routinely.

ACTIVITY 3

PLANNING A SCREENING

TIME

15 minutes

OVERVIEW

① Plan for the upcoming screening.
② Review the steps completed in this session.

NOTE ABOUT SCREENING
Because computer monitors are not as accurate as television screens, and hard drives are not as reliable as videotapes, it is important to make sure all screenings are done from videotapes.

1. Plan for the upcoming screening. Guide group members in planning for the upcoming screening of their film. Here are some tips for planning:

• *Make sure the program tape is ready* to be screened well in advance of the scheduled event. The facilities and the tapes should be checked beforehand as a matter of habit, to ensure that screenings run as smoothly as possible.

• *Invite the cast and crew members*, parents, Club personnel and any others you think may be interested in seeing the film.

• *Send out invitations* or make advertising posters.

• *Consider providing popcorn and drinks* or other inexpensive snacks for the audience.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Review with the group the more advanced editing techniques they have learned during this session. Participants have:

• Completed a picture lock: final picture and sound choices are in place.
• Made credits and placed them into the project.
• Learned how to output the final program to videotape.
• Planned to make a tape for public screenings.
• Planned to send out invitations and make posters to advertise the screening.
• Checked the screening facility, equipment and tapes before the appointed date.

SESSION TEN
SCREENING AND REVIEWING THE FINAL PROJECT

"From the start, we're [editors] put in the position of judging performances. One of the hardest things for an editor is learning to match the intensity and physical action of a performance from shot to shot and take to take within a given scene."[1]

Freeman Davies, Editor
"The Horse Whisperer," "The Long Riders," "48 Hours,"
"The Dark Wind"

TIME	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
75 minutes	**Activity 1** Screen and Discuss Projects (45 minutes) **Activity 2** Project Review (30 minutes)	• Television and Video Cassette Recorder • Video camera • Tripod • Final videotapes

ACTIVITY 1	SCREEN AND DISCUSS PROJECTS
TIME	45 minutes
OVERVIEW	① Pre-screen the completed projects.
	② Discuss and evaluate the results.

1. Pre-screen the completed projects. Arrange to show the completed projects during the session so participants can have a chance to see their work on screen before anyone else does. Whenever possible, try to make the pre-screenings less pressured than the scheduled screenings for friends and family that will be held later on. Participants will be eager to see their completed projects, so it is important to have a relaxed and upbeat atmosphere for the first time they see their projects on film.

2. Discuss and evaluate the results. Help participants understand that personalities can, and will, clash even on beginner projects. Some people do their jobs well, and others do not show up. Sometimes it does not matter how accomplished the project is; what matters is that it represents a lot of hard work on the part of the group, that it is their own work and that it came to fruition from their commitment.

• *Allow participants to give their opinions first*. Watch the film with the group and allow participants to give their opinions first, keeping the first part of the conversation to a discussion of the story. Make sure to keep the discussion positive, but allow participants to bring up points of confusion, questions about technique and story structure.

• *Allow group members to bring up questions or comments* about the working methods of the crew who produced the film. Learning how to work in groups is an important feature of this program, so leadership and teamwork become big lessons for participants.

- *Add your own observations about the film*, about the clarity and structure of the story. Point out where the audience is likely to be misled, or what they may think when they see the film. Although you cannot possibly anticipate what every audience member will think, if you see something confusing, if a character is not introduced clearly or some other element is missing, it is important to point it out. It is true that just as much, if not more, can be learned from projects that do not live up to our expectations than from projects in which everything goes right and seems easy. Remind participants to keep in mind that everyone in the audience who is not related to them will look at the film with every expectation of understanding it, being entertained by it and being challenged by it.

- *Ask the group to consider these questions*. When evaluating the projects, it is useful to ask the questions introduced in the first session:

  ✓ Is the story clear?
  ✓ Who is the main character, and was the character established clearly?
  ✓ How do the shots tell the story visually?
  ✓ Does the film rely on dialogue?
  ✓ Are the shots well composed and selected?
  ✓ Should a tripod have been used for camera stability?
  ✓ Was there too much zooming in and out?

ACTIVITY **2**   PROJECT REVIEW

TIME   30 minutes

OVERVIEW   ① Ask participants to check the equipment.
                                  ② Review the steps completed in this session.
                                  ③ Congratulate group members on completing the program.

NOTE ABOUT EVALUATION
You may want to create an evaluation form and ask participants for their feedback on the video production track. It is also a good time to find out which participants are interested in working on new projects, and discuss ideas for future projects they might collaborate on as a group.

1. Ask participants to check the equipment. Discuss any equipment problems with participants, and make note of what needs to be updated, repaired or replaced.

2. Review the steps completed in this session. Briefly review with the group what they have accomplished during this session. Participants have:

• Watched and discussed their final projects, sharing comments on what they learned and what they might do differently next time.
• Discussed aspects of working together during the production stage.
• Checked the equipment, and noted any missing or damaged elements.

3. Congratulate group members on completing the program. Acknowledge to the group all the hard work they have put into the program, and recognize their individual projects and ideas. Let them know that they are all filmmakers now, and the work they have done will be screened by an actual audience.

Distribute a completion certificate to every participant in the program, and invite each invite each individually to participate in the screenplay writing track of *Movie Tech.*

Appendix A
Equipment Review

<u>CAMERAS</u>

Digital Hi-8mm Cameras (with FireWire cable)

Sony DCR-TRV 230 Digi 8mm ($575.00 to 600.00)
(Comes with one NP-F330 battery)

Sony NPFM 750 mAH ($79.95 to 85.00)
Run time: 120-220 w/LCD or 145-275 w/viewfinder

Sony NPFM 950 4500 mAH ($109.95 to $120.00)
Run time: 185-335 w/LCD or 230-440 w/viewfinder

Battery Charger
Simco SPM-13 ($29.95 to $30.00)

Extension Cords
Heavy Duty Cable – 25 to 50 foot ($25.00)

<u>ACCESSORIES</u>

Tripod
Bogen 3001/REG ($75.00 to 85.00)

Filter
37 mm GB UV Filter to protect the camera lens ($11.25 to $12.50)
(Confirm correct size for your camera)

Gear Bag
Choice ($25.00 to $50.00)

Dry Erase Board
For use as slate, with markers ($10.00)

RCA Cables
Three-pronged connectors (red, yellow, white) for transferring from digital to non-digital
and for watching material from camera to television ($5.00)

Sound Department Microphone
Sennheiser ME 66 Short Shotgun Microphone
Sennheiser K6 Module Power Supply
*Purchase both as a unit for $379.95 to $425.00

Extra cable
Microphone Extension Cable ($20.00 to $25.00)
25-foot XLR female to XLR male

Audio Adapter
BeachTek DXA-4S Audio Adapter ($169.96 to $175.00)
Mic and camcorder cable adaptor and impedance matching
(Confirm compatibility for Sony TRV 230 camera)

Mini to Mini (Male/Female) Cable – 10-foot ($4.00)
(Needed if BeachTek cable does not reach camera input)

Headphones
Sony MDR 7502 ($45.00 to $55.00)
Closed cell type

Headphone Extension Cable
Hosa Mini Stereo to Mini Stereo ($6.95)
(Male/Female) Cable – 25-foot

Microphone Boom Pole
Gitzo 555 Loisir Fisher ($71.00 to $80.00)
Two sections

Gitzo 556 Weekend Fishpole ($85.00 to $90.00)
Three sections

NON LINEAR EDITING SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

Recommended System Requirements
Pentium III 500 MHz or faster
128 MB RAM
Hard disk with 4.5 MB/sec sustained data transfer rate
50 MB free hard disk space
Microsoft Windows 98, Windows NT 4.0* or Windows 2000
DV or Digital 8 camera/deck
*VGA card with hardware DirectDraw overlay support

Minimum System Requirements
Pentium II 400 MHz, Celeron 466 MHz or faster
CD-ROM drive
64 MB RAM
Hard disk with 4.5 MB/sec sustained data transfer rate
50 MB free hard disk space
Microsoft Windows 98, Windows NT 4.0* or Windows 2000
DV or Digital 8 camera/deck
*VGA card with hardware DirectDraw overlay support

Capture Card and Software
Canopus EZDV Editing Bundle ($160.00 to $190.00)
(With Video Capture Card and Software)

Hard-Drives
Choose either one external or one internal drive

External
LaCie 40 GB 7200 RPM ($320.00 to $350.00)
FireWire Drive

LaCie 60 GB 7200 RPM ($390.00 to $425.00)
FireWire Drive

Internal
IBM IDE 7200 RPM 30 GB ($200.00 to $225.00)
(ATA/100/REG)

IBM IDE 7200 RPM 60 GB ($300.00 to $325.00)
(ATA/100/REG)

FireWire Cable
Usually comes with video capture card
(Buy new one if cable provided doesn't match pin configuration of camera)

FireWire Cable - 4-pin to 4-pin - 7' ($35.00 to $40.00)
FireWire Cable - 6-pin to 4-pin - 7' ($35.00 to $40.00)

Tape Stock
Digi 8mm
(Buy the highest quality tape; one or two for class exercises)

Sony
E6-30HME HI-8 ($5.49)
30 Minutes High Metal Evaporated

E6-60HME HI-8 ($6.79)
60 Minutes High Metal Evaporated

Maxell
P630 HMBQ Hi-8 ($5.39)
30 Minutes Video Tape

P6-60HMBQ Hi-8 ($6.09)
60 Minutes Video Tape

Head Cleaner
Sony 8MM/HI-8 Head Cleaning Tape ($9.95)

<u>MAJOR RETAILERS</u>

Adorama
42 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
800-223-2500 T
212-741-0052 T
212-463-7223 F
govsales@adoramacamera.com

B & H Photo/Video
420 Ninth Avenue
New York, NY 10001

Video
800-947-9920 T
212-444-5020 T

Audio
 800-947-9921 T
212-444-5021 T
212-444-5001 F
bhphotovideo.com

Showcase
2323 Cheshire Bridge Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30324
800-886-1976 T
404-325-7676 T
404-321-3636 F
www.showcaseinc.com

Appendix B
Film Recommendations

<u>405/</u>narrative
Running Time: 2:58 min ($10.00)
The acclaimed digital short about a jumbo jet crash-landing on a busy L.A. freeway.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,204155,00.html

Contact the filmmakers:
Bruce Branit and Jeremy Hunt
bruce@405themovie.com or jeremy@405themovie.com

<u>Adrenaline/</u>experimental
$15.00 ($10.00 for orders of 10 or more. Postage not included.)
 "Adrenaline" is an abstract experimental short utilizing animation techniques including optical printing, hand-processing, sand animation, line animation, Xerox animation, etc.

Contact:
Matthew Scott
Minor Eyeworks Studio
8126 Foxchase Circle
Indianapolis, IN 46256
(317) 595-8908 or (317) 894-3915

<u>Better Never Than Late/</u>narrative
Running time: 15 min
An action comedy chock full of slapstick Jackie Chan style choreography and understated social commentary.

Contact:
filmthreat.com.
kenn@monkeyhouseproductions.com

<u>Big Mama/</u>documentary (Academy Award Winner)
Running time: 30 min
An African-American grandmother struggles to maintain legal custody and raise her grandson after his father dies. Oscar winner for Documentary Short Subject, 2000.

