

How to film: Top tips

So, you're ready to start filming. To help you get the most out of your filmmaking experience, we've put together some useful top tips to help you on your way...

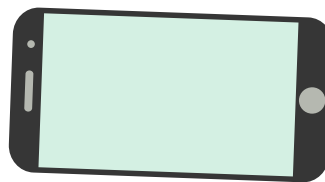
Equipment

1. Camera

There are a number of different devices that you could use like a DSLR camera or a mobile phone. Just make sure you change the settings so that you are filming in 1080p (full HD).

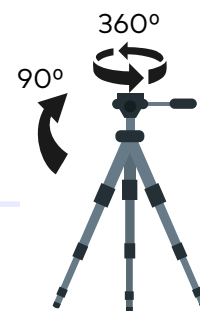


DSLR camera



Smartphone

Top tip: If you're unsure which to use or how to use it, ask an adult for help.



2. Tripod

It's always best to use a tripod. Unless you are purposely trying to create a mood or atmosphere using shaky images, using a tripod will help to stabilize your shot. Something called a **'fluid head tripod'** is best as this allows you to record and smoothly pan the camera from left to right and up and down.

If you don't have one then it's fine to use a **'photographic tripod'** but make sure you think about the shot you want to record as you won't be able to pan it whilst recording. If you're not sure, then test it out first to see if it moves or not.

Top tip: If you don't have access to a tripod, then use a pile of books instead.



3. Sound

We want to hear your film, so find out what kind of sound quality your chosen camera or device can offer. Test shoot something and play it back to check the sound. If you think the sound is too weak, or it's picking up too much interference (e.g. traffic or blustery wind), you might need to connect an external microphone.

If possible, it's always better to use an external microphone as a built-in microphone can often pick up unwanted background noise.

Using an external microphone with a **phono connection** will make a big difference to the quality of sound. Lav