Contact:
Tracy Seretean
Birthmark Productions
826 Washington Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90403
(310) 434-9124

<u>Café</u>
Running Time: 10:00 min
A bittersweet, silent drama/comedy, which probes the inner workings of a woman's mind as she watches a man across the patio of an outdoor cafe.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,534676,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Gretchen Somerfeld
(323) 655-5308
mosaicmp@aol.com

<u>Cat Ciao</u>/animation
Running Time: 4:30 min
What happens when your eyes are bigger than your mouth? Or your brain?
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,423380,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Sam Chen
sambochen@yahoo.com

<u>Enter the Garden</u>
Running Time: 12:00 min
In "Enter the Garden," Josh Goldstein and Michele Hyde plant age-old seeds of hatred and family feuding, then nurture their growth through forbidden love.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,215803,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Josh Goldstein
443 N. Sycamore Ave. #102
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 938-6584 or (323) 864-0024 or (323) 951-4400
bobo@abandapart.com

<u>Fetch</u>/animation
Running Time: 2:30 min ($12.00)
The portrait of a dim-witted trickster and his overly powerful companion.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,526906,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Matthew Meyer
115 East 25th Street Apt.1
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 871-4166 or (612) 384-5434
mattmeyer@qwest.net

Fool's Gold/animation
Running Time: 4:48 min ($9.95 VHS)
A computer-generated short tale of a fortune hunter's pursuit of an elusive treasure.
http://www.foolsgold2001.com
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,846420,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Ben Stevenson, Producer
340 E. 87th Street, 1A
New York, NY 10128
(212) 833-5870 or (917) 517-2540
Email: bstevenson@foolsgold2001.com or benjaminstevenson@hotmail.com

Foraging/animation
Running Time: 3:10 min
A little green man and his cute dragon buddy forage for fruit in a psychedelic jungle.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,669066,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Yu-Chen Hsieh
No.11, Lane 62, Ping Der Road, Taichung, 406, Taiwan
51 West Squire Drive, Apt 1, Rochester, NY 14623, USA
athene@sinamail.com or chester_hsieh@yahoo.com

The Great Fakir/animation
Running Time: 3:50 min
What happens when a magician messes up the famous saw-a-person-in-half trick?
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,982913,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Yu-Chen Hsieh
No.11, Lane 62, Ping Der Road, Taichung, 406, Taiwan
51 West Squire Drive, Apt 1, Rochester, NY 14623, USA
athene@sinamail.com or chester_hsieh@yahoo.com

Hair!
Running Time: 5:00 min
A 5-minute, silent, DV comedy, "Hair!" details the trials and tribulations of a young woman with particularly big hair, which seems to get caught in just about everything.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,1062791,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Gretchen Somerfeld
(323) 655-5308
mosaicmp@aol.com

<u>Help</u>/narrative
Running time: 4 min
A homeless man's attempt to reach for a coin, oblivious to those around him.

Contact:
Ravinder Patria
9 Kenpas Highway
Green Lane
Coventry, CV3 6AZ
United Kingdom
Tel: 024 76419360
<u>ravinder.patria@ntlworld.com</u>

<u>Isaac's Interpretation</u>
Running time: 9 min
An overly imaginative boy plays in his home, and as he plays he interprets his mother's conversation with a friend through his own point of view.

Contact:
<u>astrong@rcnchicago.com</u>
(773) 764-5823

<u>It's Not Unusual</u>
Running Time: 11:35 min
Max Luna, the youngest of two sons, has always dreamed of following in the footsteps of Tom Jones, Elvis and Sinatra.
<u>http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,215999,00.html</u>

Contact the filmmaker:
Kevin Estrada
kevestrada@aol.com

<u>LANDSCAPE</u>/narrative
Running time: 20 min ($20.00/$16.95 for orders of 15 or more)
Follow Gene, the gardener, as he takes a surreal journey through the home of his employer. An update of the classic Goldilocks and the 3 Bears tale.

Contact:
Nick Regalbuto
ncregal@excite.com

<u>Lunch Date</u>/narrative (Academy Award Winner)
Running time: 10 min ($53.00)
Directed by Adam Davidson
Winner of the Oscar for Best Short Subject in 1990, "Lunch Date" shows how a wealthy, suburban woman confronts her fears of the city when she misses her train back home.

Contact:
Dennis Aspland
c/o The Lantz Office
200 West 57th Street, #503
New York, NY 10019
(212) 586-0200

<u>McTerminator 2</u>/animation
Running Time: 2:05 min
Instead of The Terminator's future war between humans and machines, it's a battle between McDonald's and Burger King.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,986575,00.html

Contact the filmmakers:
Eric Barker & Mike Murphy
ebarker@idlemind.com

<u>Marvin and the Martian</u>/animation
Running Time: 4:06 min
Mayhem ensues when Marvin's new computer game, "Martian Massacre," becomes a little too virtual and he finds himself face to face with a heavily armed spaceship.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,433523,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Dustin Adair
ifilm@mediumedge.com

<u>The Pigeon and the Onion Pie</u>/animation
Running Time: 3:31 min
A bittersweet tale of a downtrodden pigeon who yearns to fly – and the onion pie that makes his dreams come true.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,772421,00.html

Contact the filmmakers:
Stephen Holman & Josephine T. Huang
aes323@aol.com

Rocking Horse Winner/narrative
Running time: 20 min ($75.00)
Directed by Michael Almereyda
A wonderful short film shot in Pixelvision, a low-end early video format that did not allow for sharp focus pictures, resulting in a narrative film that must rely on strong composition and imagery to tell its story.

Contact:
Michael Almereyda
216 East 112th Street
New York, NY 10003
(212) 982-7668

Roots, A Film En Music/narrative
$15.00
"Roots" uses film and music as global languages, telling the story of a man sent to prison for a crime he did not commit.

Contact:
Vince Ellis
Burning Fire Productions
32 Partridge Court
Marlton, NJ 08053 USA

Snakk/animation
Running Time: 2:30 min ($10.00)
A little fish takes a swim in the great, big ocean.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,541378,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Mike Fisher
(202) 383-6136
mfisher@krtinfo.com

A Soccer Story (Academy Award nominee)
Running Time: 22:01 min
In this touching, Oscar-nominated short, an elderly man takes a nostalgic look back at the days of playing soccer in the streets of a small Brazilian town with his friends.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,954818,00.html

Distributed by Talantis Films
Chicago Children's Film Festival 1999
Festival BAM Kids, Brooklyn New York 1999

Contact the filmmaker:
Machline Paulo
josselin@pitchinc.com

Star Wars: Legacy of the Jedi
Running Time: 8:06 min ($10.00)
Jedi Master Mal-Que Narrin and his Padawan apprentice, Te-Kun Rel, confront the evil swordsman Krathis Kanan in an duel to retrieve Mal-Que's Master's stolen light saber.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,579077,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Joseph Jerman
jerman@usc.edu

Superfunk & Freaky Dee/animation
Running Time: 12:52 min
Two siblings struggle to overcome unfortunate first names, unusual clothing choices and robot lunch ladies.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,213471,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
David Cowles
cowles2069@aol.com

True-Life Childhood Tales/animation
Running Time: 1:50 min
Everyone has a story, but are you willing to tell it? One in a series of embarrassing, but true, childhood stories.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,928418,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
David Cowles
cowles2069@aol.com

Visas and Virtue (Academy Award Winner)
Running Time: 26:00 min
Inspired by a true story, "Visas and Virtue" explores the moral and professional dilemmas that faced Japanese Consul General Chiune "Sempo" Sugihara.
http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/skeletons/film_detail/0,1263,1096620,00.html

Contact the filmmaker:
Chris Tashima
cedarmail@aol.com

Appendix C
Directing Guidelines

<u>UNDERSTANDING A DIRECTOR'S ROLE</u>

A director's responsibility on the set is to supervise the work being done by the cast and crew. Although the job is called "directing," directors do not spend every minute telling each individual on the set what to do. Good directors communicate their vision to the talented professionals they are working with, and they trust those professionals to do the job. For example, in the relationship between the director and the actors, many people believe that directors spend a great deal of time on the set talking to the actors. In reality, many good directors sometimes have little to say to their talented cast members. There is an old bit of filmmaking wisdom that says that 70 to 80 percent of directing is in the casting. If there is a good fit between the actor and the role, the director has less work to do to shape the performance. A good actor, well cast, can deliver a fine performance with very little direction.

This does not mean that the director should not speak to the actors. Typically, the credit for a really good performance goes largely to the actor, with little left over for the director and crew. On the other hand, however, when it comes time to assign blame for a performance that fails to serve the film, the director shoulders more of the responsibility than the actor. After all, who cast the actor in the role?

There is plenty of credit, and work, to go around
It is important to understand that no director can do all the tasks required on a movie set by themselves. That is why it is especially important to find the best people for the job and then allow them to bring their own talents to the production. When a good result is achieved, there will be plenty of credit to go around.

In working with the crew, the best way for a director to lead is by example. In filmmaking, the crew will look to the director for one thing above all: preparation. If he or she knows what is needed and is ready to pursue it, the crew will be right there, too.

Improvisation requires good planning
A director should come to the set with the day thoroughly planned out. He or she should be familiar with the location and with the scene to be shot that day. After arriving, it is critical to let various departments know what the first set-up will be. Keep in mind that a director should be *genuinely* concerned with the crew's well being. If the director cares about their safety and well being, he or she will be rewarded with good performances.

Directors should come to the set with shot lists that they have already shared with the camera operator and the heads of the other departments, including sound, wardrobe and production design. These are the people who need to know in advance what is planned for each day of the shoot.

Fortune favors the well prepared
Everyone is aware that unexpected things can happen at any time – on a film set, you might say that the unexpected *always* happens. These are times when directors must truly lead, stay calm and think through the situation. A director should try to anticipate what problems might arise and, if nothing else, learn what to do (or not do) the next time.

For example, if the crew loses, at the last possible moment, the ability to shoot in the location planned, the director should have planned ahead to be able to adapt quickly to a new location. Or, if time is running out on a planned shot, a director will be prepared to make the necessary adjustments.

Directing the audience is important, too
The other group of people the director directs is . . . the audience. Using the power of the camera, directors decide when to pick the audience up or change their perspective on a particular scene.

If the scene needs a close-up, the director can immediately bring the audience closer to the action. To give a feeling of effort, a director might back the audience away from the camera so the people in the scene are tiny compared to the city, or the mountains, surrounding them. If a director wants to indicate that a moment is really important, he or she can move the camera, even just a little bit, and the audience will know that he or she is underlining the action.

Most amateur directors should not try to make every scene a defining moment of American cinema. For a short film, it is a good idea to choose just three scenes in which to try something new and different.

PLANNING AND DIRECTING YOUR OWN SCENES

Before you begin planning and directing your own scenes, remember the following points.

1. Make the story real

If you think about your favorite movies, there are probably moments in the story you remember very well. It is useful to go back and watch them, looking for the specific details that make those scenes different or special.

In planning the camera coverage for your story, ask yourself "How can I use the camera to help move the story along?" It is no major accomplishment to simply photograph the dialogue. Instead, think of how the photography is adding to or enhancing the meaning of the text. In a dialogue scene, you can enhance the meaning of the text by making sure you show the emotion of the story. A director's primary job is to understand the story.

As director, you need to know the story inside and out in order to know how best to tell it to an audience. During production, keep your ultimate goal in mind: to film (or tape) all the shots you will need for a given scene and to film (or tape) all the scenes you will need to tell your story in the best possible way. This is called *scene coverage*.

2. Use the master shot approach

This approach uses traditional compositions – wide, medium, and close shots – to cover a scene. This is called the *master shot* approach.

A master shot is the shot that covers the entire scene and is most often a wide shot. It can be a safety net, because you can always cut back to it if one of your other shots does not work, falls out of focus or just fails to hold interest for very long. The master shot is generally used at the beginning or end of scenes because it provides a good cut point. Using a master shot will also orient the audience by showing the geography of a location. It can punctuate the emotion of a scene whenever you use it.

3. Shoot from different camera positions

In conjunction with the master shot approach, you will also need to shoot from other camera positions. Often these shots are called *cut-aways*, because you are cutting away from the main action to notice something else. Whatever you shoot must – in some way – help tell the story. Here are some examples of possible cut-away shots:

- The faces of those watching or listening.
- A detail that shows emotion, such as someone wringing hands to indicate tension.
- A detail that is part of the plot, as in those classic scenes where someone puts poison in a drink when the other person is not looking.

4. Vary the shots you take

Here are some points to keep in mind when you move the camera to a new set-up:

- Change the angle and size of the composition to avoid jump cuts.
- Begin each new shot with some overlap (several seconds) from the shot before it.
- End each shot with some additional material (a few seconds) to provide overlap for the next shot. You always want to have a choice as to where to cut, even if you think you are absolutely sure that you know where the next shot begins. When you get to the editing stage, you will be glad you have some flexibility. For example, you may have planned on a cut-away from Actor A to Actor B, but Actor A gave such a great performance, you may decide not to cut away from it too soon.
- Remember to shoot the reaction, and not just the dialogue. Sometimes, the real drama in a scene is the person listening or watching. Make sure you shoot the reaction, even if the shot does not run for the entire length of dialogue.
- Plan to use reaction shots as a way of cutting down dialogue that does not work.
- Do not forget the silences. Many dramatic moments can occur during pauses in the dialogue, and although you do not want to prolong the scene too much, you do want to make sure you can underline a reaction or a moment. Let the actors speak in a normal rhythm and do not slow things down too much for effect.
- The most important silent moments to shoot occur when your lead characters are alone. What do they do when alone? How do they feel? Even if a character is surrounded by a carnival, he or she can be very alone. Let the audience see that, and they will be more likely to understand who the character really is.
- Always let the camera run a few extra seconds before calling "action," and again for a few seconds before calling "cut." You will need those extra seconds during editing, in order to do transitions such as dissolves and fades.

5. Keep the audience in mind

Now that you know what your options are, it is time to decide which approach to use. Do you want to use the master shot approach and use fewer shots? Perhaps you want to use several shots and cut at a mad pace? As you consider the entire scene, and where it comes in your story, choose an approach that will seem special to the audience.

The most important times in a story are called "moments of decision." In these moments the characters make choices, and if the audience is involved in the story, they participate in those moments. As a filmmaker, and as the director, you can push the audience to lean forward in their seats and get nervous, or excited, at just the right times.

6. Move the camera to move the audience

At the moments of decision, at least three times in your short project, try to move the camera to provide a little extra meaning, a little extra push, for the audience. Only you can decide what kind of movement is best. Do you want to move in on the character and create a tighter shot? Or do you want to move out to place the character in a larger environment? You can also move around them, side to side. Remember that small movements can go a long way. Any choice you make will underline the moment, as long as are not repeating a movement the audience has seen many times already.

7. Let your camera be natural

Sometimes it is important to allow the camera to move with a character. This is *motivated movement*, and it happens all the time in the feature films. As the character stands up or walks across the room, the director allows the camera to tilt, or pan, to follow the character. Instruct your camera operator to be prepared to adjust the shot as the actors move. Their movements may be a little different from what you rehearsed, but it is better to have the camera move a bit than to call "cut" in the middle of a great performance.

8. Rehearse the scenes

In drama, it is best to rehearse, and then it is fair to expect your actors to follow the scene. If they do something different for each take, it may be difficult to cut the scene together later on. If you know you want to achieve a certain image using the location or the props, let the actor know early in the process. This way, the actor can incorporate your wishes into their own performance, and keep the entire scene feeling fresher.

As you rehearse a scene, ask yourself a few questions. Is it interesting? Is there enough tension and dramatic action? Is the real meaning of the scene being portrayed well? Keep working on the scene until you can answer "yes" to these questions.

Appendix D
Documentary Filmmaking

Choosing a story you *have* to tell
A documentary – or any other film – begins with an idea. It gets in your head, and you cannot stop thinking about it. It is a story you *have* to tell. It can be about your grandmother's cool touch, and how that makes you feel. It can be about your best friend always telling the dumbest jokes. It can be about your neighborhood, your dog, your teacher, your uncle. It's a story you *want* to tell. And a "documentary" means you are *documenting* the story, setting it on record. It illuminates for the future just what you are seeing and feeling today. Documentaries are video "snapshots" that help us interpret our world. And by taking a close look, we get a chance to learn about ourselves.

Choosing a story idea that is really important to you is at the heart of any good documentary. Having passion for your story is crucial. If you do not care about it, neither will anyone else. What gets you excited? What makes you laugh, cry, or feel deeply? Can you share it in a way that would interest other people?

On a piece of paper, list the pros and cons of several ideas, so that you can zero in on one. There are some basic questions to consider right at the start that will help you make your best choice.

1. Can you get permission to put the story on videotape?
Remember that some people get shy around cameras, so do not be offended if they are uncomfortable with your idea and turn you down. There will be someone else who is excited about being recorded. If you cannot shoot this story, move to another idea, or find a different approach to your first idea.

2. Do you have transportation to get to the "scene," or is it better to stay in your immediate neighborhood? Often the best stories are right under your nose. The things that are familiar are often the things that make you the most passionate.

3. What is the time frame of your story?
For example, is it about a family reunion that happens just once a year? Or is it about your little brother, who is around all the time? The time frame will determine how soon or how fast you need to get your project together, and how many chances you have to "redo" something that do not work out. Some things only happen once, so you get just one shot at it. This makes good planning very important.

Researching the project

Once you feel comfortable with your idea, your time frame, and your subject, you are ready to begin your *research*.

Research means you learn about the history and possible future of your subject.

Research sets the tone for your entire project. The more you know about the topic, the better your interview questions will be. If you ask thoughtful, intelligent questions, the people you interview will be able to give you thoughtful, intelligent responses. Research will also help you plan and schedule your project, so that you will not miss out on videotaping the very things that will shape your story.

It is a good idea to make notes in a notebook designated just for your documentary. If you need to look something up, it is right there. You can even put a date at the top of each page you use; it will help you when you need to refer to something. For example, "Mr. Jones, you told me last Tuesday that your bread is always delivered on Thursday afternoon at 3 P.M. Has that time changed?"

Making a story outline

You know who or what you want to do your documentary about. You have their permission, and you have information, or research, about the most interesting aspects of your story. You know which days of the week are the most important days to be available with your camera. You know how much time the people in your story have to give you. You know the history or background of your story. And you have begun focusing on a storyline, or outline. You will decide how the story should begin, what information you want in the middle, and what ending will be the most compelling. Get out your notebook and write down your outline. List all the things, people, ideas you want to include in the documentary. This outline will keep you on track when you begin shooting tape. You can change it anytime, and you probably will, but it is your guideline, so take your time and write it carefully.

It is important to remember that people and situations are always unpredictable – that is what a documentary magical. You can never predict or know exactly what people will say or how they will react to questions or situations. So when the camera starts rolling, you will be revising your outline, because your documentary is a living, organic *idea* at this stage. In fact, until you are finished, it will continue to change in many ways. It is good to have a solid plan, but also to be prepared to "go with the flow."

Planning the documentary

For example, assume you are interested in documenting a story about your next-door neighbor and her beautiful garden.

Your first move would be to go next door and talk to your neighbor about your project. Introduce her to the idea that you want to visit with her in her garden, and record the magic that occurs between her and her plants. If she likes the idea, ask her some questions. *What time of day she does her planting, her watering, her weeding and her pruning. When does she shop for new plants? Is she buying plants anytime soon, and could you go with her on her next shopping trip? When do the flowers usually bloom in her garden*? You will want to be there to capture the garden at its best, and perhaps that view will be the final shot of your documentary. Get the facts, and make your plan, or outline.

Getting to know the story

You have a beginning idea, one we will call "The Birth of a Garden." You plan to be there when your neighbor first turns the earth still packed hard from winter. And you have an idea for the middle of the story, when she is purchasing her seedlings, planting them and caring for her garden. You also have an ending idea – the garden in full bloom. The visual basics are all there, but the one thing you do not know about is your neighbor. Is she interesting? Does she talk to her plants? Will she be able to share her feelings about her garden with you while the camera is rolling? It is most likely your neighbor's relationship with her garden that makes this story interesting.

The human connection note

Have you ever had someone on the street or at your school take your picture without asking? In some circumstances, it might be just fine. In others, you would have preferred them to ask first. The same is true when you are behind the camera. If you are shooting a wide street or shop scene with no fine details, it may be enough to get permission only from the shopkeeper. If you are shooting close to someone, it would be courteous to explain that you are producing a documentary, and ask if they would mind you taking a shot of them for your story. It saves a lot of explaining on the other end, after they may already be irritated. In some instances, getting *written* permission, not just verbal permission, is a good idea. You will have to make the decision about each situation or each person involved in your documentary.

Taping the interview

Interviews are challenging, and also a lot of fun. They are the "bones," setting and supporting the tone of your entire documentary, because people are the most interesting and unpredictable stories of all. We all have stories to tell, and your documentary becomes the telling of a story that means a lot to you – through another's experience. By telling the story of your neighbor's garden, we are learning something about *you* as well. You like your neighbor's flowers, but perhaps the garden represents something more to you. Maybe it is a symbol of compassion, maybe it is what brought you and your neighbor together as friends for the first time. Maybe you never understood her before you saw her watering her plants all alone evening after evening. The viewer learns through you by the questions you ask her, and by what you show us, what *you* think is important in the world.

Decide how you want to interview your neighbor. Do you want to ask her questions while she is tending the garden? Do you want her sitting formally in her garden at the beginning of spring? Or do you want to film her when the ground is barren? How about at the end of spring when the garden is in full bloom?

The best suggestion is to make a general plan – again – put it in your outline, and again, allow yourself to be surprised during the interview. If she opens up more with a trowel in her hand than she does sitting formally on a bench, you might get more interesting information from her if you interview her while she works. Be flexible. Get into her rhythm. You are telling the story of a person and her passion. Let her open up and talk. *What are her favorite parts of gardening. What are her least favorite parts? Which flowers remind her of things? Is it an expensive hobby? How much does it cost her each year? How long has she had a garden? Did she garden as a child? Does she have pictures of herself as a child in her mother's garden? Can you tape the pictures?* If she is shy, proceed slowly.

Being flexible

Sometimes you will have to just sit in the dirt with your camera rolling, and let her think about something before she responds. Be patient. You may have to ask her the same things several times before she gives you a heartfelt and meaningful answer; sometimes emotions close to the heart are hard to talk about. Ask her questions in different ways. For example, you might ask her if her mother had a garden. If her answer is "yes" or "no," give it a minute, and ask her if she thinks about her mother when she is in her garden. Her answer might surprise you – and lead you to a different place than you thought your story would take you. Perhaps your story will evolve from "Birth of a Garden" to "My Neighbor's Memory Garden." Return to your outline, and be prepared to go with the most interesting aspects of your story. The way you shoot the garden's growing season probably remains the same. But your story *focus* may shift.

There are other decisions to make. Do you want the only voice we hear on the documentary to be your neighbor's? Do you want your questions to be in the final piece? Do you want to be the narrator and describe the action around the garden and your neighbor, stopping only to let her speak every so often? The final product dictates your approach along the way. Think through these questions, and make notes in your notebook.

The non-interview video

If the interviews are the "bones" of your story, the B-roll is the "skin." When you shoot, be prepared to move around. Nothing is more boring than a camera that does not move with the story. If you are shooting your neighbor's garden, be ready to stoop, squat and sit in the dirt. Do not just shoot down at her, because the final shot will look uninvolved and unengaged. Be a part of the gardening. Follow your neighbor's hands while she digs. Follow the hose while she rolls it up. Follow her eyes while she surveys a job well done. Think about shooting from the point of view of the flowers – from low down, looking up at her face and hands. Help the viewer get the feel of being in the sun, or the damp earth or the deepening evening. Shoot a lot of non-moving video as well, otherwise you can leave your viewer feeling seasick. A good rule of thumb is that people move – do not be afraid to follow their movements. But flowers grow so slowly, and your camera might take that into account. There is no right or wrong; go with your instincts, and give yourself choices for the editing phase. Be a part of the garden with your camera. You cannot smell the flowers on the tape, but you should almost feel as if you could.

Gaining permission

If we continue using your neighbor's garden story as an example, then you would first ask the owner of your neighbor's plant shop if he minded you shooting video of your neighbor's shopping trip in his store – *before* you go in assuming it is all right. It probably is, but showing respect for other people's property is the best way to accomplish your goals. What if the neighbor gets into a good debate with the shop owner about which plants grow better in the sun or shade? You'd want to get the conversation on tape. Remember that it is usually a good idea to ask first.

Putting the film together

After you have the interviews and the B-roll on tape, the next phase of your work begins. Now you get to put it together. There will be so many different ways to go about it, but before you panic, return to your story outline. It will remind you of your focus before you got so many interesting answers on tape. Jump in, and remember that you can always revise and change as you go along. Listen and look at the tapes, and make detailed notes. You may want to write down the answers (called "transcribing") you like best. Note the location on the tapes where your favorite interview answers and best B-roll shots are.

Creating a script

You may want to revisit the way the story is told. Now that you have shot your story, are you comfortable with the choices you made? Do you still want a narrator? Do you want to be a part of the piece? Can the story be told more directly by having the subject of your work speak just for him or herself? Your script, like everything else, is organic. Rewrite it as many times as you need to. Once you have written your script, you are ready to see if it holds up in the editing.

Editing your documentary

You will see areas where you may need to go back and flush out an angle more fully. You will see that the story flow demands more – or less – of a particular person or focus. You will learn more about the story than you knew before, because now you are living with the characters in your head, the way they explained something was either much better – or much worse – than you remembered it, but now it is on tape. Perhaps you zoomed in when you should have zoomed out. Perhaps you concentrated on someone's hands when you should have been focusing on their eyes. This happens all the time in making a documentary, and is part of the challenge. If you think about the problems creatively, you may come up with a better, more interesting solution than if you did not have a problem. Think big. What you cut out may be as important as what you leave in. Editing is your chance to change everything around – until it works.

If you think of the example of the neighbor's garden, assume you shot the story in the spring, and now it is autumn. You do not have an ending you like, and her garden is long gone. What are you going to do? You might go back to the early, dormant garden, with some words about how spring is just around the corner. Or you might take your neighbor on a walk through a nearby park, and get the leaves swirling around her feet, while she talks about the course of nature. Remember that there are hundreds of ways to put together a story, and the right way is the way that feels genuine and is an authentic representation of what you want to say.

Editing and re-editing

You may re-write and re-edit several times before you are satisfied with your product. True art, true passion, true storytelling takes time and patience. But if, when you are finished, you have a piece of tape in your hands that you are proud of, if you feel it tells a meaningful story and is a true reflection of the original idea you had, then you can say with price, "I produced a documentary."

Appendix E
Sound Recording Guidelines

<u>RECORDING TIPS</u>

The art and craft of recording sound on location for your short film, feature, documentary or video project can be very challenging in the noisy world we inhabit today. One of the first things you will decide, which will have a big effect on the quality of your sound, is the location at which you would like to shoot. If the people in your film speak, and you want to be able to hear them, you should be in a quiet place.

Take control

The more control you have over the environment in which you shoot, the better your location sound will be. For example, assume you are filming a scene in your living room during a hot summer evening. You might hear the hum of the air conditioner in the background. Normally, you might not notice it so much because you are used to it, but it would certainly be noticeable on your audio tracks, and the audience would likely wonder what it is. The simple way to fix this is to turn it off.

If you are filming outside in your neighborhood, you might find a quiet street without a lot of traffic. If you were to shoot near a busy road or highway, you might consider asking the director to get a shot establishing the busy road in the background, visually. This would help your audience understand the background noise they are hearing in the shot.

Scout your locations

Another concern, whether you are shooting outside or inside, is air traffic. The sounds of planes and jets on top of your dialogue can cause problems in the editing of your film. For example, assume you are shooting separate shots of two actors speaking and, when recording one, a jet flies over the location. When you record the other, there is no jet. When you "cut" from one actor to the other, the sound of the jet will come and go, instead of being continuous. Naturally, we would prefer there be no jet noise at all, but if you are shooting in a noisy area, it is important to record separately the environmental sounds. This might be jet noise, or car traffic or any sound unique to the area. By doing this, you can use these sounds later on, when you edit, to create a bed of sound that is continuous. This type of sound would be considered an *effect*.

Monitor your recording

The sound heard in the background of your recordings will either enhance your story and the visuals chosen to dramatize the tale, or be very distracting to your audience. The main goal when recording location sound is to record it as cleanly as possible.

You can always add other sounds to your audio in editing but it is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove sounds, especially when they are recorded with dialogue. Whenever possible, always listen live to the recording. It may not always be easy, because there will be people near the camera, but try to plug in a set of headphones, and assign someone the important task of concentrating only on the quality of the sound recording. With extension cables, the person monitoring the sound can stand 10 or 20 feet from the camera. (Be careful, too, to watch for the cable, especially when the camera is moving, to avoid having yourself or others trip over it. Cable wrangling is an actual job title that you may need to assign to someone, but it is one of those responsibilities you might want to have people share, because it is not one of the more glamorous positions on the set.)

MICROPHONES AND MIC PLACEMENT

There are several types of microphones and different ways of using them to capture the sound of people speaking and other sounds in the story or project.   All 8mm and Digital Video cameras have built-in microphones. These microphones work pretty well when the subjects are close to the camera and to the microphone.

The external microphone input

Most of the camcorders we will use also have inputs for external microphones. This means that you can use a better quality microphone and plug it into the camcorder. You can attach the microphone directly to the camera, and by adding a longer cable to it you can then move the microphone close to the people who are speaking. Your audio recordings will always sound better when the mic is close to the people speaking. Maintaining the microphone in close proximity to the speaker helps to hear them clearly and also to lower the sound of the background, if you are shooting in a noisy place.

The boom mic

There are several types of microphones you can use. One of the most popular types is a boom microphone. The boom mic fits on the "boom pole," a tool used to get the mic close to the action. The boom pole is also called a "fish pole."

The boom pole allows you to reach out to the people talking and have the microphone right above them, but just outside of the frame of the picture. In order to operate the boom well, you must be aware of what the camera shot is shooting. Always remember to point the microphone at the mouth of the person speaking. If you practice during rehearsals, and if you wear headphones, you will be able to tell when the speaker is "on-mic" or when they are just a bit off.

The hand-held mic

Reporters and singers use hand-held microphones. When sports announcers interview athletes after a game, they usually have microphones that they hold in their hands and point at the player when he or she is speaking. The announcer holds it close to himself when he is speaking.   You have probably noticed that if the athlete grabs the mic, the sound quality will decrease, because they are not as experienced in holding the mic properly, and forget to keep it very close to their mouths. Hand-held mics are great when you are doing interviews or asking people questions on-camera.

The lavaliere

Another type of mic is called *a lavaliere* or *lapel mic*. News anchors, game show hosts and talk shows all use these mics. They are normally attached to the outside of the clothing and are very small. The one drawback to using these mics is that you have to have one for every person speaking. These mics can also be hidden under clothing so they do not show. When they are used this way, they are plugged into a small transmitter (about the size of a large pager) that is also hidden under clothing. The transmitter sends a signal to the receiver that is attached to the camera and plugged into the audio input. On motion pictures, radio or wireless mics are used when a boom mic cannot get close to the actors speaking. These mics come with their own set of problems, as they can pick up FM signals that are in the air, or a "hum" from the many cables crossing the set. Good quality radio-mics also can be very expensive, but they are a handy item to have, especially when the action is far away from the camera and a boom pole is not a practical tool. Keep in mind that when the action is so far from the camera that we cannot see the actors moving their mouths very well, it is possible to place the dialogue in later, when editing. Of course, it is always advisable to record live sound when making any kind of movie, but if you use proper mixing techniques, and remember to record an ambience track, you can place dialogue in later when the actors are very far from the camera.

IN THE FIELD

Location sound is more than just recording the words that are spoken. It is also the job of the recordist to gather all of the elements that are unique to that environment, including the sound of the room or location. These will be needed in post-production editing.

Room tone

If your shooting location is inside, the sound of the room is called *room tone*; outside, the term is *ambience*. To record room tone or ambience, simply have all of the crew and cast be very quiet and still while you record about 30 seconds of the sound of that location. This is done by placing the mic in the area where the majority of the scene was filmed.

If you filmed in different rooms, record room tone in every room and in every exterior location. Each location has its own sound, a result of architecture and materials that affect the way sound moves around in that particular space.

Room tone and ambience are used in post-production to balance out the sound of the scene. The editors can make a continuous track of your room tone and lay it under the edited dialogue. This creates an even background sound.

Another way the ambience can be used is to fill in any gaps that may have been removed from a scene. There could be dialogue or noises that are edited out that are not on any spoken words and this sometimes leaves a blank spot that has to be filled.

Effects and wild sound

Remember that you should also try to record any other sounds that are unique to the location and scene that you are filming. There might be a door that an actor opens that has a unique creak. This would be a great element to record "wild." This means that you record isolated sounds, even if they are also heard during a scene. But, when you record something wild (which means without sync picture) you can record it at whatever level you want. If the actor is speaking in the scene when he opens the door, and it creaks on his lines, it is better spray the hinges with a lubricant and record the lines wild, without the creaks. You can always find great creaks in a sound effects library or you can find another door to record later.

In the example given above, when actors are talking very far from the camera, you might edit in the sound of the dialogue, keeping the volume a bit lower than normal to imply the distance. Better still, you could mix the ambience track and the dialogue in such a way that it would *sound like* the characters are far away. The wind might rustle more, the sound of the cars would be a bit more pronounced. Since you recorded an ambience track while on location, you maintain control over exactly how you want the mix to sound.

Something you always use with mics is a windscreen. Most mics are very sensitive to wind and movement. When you shoot inside, a light windscreen can be used. These are made of foam and slide over the mics. When you film outside, a heavy cover is needed to protect against wind. These covers are called *windjammers*. They are made from a fuzzy type of synthetic material that blocks the wind and allows the sound to come through without making the mic sound muffled.

RECORDING LEVELS

Most of the time you will be using cameras that have automatic level controls, for recording sound. On these cameras there are no knobs to adjust.

There are sound input accessories that you can add to your DV or Hi 8 camera that allow you to control the levels and input professional mics. The most popular of these is the BeachTek.

This box screws on to the bottom of your camera where the tripod would mount. It still allows you to mount the tripod to the box, but it attaches to the bottom of the BeachTek, and not directly to the camera.

The BeachTek box has two mic inputs and two level controls, one for each input. There is a switch for "mic level" and "line level." "Mic level" is for mics, while "line level" might be used from another mixing console or even the audio output of your VCR, TV, CD or cassette player.

When shooting in the field, with the microphones, set the box on the "mic" position. The mini-plug cable that comes out of the BeachTek is plugged into the camera's external mic input. This input is usually located to the side of the camera's lens.

Usually, it is best to set the volume knobs on the BeachTek somewhere between levels 6 and 8, and then control sound further, if necessary, from the recorder. In this case, your sound recorder is the camera. Just make sure the BeachTek is not set too low (0 to 2) or too high (9 to 10) to avoid giving the camera too weak or too strong a signal.

Since the Sony-TRV 230 does not have manual control of sound levels, you will not be able to further control sound on this camera. The automatic gain function will boost the sound coming into the camera, so your main concern is to place the microphone as close as you can to the action, so as to provide a clear signal source. However, when using the BeachTek module that allows you to connect a professional microphone to the camera, you must set the volume control on the BeachTek to allow the sound to be "heard" by the camera. A setting of between 6 and 8 ought to be consistently satisfactory.

On some models of camcorders and DV cameras there are controls for audio levels. These cameras allow you to turn the automatic level control to the "off" position, and to set the recording level manually. Just as we prefer to set the exposure on the camera manually, to get the best sound recording, you should turn off the automatic level control whenever possible. This allows you to set the level with a control knob.

When you turn off the automatic sound recording function you are turning off *limiters* and *automatic gain controls*. Limiters push down the level of loud, sharp sounds. When the sounds are pushed down they sound distorted. The automatic gain is always turning up the level, looking for sound and trying to record it at a high enough level. Automatic gain controls tend to push up even the silences you want in a scene, because they want to achieve a high level of sound, even when "nothing" is being heard.

The best way to record is to set the levels in a middle setting of the control knob. Some recorders offer meters inside the viewing monitor or externally on the camera. Watch the meters, and make sure they are not reaching the top or end of the measurement scale. Whenever possible, read the owner's manual of the camera you are using to check to see what controls you have for adjustments to your sound levels. Be sure to listen to the "live" recording, with headphones, whenever possible.

<u>SOUND EFFECTS</u>

When you record sound without reference to picture, like the sound of a door slamming without filming or taping the actual door, this is called *wild sound*. You record wild sounds in order to create sound effects. It could be a door slamming, a car idling or a phone ringing. When you record wild sound on a camcorder, it is a good idea to create a slate that tells the editor you are recording sound effects. This way, when the editor is scrolling at high-speed through the tape, looking for effects, he or she will see the slate and know that in that certain location, the "wild" elements are in this area on the tape. Simply write "wild sound" and the "location" (swimming pool) on the slate, and this will provide the information needed.

The more control you have over the elements of the sound the easier your editing will be in post-production. If the doorbell rings during a scene in which two actors are speaking, it is to your editing advantage to capture the doorbell sound wild and not during the actual take. The reason for this is that you can then control the level and the placement of the doorbell in editing. You can put the ring in where you want it, and you can make it very low or very loud. If you record it over the actors' lines you cannot take it out raise or lower the level without affecting the dialogue.

If you are thinking you would hear the bell even a bit during shooting, and that this might get in the way of manipulating it later on, you are right. On a professional film, the doorbell would be disconnected during the actual shooting, and the sound of the doorbell would be placed in later, as an effect. Naturally, it would have to be placed to coincide with the actor reaching up to touch the doorbell, but the actual placement, length and level would all be adjustable, and decided upon during editing.

By recording effects separately, you can use whatever sound you would like and not necessarily the one at that particular location. In the example above, you could use a normal doorbell, or insert a really creepy one, whatever you deem appropriate. This gives you many options in the editorial process.

You would be surprised how many sounds are considered effects; the sound of people using forks and knives, breathing at dramatic moments, footsteps, etc. You can get very creative with sound, so that it greatly enhances the dramatic success of your movie.

SOUND REPORTS

A sound report or log is kept by the recordist. These are pre-printed logs that you can get from a location sound vendor, film laboratory or film transfer house. You can also make your own using a computer.

On a movie set, the sound report consists of three different color copies and the original. The original is white, and stays in the box with the tape for the life of the tape. The second is yellow, and is handed in to editorial, the third is pink and goes to the production office where it is filed with all of the production paper work. The fourth is orange, and is kept by the recordist for his records.

A sound report should contain the following information:

- the date
- the name of the production
- the company filming the production
- the names of the recordist and boom operator
- tape number
- scene and take numbers
- brief notes on each take (good, no good and any sound problems)

For example, if a plane were heard during the recording of a certain take, the recordist would indicate "plane" by that take number. This lets the editors know that this would not be the best take for sound. If you have a really great take make a note of that, too. This helps later on in the editing process. Make sure that you also note all of your ambiences, room tones and sound effects, so they can be found on the tapes, later during the editorial process.

PICK-UP PATTERNS AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

When you are using mics there are three types: condenser, electret condenser, and dynamic mics. The difference between the three is very simple.

- *Condenser mics* require power externally, generally 12 or 48 volts. This power is sent to the mic by a power supply, mixer or recorder that has this capability built in.

- *Electret condenser mic*s have a battery that is in the mic. The voltage is usually 1.5 to 6 volts.

- *Dynamic mics* do not require power and work off a magnetic coil in the mic.

Microphones also have various *pick-up patterns*. A pick up pattern is the area in front of the mic where the sound is gathered and is generally referred to as the "sweet spot" or axis of the mic.

You can discover this area of the microphone by using a pair of headphones while listening to someone speak. If you start moving the mic slightly away from the person speaking, you will begin to hear the voice drop off. This is when the sound can be said to be "off-mic" and off-axis of the mic. When you hear this, you are outside the pattern of the mic. Always remember to point the mic at the mouth of the person speaking, and to rehearse the movement of the mic in the scene as the actors are doing their rehearsals.

In many shots you will have to choose who to favor with the microphone coverage. When shooting "singles" or close-ups, it is standard practice to favor the actor whose face is on-camera. The assumption is that the other actors in the scene will also get their own shots, and this is when you favor their sound. But, always try to record sound as best you can, even in the wide shots, or in shots with two to three actors in frame, because this may be the only time you can record some of the sound to be used in the scene. Not all of the dialogue will be re-recorded with each change in set-up or composition.

Pick-up patterns

Microphones may have *hypercardioid*, *cardioid*, *omni-directional*, or *figure-eight* pick-up patterns. *Hypercardioids* have the greatest reach. *Cardioids* have a heart shaped pick-up pattern with a little reach. *Omni mics* have more reach on the sides than a cardioid or hypercardioid, but not in distance from the front of the mic. The *figure eight* has great reach on the sides of the mic, but very little in front.

The figure eight pattern is generally used for MS stereo recordings of sound effects. (The MS stands for middle-sides.) MS Stereo uses two channels; one channel is used for the

front sound (usually a hyper or cardioid mic), while the second channel is used for the sides (the figure eight pattern). The two channels are combined to form a stereo sound.

The hypercardioid

For most dialogue situations, it is best to use a microphone with a hypercardioid pick-up pattern. Since it has the best reach of all the patterns, hypercardioid mics enable you to most clearly capture the dialogue. Since the pattern is "tight," it also rejects some other sounds that might be around, like traffic or other background noises. The hyper-cardioid is the best mic to use indoors. With rooms that have hard floors and walls, there can be many reflections of sound waves. A person's voice will bounce off the walls and floors, sometimes causing an echo-like sound on your recordings. The hypercardioid pattern helps eliminate *some* of these reflections because of its narrow and direct pattern.

The shotgun mic

Sometimes people are confused by the use of the term shotgun mic. All hypercardioids that are boom style mics (made to use on boompoles to gather dialogue) are shotgun mics. The best way to think about this is that there are short, medium and long shotgun mics. The shorter shotguns have shorter pick up patterns while the longer mics have greater reach in their pattern. Shotgun mics are a style of mics. They are six to eighteen inches long and are usually the size of a nickel or quarter in diameter. On all shotgun mics, there are ribs or vents that gather the sound waves.

On a short shotgun mic, there are only few vents. On a long shotgun there are many vents, while a medium is between the two. The shorts are usually only six to eight inches long, while the medium are ten to twelve inches and the longs are sixteen to eighteen inches long. The short and medium shotguns are better to use inside because of the fewer vents collect fewer reflections. The medium and longer shotguns are better for exterior recording because they have a greater rejection of background noises and longer reach. A medium shotgun is the best all-purpose boom mic.

Sound recording can be a very challenging job, but working with the camera and lighting departments during set up and rehearsal will make it much easier and allow your final results to sound their best.

Always remember to be a smart thinker and try to stay ahead of the game. Help the director and the project by coming up with ideas for elements you can record as effects or ambience. Sound may be often overlooked element in the movie business, but it is never overlooked by those who really know what they are doing and are looking for ways to make the best production they can. Maintain a professional attitude and you can make a great contribution to the creative process.

Appendix F
Non-Linear Editing Techniques

Organize the chaos

The biggest rule in editing is that you *must* be organized. You are working with a computer, so it can only do what you tell it to do. Once you have created an organized database for your material, you will always be able to find any piece of footage you have shot. It is very important that you decide on a system of naming things and stick with it for the remainder of the project.

The first step in non-linear editing is naming your project. You can call it the name of your movie or anything that will identify it as yours. You must then select a user (you). Once those two things are selected, you can begin.

It is entirely up to you to decide how you want to organize your footage. The standard way is to give every tape a number and then every tape will have a "bin" with a corresponding number. If you have four tapes, for example, numbered one through four, then you will have four bins numbered one through four as well.

Digitize your footage

Once you have selected a new bin and have named it accordingly, you can begin digitizing your footage. Digitizing takes place in what is called "Capture Mode," which means that the computer is ready to input material. Your tapes have time-code, on them, which means that every frame of video has a number. The computer inputs the material and the numbers so you can always go back and re-digitize material if you need to.

You will want to digitize every take separately so that they will be easy to find once you are cutting. Once the takes are digitized, they are called *clips*, and you must now give every clip a name. Usually the name will be the number of the scene, a letter that indicates the camera setup (close-up, wide-shot etc) and the take number. For example, a clip named 5A-4 designates scene number 5, camera set up A and take number 4. You can name your clips any way you prefer, but the name should be something you will be able to easily identify when you start editing.

Begin the editing process

Once all your material is digitized and named, you can begin editing. You must create a new bin and name it (you can call it your sequence bin). Within that bin, you must select "new sequence." The untitled sequence will appear in that bin and you can name it

whatever you want (again, you will probably want to name it according to the scene or scenes that you plan to cut). Now you are ready to begin working with your footage.

The window display has two sides. The left side is called the "source" side because that is where you look at your clips in their original state. The right side is for your sequence and is called the "record" side. You can drag and drop or double-click on the clip to make it appear in the source window. Once you have watched your clip, you can decide on your "in" and "out" points (where you want the clip to start and end in your sequence). When you have chosen "in" and "out" points, you insert the clip into your sequence using the "splice-in" button, and your first edit has been made. You will see it appear as a graph below the windows on what is called the "timeline." You can now go through all your material for the scene and chose your favorite parts from each clip and insert them into the sequence.

The two primary ways for adding material into a sequence are the "splice-in" and "overwrite" commands. A "splice-in" edit inserts the material into the sequence without replacing material already in the sequence. The existing material moves further down the timeline, lengthening the overall duration of the sequence. You are basically inserting a shot in between two other shots. To perform a "splice-in" edit, load a clip into the source monitor and mark the "in" and "out" points. In the sequence, mark your "in" point for where you want your new shot to go. Click the "splice-in" button and the material will be inserted into the timeline.

An "overwrite" edit replaces a section of the sequence with the material you have selected in the source monitor. Unlike the "splice-in" edit, an "overwrite" edit replaces the existing material and therefore does not lengthen the overall duration of the sequence. To perform an "overwrite" edit, mark either the "in" or "out" point on the source side to show the start or end of the clip you want to use. In the record monitor, mark both the "in" and "out" points to select the material that you want to overwrite. Click the overwrite button and the material will be laid onto the sequence.

"Lifting" and "extracting" allow you to remove material in your sequence. The "Lift" function removes selected material from a track in the sequence and leaves black filler (on a video track) or silence (on an audio track) to fill the gap. You can later fill this gap with other footage. When you lift material, the overall duration of the sequence remains the same. To lift material, mark "in" and "out" points at the start and end of the material in the sequence that you want to remove. Select the tracks containing the material (the system will only remove material on tracks that are selected). Click the "lift" button to remove the material.

The "extracting" function removes the selected material and closes the gap left by its removal. As a result, when you extract material, you shrink the duration of the sequence. To extract material, mark "in" and "out" points at the start and end of the material in the sequence you want to extract. Click the extract button to remove the material.

Basic editing produces what is called a *rough cut*, which is basically a series of straight cuts. After creating a rough cut, you can enter *trim mode* and fine-tune the transitions between the clips. This is where you would create *overlap edits*.

To enter trim mode, you click on the trim mode button. By default, the system will select the transition nearest to the indicator bar. There are three different types of trim modes but we are going to deal with the simplest one called "dual-roller" trimming. This is the default mode that will come up when trim mode is selected. What you are doing is covering part of one clip with material from another. To perform an overlap edit, you would start with a straight cut between two clips and go into trim mode. You would select either your video or your audio track (depending on whether you wanted to extend picture or sound). Pull the double roller in the direction you want to cover.

Dissolves are another helpful way to deal with transitions. When used on a picture track, a dissolve overlaps the two images for the length of time selected. With audio, it can be used to smooth the audio transition so there is no distracting pop when going from one audio clip to the next. To perform a dissolve, place the position bar on the transition and click the "dissolve" button (the dissolve will be applied to any track that is highlighted whether it is picture or audio). The dialogue box will appear where you can select the length of the dissolve. Audio dissolves must be rendered, video dissolves do not.

These are the most basic ways to manipulate your media into a cut scene. As you become more familiar with the editing tool, you will be able to really focus on what it is you are cutting, rather than how to make the cuts happen. There are countless ways to cut the same scene and the decisions made in the cutting room will change how the film works.

Explore the possibilities

As the editor, you must decide how to best express what the film needs to say at any given moment. Do you want to start a scene on a wide-shot to establish the space or begin on a close-up of an actor and reveal where they are later? These are the choices that make editing interesting. In the timeline, you have the ability to work with several audio tracks, which will enable you to layer sounds. You may want to have music, sound effects and more than one character's audio playing all at once. You may want to have one character's line under the other character's reaction (overlap edits). It is through playing with all the different possibilities that you will discover what works best for each scene.

Change your mind

One of the most useful aspects of non-linear editing is the ability to do different versions of the same sequence. Once you have tried your scene starting with the wide shot, you can create a new sequence (name it something else) and start with the close-up. You can show the different versions to the director and figure out which one best suits the story.

Find the movie

Sometimes it seems that editing takes place in stages. The first stage occurs when you begin cutting the movie you intended to make all along. The second stage is the point at which you realize that changes are required, and you then edit the movie you think you made. You realize that this too requires a few changes, and so, finally, you edit the movie you actually made.

Appendix G
Video Camera Basics

<u>CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE</u>
Start the day by cleaning your equipment. Clean dust and fingerprints from the lens and viewfinder at least once a day. Eyeglass cleaning kits work quite well; they have an excellent lint-free cloth and gentle lens fluid.

Cleaning the lens and tape transport system
Spray a little lens fluid on the cloth and gently wipe the lens in a circular motion from the center toward the outside. Then wipe the lens dry with another portion of the cloth. Check the lens for streaks and repeat if you see any.

Maintenance reminders
- Run the head cleaner tape every 20 tapes or so.
- Be careful not to leave the camera unprotected in harsh conditions: on top of a heater, sitting in the snow or on the back seat of a car on a sunny day.
- Always put the camera and all other fragile equipment on a protected surface, preferably low to or on ground level.

<u>POWERING THE CAMERA</u>
- Use the AC power adaptor whenever possible
- Reserve battery use for when you really do require it.
- When using battery power, try *not* to use the pull-out LCD screen. It consumes power much more quickly than the standard viewfinder on the camera, and will greatly reduce the amount of power you will have available to record your images and sound.
- Make it a habit to use the viewfinder as your main source of judging composition and focus, because it is sharper than the LCD screen.
- Charge the batteries regularly.
- Charge batteries the night before a shoot to ensure you start out with fully loaded power supply.
- When shooting on location that requires the use of batteries, find a nearby spot where you can plug in the re-charger. Run an extension power cable to use nearby outlets.
- Assign someone to place batteries in the charger as soon as it is depleted.

<u>MANUAL FOCUS</u>

Using manual controls

In general, it is preferable to use the manual controls on the camera whenever possible. Not only does this teach us to think, it prevents the camera from thinking, and making assumptions, for us.

How to focus a zoom lens

Before each shot, these are the steps for focusing the zoom lens on the camera:

- Select the subject and camera placement.
- Zoom the camera all the way in to the subject. If it is a person, use their eyes to check for sharpness.
- Focus.
- Zoom out to the framing and composition you desire.

A zoom lens works, and is brought into focus in such a manner, because focus is most critical at the telephoto end of the lens. If your subject looks sharp when the lens is on the full telephoto position, it will remain sharp when you zoom out. Also, focus will 'hold' if you zoom in on your subject during the shot. If you zoom in on a different subject, one closer to or further away from the camera, it may not be sharp, because the lens-to-subject-distance has changed.

Focus practice

Turn the camera on, making sure that it's in the "auto-focus" position, and place a picture, or poster, on a wall or table about 10 to 12 feet away. Place an object (i.e. a chair) about five feet away from your lens.

- Zoom your camera all the way out, so you are using the widest lens setting, and look at the shot closely to judge what is in focus. Are the chair and the painting in focus?
- Now, zoom the camera all the way in on the picture (hold down the "T" end of the zoom function; you will end up at the full telephoto position of the lens).
- Frame the shot so a piece of the chair, or whatever foreground object you are using, remains in the shot. See if you can also frame a portion of the wall, to the side of the painting is also in the shot. Is the painting still in focus? The chair? How about the wall behind, or beside, the picture?

Now, switch the camera from "auto-focus" to "manual" mode.

- Bring the chair (or foreground object) into focus by rotating the focus ring, located around the lens, until the chair looks very sharp.
- Keep both objects in your frame; only a part of the chair will be seen because your lens is so zoomed in. Is the painting still in focus?
- When you are using the extreme end of the telephoto lens you will have very little "depth of field." This means, if you are framing someone's face, sometimes the eyes will be in focus, but the ears will not.
- Without adjusting focus, zoom your camera all the way out (by holding down the "W" side of the zoom function; this is the "wide" lens setting) and look at the image closely to judge what is in focus. Is the painting still in focus? Is the chair?

Review Questions for focus exercise:
- When you first turned on the camera, what was in focus?
- What was in focus when you zoomed in on the painting?
- How did the image change when you adjusted the focus to favor the chair?
- After altering the focus to favor the chair, what happened to the image when you zoomed out? Was the picture or poster still in focus as well?

AUTO-FOCUS

Auto-focus can prove quite useful in several circumstances, notably when you need to make extreme changes in focus very quickly, while panning or tilting from one object or person near the camera, to an object or person much farther away from camera. In professional situations, the camera assistant has a special tool that allows him or her to quickly adjust the focus manually. Since our cameras do not feature this tool, auto-focus can be worthwhile to use when a character is moving quickly, say running through the frame from near to far, or vice-versa.

A drawback to using auto-focus

When we use auto-focus, the camera assumes we want whatever is in the center of the frame to be in focus. Film images are rarely composed in this manner, and we do not want to be limited to this compositional choice. Take a look at famous paintings and portraits: how many use the center of the frame to hold the compositional emphasis of the subject? Auto-focus can also be fooled by bright backgrounds, which the camera will try to focus on instead of your actors. In low-light situations (at night, for example), the camera can be fooled by very bright elements in the frame.

- By placing the camera in manual focus and selectively choosing the focus point in the frame, we can avoid this pitfall.
- If you are having trouble focusing because of a low-light situation, bring a small focus light with you. Turn the light on, focus the camera, and then turn the light off.

<u>MANUAL EXPOSURE</u>

Exposure is the amount of light allowed to pass through the lens and onto the video chips. The camera can adjust exposure automatically, which is not recommended, so you should make it a habit to manually control the aperture setting.

Exposure is adjusted by opening or closing the *aperture*, also called an *iris*.

Iris exercise

To see how this works in your camera, look at a person's eye under controlled conditions.

- In a darkened room, look closely at a person's eyes. Notice how large the pupil is.
- Quickly turn on the lights. The pupil has gotten much smaller while the iris (the colored part of the eye) now covers a larger portion of the eye.

To see how the aperture works on the video camera, set the camera to auto-exposure.

- During the day, aim the camera toward a window. Include part of the wall to the left or right of the window. Notice how dark the wall appears. This is because the automatic exposure setting is selecting to expose for the subject in the window. It does this because it takes up the larger part of the frame. You may want to frame a shot in which you expose for a subject taking up a very small part of the frame.
- Now pan slowly until your frame shows mostly wall, with just a small part of the window. What happened? The automatic exposure feature changed its mind, and decided to expose for the interior wall. It made this decision without asking you, and because the wall now takes up the larger part of the frame.

Auto-exposure makes rapid changes in the size of the iris. This can distract an audience and also ruin the mood of a scene by eliminating shadow areas. Dark portions of a frame are an important component of storytelling.

Manually controlling the aperture setting

- Set the camera to manual exposure by pressing the button marked "exposure."
- This places the camera into manual mode; you will see an exposure indicator in the viewfinder or on the LCD screen.
- Slowly adjust the iris by using the menu wheel to make changes and select the aperture setting you desire.
- Get used to seeing the slight changes in exposure by first making your subject much too bright, and then much too dark. Notice that when you set the camera into manual exposure mode, you will see a numerical read-out of its present setting. These are called "f-stops."

- Now bring the exposure back to where you like it. It is useful to note that f 16 and f 22 refer to small aperture settings that would be used in very bright situations. And f 2.0 or f 2.8 are larger aperture openings, indicative of low-light situations. What is important is the aperture setting that correctly exposes the subject of your frame, and to find this we usually study light falling on a human face.
- Make sure you do not manually set the exposure below the "open" position, which means the aperture is "wide open."

Note also that when you turn the camera on, it starts out in the automatic exposure mode. If you turn the camera on in a very low light situation, the aperture may be set beyond "open" to a setting where the camera will increase the "gain" of the pixels which make up the picture. This may make your picture look good to your eye, but when you look at the image on a screen, it will look grainy. In general, use manual exposure mode, and be careful to use the gain setting when you are choosing it for a very specific reason.

By using the manual iris setting you will avoid sudden exposure changes on-screen caused by panning the camera, or having your subject move, across light and dark areas in the image. These sudden changes in light will cause aperture adjustments that can be very distracting, and defeat the purpose of allowing light and dark to interplay on the screen. It is better to find a single exposure setting and let your characters walk in and out of various shades of bright and dark.

WHITE BALANCE
Light contains every color in the spectrum, with white light being the combination of these colors. But even white is not always the color that it seems.

White balance exercise
Take two pieces of white letter-sized paper and lay them on a table near a window, long end to long end (creating a single sheet, 8½" x 22").

- Concentrate, and look closely at the paper for 10 to 15 seconds under the daylight.
- Have someone stand between the window and one of the sheets of paper, casting a shadow over the paper.
- Someone else should now shine a flashlight (regular, inexpensive models are best; do not use a xenon type) on the shadowed paper.
- Compare the day-lit "white" paper with the electrically lit "white" paper. The electrically lit paper should seem to contain a bit more "yellow."
- Now take the flashlight and white paper into a darkroom and use the flashlight to illuminate it. Look at the paper for 10 to 15 seconds and judge the color of the paper.

Compared to daylight, the flashlight looks orange-yellow. And, once isolated in a dark room, the light from the flashlight looked white. This is why the camera has *Daylight* (indicated by the "sun" setting) and *Tungsten* (illustrated by the "incandescent bulb" setting) filters.

In general, daylight is said to be more "blue" than interior light, which is closer to the "orange" end of the color spectrum.

You have probably seen news footage where the camera operator forgot to "white balance" the camera, and so the faces shot outside look very blue. The camera was left on the "incandescent" (interior) setting, and so to the camera, the outside light appears to have a much more blue tint.

If you leave the camera white-balanced on the "sun" (outdoor) setting, faces shot indoors may look much too orange.

Working with the camera's white balance
When you turn on the camera, it automatically tries to find the proper white balance to make pictures with the proper color. However, if you look at a part of the room that is window-lit and then turn quickly (pan the camera) to another part of the room that is lit by electric fixtures, you will see the colors shift.

Using the pre-sets (Daylight and Tungsten)
- Select the "White Balance" button by pressing it once.
- Turn the menu wheel until a small picture of a sun appears in the viewfinder.
- This is the *Daylight Pre-set* and is used outside during the day, and inside when the room is lit mainly by daylight.
- To make sure that this setting does note change during a shot, select it, then press one of the other controls (i.e. "Shutter"). The light colored field around the sun picture disappears and you are set on the exterior, or daylight, setting.
- Press the "White Balance" and select the light bulb icon.
- This is the *Tungsten Pre-set*, for indoor use. Notice how the color tones look "normal."
- Now, point the camera at a day-lit area and notice that the picture looks quite blue. Color tones of the face will also look "off."
- Use the "indoor" setting for rooms illuminated mainly by ordinary light bulbs or when shooting outside at night.

Setting a custom white balance
- Select the "White Balance" function and turn the wheel to the "Custom White Balance icon" (illustrated by a square bordered by 2 triangles).
- Place a piece of white paper under your light source, the same one illuminating the scene you are about to shoot. You can place the paper on a table or someone can hold it to the light. Zoom until the paper fills the frame, expose it properly (you can switch to auto-exposure the first few times that you try this) and gently press the menu wheel. The icon will blink several times, and when it stops blinking, the paper will appear white and you will be color balanced.

A custom white balance becomes essential when working under fluorescent lights, as these tend to have a greenish cast, or when there are many mixed light sources on the set.

You can set color balance to technically proper specifications, or use it "incorrectly" for artistic effect.

White balance exercise
Using an 8½" x 11" pad with paper of different colors, custom set the white-balance to each color in the set; green, blue, light blue, etc. Use a marker to note the proper color on each piece of paper, because similar colors may look exactly the same after the white balance has been set.

Some people like to use a light blue piece of paper, rather than white, to set the white-balance, because it can give faces a "warmer" feel.

The shutter speed
- Normally, keep the shutter at 60, which really means $1/60^{th}$ of a second.
- As you go to shorter intervals, such as 100, 250, or 500, moving objects appear sharper, but may show a pronounced staccato motion. You see this effect during TV sports coverage.
- You can use a shutter speed of 30, 15, or 8 for a dreamy, swirly effect. You see this in some music videos.

Shutter exercise
Shoot material in a variety of shutter speeds, taking care to slate each shot so you can watch them carefully. Include a moving object in the material you shoot for this exercise. Use an erasable board and write, in big letters, the speed of the shutter you have chosen:
$$1/60^{th} \quad 1/30^{th} \quad 1/8^{th} \quad 1/250^{th}$$
Watch the results, and keep in mind how the settings change your perception of the moving image. You may want to use the effect later on for a dramatic purpose.

Always remember to WAFT!

Before shooting from any new camera position, and especially when lighting conditions have changed, remember the four basic functions to set on your camera.

- **White balance**

Set the camera to the light source, or to a custom white-balance.

- **Aperture**

Set the camera manually to the exposure of your choice. If you let the camera choose the aperture, it may be overpowered by the presence of a very light or dark area or background. Only you know what you want to expose for in your frame.

- **Focus**

Zoom all the way in, focus, zoom out to your choice of composition. Again, the camera will always focus on what is in the center of the frame, and this is not usually the way film compositions are set.

- **Think**

What other choices are you making? What choices are you leaving to the camera? Before you hit the "record" button and set the scene down, is there anything else you might want to adjust?
- Are the actors moving enough?
- Does it seem real?
- Is the camera moving too much?
- Will your audience get seasick?

Think ahead of time, and more often than not you will avoid serious trouble later. Finally, ask yourself, "Does this work?" If the scene or the blocking is not working for you, right now, chances are it will not work for the audience. Good directors, good camera operators, good professionals of all crafts are not afraid to make adjustments. Just remember that you made a plan for a reason, so make changes with good reason, too.

<u>LIGHTING BASICS</u>
Since we do not have the money, and are still working to reach the technical know-how of a big Hollywood crew, when we set and light a shot we have to think about the budget.

Getting quality lighting on a budget
An important rule with video is to be careful with over-exposure. You can make a shot that is a little dark somewhat brighter, but if the image is burned-out (so over-exposed that the whites are said to "bloom" and all detail is lost) you can never fix the exposure. That said, when filming toward a window during the day, you will not be able to easily match the inside with the outside exposure. You have several choices:

- Expose for the faces inside, and let the outside burn-out.
- Expose for the outside and silhouette your actors inside.
- Wait for the end of the day when the outside light has faded enough for you to match the exposures, and then your camera will be able to read detail both inside and out. This is because the light levels will be much more evenly matched.

Take advantage of favorable light
Schedule your shots to take advantage of the most favorable light, and if you need to see both inside and out at the same time, shoot early or late in the day.

Other lighting and shooting tips
When shooting outside during the day (Day Exteriors), try to avoid having sunny backgrounds when your actors are in a shaded foreground area. If you expose your actors well, the background will burn out. If you expose for the background and make your actors into shadowy shapes, you have created a silhouette.

The silhouette is a wonderful technique that has great impact in very specific situations, such as mystery stories or beautiful sunset shots.

For everyday scenes, try to have your actors be brighter than your background because most people have conversations with people, not backgrounds. In other words, we will not mind an area that is dark, and our eye will adjust to it, if it is not the most important element in the frame.

Backlight and cross-light lighting conditions
In *backlight*, the sun, or light source, points at the back of your actor's head. This gives the effect of a line of light around the head, shoulders, and arms of your actors.

Be careful not to have the sun shining directly into your lens, unless it is a shot about the sun. Stray rays of light directly entering the lens usually cause an unattractive 'flare' that shows up in the viewfinder as weird blue dots.

Cross-light puts one half of a person's face in light and the other in shadow.

To make these two styles of lighting work, you need *fill light*. This is light directed into the shadow areas to compensate for how video sees light and shadow.

- Video is unable to differentiate between dark and light parts of the world as easily as your eye does. Video sees bright areas as brighter than they are and dark areas as darker than they are. Video can be said to have a restricted contrast ratio. Fill light lessens the contrast by making the dark parts of the image brighter so that the picture looks better on the TV.
- Outside, add fill light by simply holding the white side of an art card so that it reflects sunlight back at your actor. Take a piece of cardboard, about 2' x 2', and glue white paper onto one side.
- For a high intensity reflector, cover the cardboard with aluminum foil.
- If you crunch up the aluminum foil before putting it on the cardboard, it gives a less intense reflection, but is still brighter than the white cardboard alone.
- This kind of reflector can bounce light from far away, so if your actors are in a shadow, put the reflector 20' to 30' away in the sun, and the light that you send in can help expose your actors properly and with highlights.
- A practical solution is to carry two pieces of art card; one side can be white and the other can be covered with aluminum foil. This way you will have two reflector boards and the choice of using a softer quality of fill-light from the reflector cards.

Night exteriors
Since you will not be able to light night exteriors with big movie lights (a very expensive proposition), you should rely on placing your actors under the streetlights, porch-lights or any areas of relative brightness found in your neighborhood. Neon signs above stores make great lighting solutions.

Gain
In low-light situations, you may also take advantage of video's extra sensitivity to light by activating the *gain* function. You get to this while adjusting the camera's manual exposure setting. You move into the gain position when you move past "Open" ("2.8", "2.4", "2", "Open")

Setting the exposure to use gain

- Select the manual exposure setting and rotate the selection wheel past "open," until you see "Open + 3" "+6" and so on.
- Natural light night exteriors often require some gain.
- In placing your actors for the light, try not to put them directly next to, or directly under, your light sources. Place your action so that some of the light gets into your actors' eyes.
- You can also use the same reflectors that you use for day exteriors during your night shoots. However, they will not work as well as during the day, and may need to be much closer to the light sources, and to the actors.

Night interiors

Most of your lighting will come from the table lamps and overhead lights that are already in your locations, or which you bring with you. Remember, you can always switch out the bulbs in a lamp fixture, and replace them with brighter ones. Or, you can dim the lights, so that your subject is the brightest object in the frame. You can make very interesting lighting using everyday equipment found in your homes.

Light

More light does not always mean better light. Light can give texture, drama, and emotion to an image. Just flooding a room with light can make your film boring. Side lighting makes a beautiful picture, edge lighting a mysterious picture. If your light comes from right near the camera, you have made a front light. Darkening the background a little bit makes this type of lighting work well. Conversely, a darker foreground works better for edge lighting.

Before you shoot any video, turn on the various lights in your location one at a time. Ask yourself several questions about each lamp.
- Does this lamp light up the entire room?
- Do I need to use other lights, or is the one source dramatic?
- Is the room bright only near the lamp itself?
- Do I need to use fill light?
- What direction does the light come from when you are at the door?
- Does the light direction make sense? Does it look like the light is coming from the window, or from down the hall?

Turn on two lights in a room and check to see if the effect looks good to you. You may want to carry a small mirror with you so you can check to see how the light looks on you as you walk through the room(s).

ADVANCED LIGHTING

Most lighting is naturalistic, meaning it looks like the light that you see in everyday situations. In the real world, every ray of light has a source. Outside, the sun is the source light and the sky reflects the fill light. Inside, during the day, the sunlight and skylight through the windows plus any lamps or candles, and the reflections of all these lights, are the sources.

The first thing to do is figure out the proper color balance for your scene. If it is a daytime interior and the windows are big enough to allow a lot of light in, the primary light source might be from the windows. In this case, you could use the daylight setting on the white-balance function.

Perhaps your windows are small, or have curtains on them. In cases like this, or where the action takes place far from the windows, electric lights (Tungsten or fluorescent) provide most of the illumination, and you should use the tungsten white-balance setting, or manually white balance for fluorescent light.

Difficult situations

What color balance do you use when the light in a room is a 50/50 split between daylight and artificial light? If either pre-set white balance position (sunlight or tungsten) does not look good to you, try a manual white balance using a mixture of the lights.

- Place a white piece of paper at a point in the room where it receives both kinds of light. As always, before you white balance, zoom in so that the piece of paper fills the screen image. After white balancing, the daylight will not look too blue and the electric light will not look too orange. Just remember, with artistic decisions, what looks good to you is the right choice.

Try it one way, then try it another way.

COMPOSITION: FOREGROUND, MIDDLE GROUND, BACKGROUND

In filmmaking, shots look more interesting if they have depth. That is, a foreground, mid-ground and background. When you place your actors flat against a wall and you shoot them straight on with a wide-angle lens, the results might be boring.

In each scene, and in each shot, try to find a way to tell the story, and the emotion of the characters, in a visual way, a way that does not depend on dialogue. Try to show the emotion in a way that allows the audience to add their own feelings to the emotion; do not make it too obvious for them.

Using the zoom lens

The Zoom lens on the video camera is a powerful tool. However, constant zooming in and out creates messy filmmaking. The audience loses its place in your story because there is a fuzzy point of view. Pick your moment to zoom in or out. Emphasize emotion, or drama, by moving the camera in or out, right or left. Just a little motion will tell us to underline this important moment. And your camera is light, so pick it up, walk with it, run with it and slide it along on a shopping cart or on a skateboard. Be inventive.

You may also want to hold off on that zoom. When we use the zoom lens, the camera does not move, the screen does. Moving the camera is like picking up the audience and putting them on your back, saying "Come with me over here for a different point of view." But the zoom allows the audience to sit still and it brings the screen closer to, or moves it farther away. There is not as much drama in that technique.

If you do decide to use the zoom lens, make it a controlled one, and use it once. When you become accustomed to it, and see where it really helps you in telling the story, then perhaps you can increase its use based upon your experience. It is a good idea to use it sparingly at first. Use it primarily to change the lens setting between shots, along with moving the camera to a new position.

You can tell a wonderful story without using all the advanced features of the camera. Keep it simple and then that one special shot that you spent hours to make will really impact the audience. A little movement goes a long way.

USING HEADROOM

One important compositional choice involves headroom. This is the amount of space between the top of a person's head and the top of frame. In general, a small amount of headroom looks best. However, if you want to emphasize the puffy clouds or beautiful ceiling, use a bit more headroom.

Finally, you can get clues and ideas about good camerawork by looking at the movies and TV shows you really appreciate, the ones that make you feel something or have a great deal of energy. Begin to pay special attention to how they do what they do. This requires more than just following the story. Once you analyze a film this way, it gets even better.

**Appendix H
Program Forms**

Parent Permission Form

Certificate of Completion

Sample Press Release

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

Parent Permission Form

Your son/daughter has expressed an interest in participating in *Boys & Girls Club of your town's Movie Tech* program.

Movie Tech, part of a suite of programs focusing on technology and the arts, is specifically designed to give Club members a working knowledge of script writing and film production. During the Screenplay Writing Track, members will view short films, become acquainted with the components of a good story, and learn to put their ideas on paper in script form. The Video Production Track will give Club members the chance to learn and practice the process of filmmaking, from pre-production planning through post-production editing.

For additional information, suggestions or concerns, please contact *staff responsible for program* at *telephone number*.

☐ I DO give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the *Movie Tech* program.

☐ I DO NOT give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the *Movie Tech* program.

NOTE: Your son/daughter must return this letter prior to participating in the program.

_____
Child's Name   Age

_____
Boys & Girls Club (or Program Site)

_____
Your Name (printed)

_____
Your Signature   Date

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

Certificate of Completion
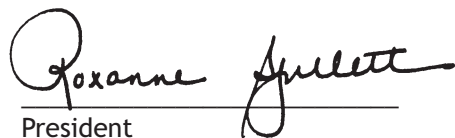
MOVIE TECH

A Program in Technology and the Arts

This Certifies that

_____

has completed all the requirements for the *Movie Tech* Program

_____

Award Date

Roxanne Spillett

President
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

_____

Boys & Girls Club Director

Sponsored by Microsoft

Sample Press Release

Add local information, as designated, retype on Club letterhead, and distribute to media.
_____

Contact: *(Club contact)*   FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
             (Club name)
             (Phone)

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB (*Your Town*) UNVEILS NEW PROGRAM FOR ASPIRING MOVIEMAKERS

(*Your city*), (*Date*) – Boys & Girls Club of (*your town*) has launched *Movie Tech*, a new program designed to teach members the fundamentals of digital moviemaking. Club members can explore the world of moviemaking by learning the basics of scriptwriting or the fundamentals of production. In the scriptwriting track, members learn the elements of writing a good script, including plot and character development, as well as the technical aspects involved in preparing a script for the screen. The production track teaches the fundamentals of filming and editing, including special effects and sound mixing. Upon completion, members will be able to produce a high quality, short movie.

"*Movie Tech* brings the magical world of moviemaking to our members, allowing them to experiment with an advanced form of self-expression, explore the limitless possibilities of their imagination and creativity, and perhaps find their niche for future career aspirations," said *(name of chief professional officer)*.

The program is the final release in a series of digital arts courses called the "Digital Arts Suite" being implemented in Boys & Girls Clubs across the country. Designed to teach youth about the arts and expose them to a level of technology that typically would be experienced only in college- or professional-level courses, the package is part of Club Tech, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's technology initiative funded by Microsoft.

Other digital art courseware programs released earlier this year include *Web Tech* for Web site design and development; *Design Tech* for graphic design and desktop publishing, *Photo Tech* for digital photography and photo manipulation; and *Music Tech* for electronic music making. Each courseware program focuses on a particular skill and teaches members the basics as a foundation to progress to more advanced skill levels.

-more-

With *Movie Tech*, members will use the Boys & Girls Club of (*your town*)'s technology center, furnished with (*insert technology hardware and software*), to discover the world of technology from the most basic to the advanced. Programs such as (*insert information on the software you will use for Movie Tech activities*) will be used to teach (*insert the skill(s) the program will teach*).

"Boys & Girls Clubs of America is offering the opportunity to explore technology on a level that not many members, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, thought possible," said Roxanne Spillett, president, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. "Thanks to the support of Microsoft, we are able to allow youth to expand their horizons through technology, and ultimately, to become prepared to function successfully in an environment in which technology is an everyday part of life."

"With *Movie Tech*, our members will be well-equipped to pursue a career in visual communications. In addition, working with this program will help youth become more computer-savvy and Internet literate," said (*name of chief professional officer*).

The Club Tech program – a $100 million/five-year partnership between Microsoft and Boys & Girls Clubs of America – will provide Clubs with technology program materials, training and software, with the goal of creating structured digital learning opportunities for more than 3.3 million youth in Boys & Girls Clubs across the country.

(Use this paragraph to add local information, including how many years the Club has served the community, how many youth are served by the Club, hours of operation and who to contact for additional information.)

###

Appendix I
Glossary

180° Rule: a guideline that helps filmmakers, when shooting several set-ups of one scene, maintain a consistent screen direction from one set-up to the next.

Act Break: the event or situation that characterizes the transition from the first act to the second act, or the second act to the third act.

Ambience: a neutral sound effect used to create background noise for a scene, usually used to cover mismatches in sound quality (also known as *room tone*).

Apparent Defeat: the point in a story at which the character appears to be defeated, that leads to the final challenge and the final decision.

Apparent Victory: the point in a film when it appears as if the character will emerge a conquering hero.

Backgrounds: sound that plays continuously in the background of a scene.

Blocking: the movement of actors within the scene and the camera frame.

Camera Notes: a record for the filmmaker of individual shots, indicating tape number, counter number, scene and take number, a description and comments about the shot.

Camera Technician: the crew member responsible for operating the camera and following the action of the film.

Cast: the actors in a film.

Clips: audio or video files that, when arranged in order, form the final film being created.

Close-up (CU): a close-up camera shot, used for a face or an object.

Crew: the technical people working on a film.

Composition: the way in which objects, people, buildings and landscapes are positioned in the camera frame.

Continuous Action: the illusion created by filmmakers that makes audience members believe they are viewing the action in a film continuously.

Cross-fade: a transition effect that gradually replaces the content of the clip that is ending with video from the one following it (also known as a *dissolve*).

Cut-aways: the small details, the close-up shots that give the audience visual clues about what is happening in the film (also known as *inserts*).

Dailies: the raw footage of film shot during one day of shooting.

Depth of Field: the portion of an image – in terms of distance from the camera – that can be kept in focus.

Director: the crew member responsible for leading the crew, for interpreting the story and guiding the telling of it in a way that is visually interesting, compelling and clear.

Dissolve: a transition effect that gradually replaces the content of the clip that is ending with video from the one following it (also known as a *cross-fade*).

Documentary: a film that dramatically shows or explores real-life news events or social conditions.

Documentary Outline: the outline that guides the production of the documentary.

Editing: the process of selecting and combining the scenes of a film in a way that most effectively tells the story.

Editor: the crew member responsible for assembly of all the scenes into a coherent whole that tells the story.

Extreme Close-up (ECU): an extreme close-up shot that exaggerates the size of a face or an object.

Fine Cut: the stage after the rough assembly, an edited version of a film with all the unnecessary shots and scenes removed.

First Act: the portion of a film that introduces a new situation the main character faces.

First Cut: the assembly of selected film clips in roughly the order they will appear in the final film (also known as *rough assembly*).

First Growth: the point in a film at which the character begins to understand what is possible if he or she had already learned the lessons needed to be learned.

Foley: the process of replacing (later in production) sounds made by people in films, such as walking, eating or rustling clothing.

Hollywood Method: an approach to shooting movies that involves a complete run-through or rehearsal of scenes before shooting any footage.

Inciting Incident: the unexpected event that jump-starts the action in the story.

Inserts: the small details, the close-up shots that give the audience visual clues about what is happening in the film (also known as *cut-aways*).

Jump-Cut: a place in the scene where the action is interrupted and does not match properly.

Lighting: the method and source of illumination for a shot.

Lighting Technician: the crew member responsible for choosing lighting for a scene that will contribute to the telling of the story.

Location Scout/Coordinator: the crew member responsible for the coordination and communication for all location information, schedules and changes.

Logging: the process of reviewing film scenes and making notes on paper.

Medium Shot (MS): a medium camera shot (we see a person from waist to head in the frame).

Medium Wide Shot (MWS): a medium wide camera shot (we see a person from head to toe in the frame).

Midpoint: the point in a story at which the character recommits to the original goal.

Moment of Self-Realization: the moment when a character finally understands the challenge and is changed by it.

Multiple Set-ups: shooting a scene using a variety of camera angles.

Overlap: a term that refers to extending the end of one scene into the beginning of another scene to give the editor flexibility about where to make a cut.

Pan: a movement of the camera from one side to the other, as if following a person walking across the set.

Paper Edit: a listing on paper of selected takes of a scene, in the order they will be used in the film.

Pick-ups: the process of re-shooting a particular scene to fill in missing or needed shots.

Picture Lock: the final version of the film, after all editing has been completed and all audio elements have been added.

Plot: the major event, the outer structure used to tell the underlying story.

Point-of-view (POV): a shot from the character's point of view.

Pre-production: the planning stage of a film that includes all preparation up to the time actual shooting begins.

Producer: the crew member responsible for overall communication and the supervision of all planning and preparation.

Production Elements: the technical aspects of the film that are used to help tell the story.

Props: the items needed by characters in a scene or the items needed to decorate a set.

Resolution: the ending of a film that shows us how the character has moved forward, and is ready to face the ultimate challenge.

Rising Action: the ever-increasing obstacles that challenge any character in a film.

Room Tone: a neutral sound effect used to create background noise for a scene, usually used to cover mismatches in sound quality (also known as *ambience*).

Rough Assembly: the assembly of selected film clips in roughly the order they will appear in the final film (also known as *first cut*).

Rule of Thirds: a rule that suggests placing subjects at the one-third of two-thirds mark, horizontally or vertically in the frame.

Scene: a segment of the story that occurs in one place over one period of time.

Scene Header: a description in the script that tells the setting, location, time of day.

Second Act: the segment of the film that shows us the goal of the main character, how he or she will resolve the challenge.

Selects: the best takes and camera angles of a particular scene.

Set-up: the introduction to a film that introduces the main character, the world of the story and the tone of the story. (Also refers to the position of the camera when shooting.)

Shot Definitions: the abbreviations used on a shot list to designate the kind of shot or composition (such as WS for wide shot or MS for medium shot).

Slate: a sign placed in the frame before shooting a scene to identify the production name, date, scene and take number.

Sound: the audio portion of a film that includes dialogue, ambient sound, sound effects or music.

Sound Coordinator: the crew member responsible for recording the dialogue and deciding which additional sounds and effects need to be added later.

Spotting Session: a session in which the crew plays back the film to determine where additional sounds need to be added.

Step Sheet: an outline of the individual scenes in a movie; a blueprint or roadmap for the screenplay.

Subtext: the unspoken, underlying message of a film; what the story is really about.

Story: what is happening to the characters, both internally and in the larger context of their lives; the message the film is trying to communicate.

Storyboards: a format that shows the sequence of individual clips in a film, similar to the panels of a comic strip.

Story Treatment: a concise description of a story idea, which describes the images, sound, character and action we will see on the screen.

Sync Effects: sound effects that are synchronized with the action in a film.

Take: a separate shot of a single scene.

Tape Log: a record of individual shots on a tape that guides us to the best material.

Timeline: a way of viewing a film that allows the editor to preview, organize, order and arrange film clips while editing.

Trim: the process of marking the start and end points of a clip to shorten and fine-tine it.

Walla-walla: the technique of including the sound of background people in a room, recorded and added to a scene after it is shot.

Wardrobe: the costumes worn by the characters in a film.

Wide Shot (WS): a wide camera shot in which people are small compared to the landscape.

Writer: the crew member responsible for inventing and translating the story into a form appropriate for the screen.

Visual Storytelling: the use of elements other than dialogue – such as facial expressions, movement, gestures, action and character – that help tell a story.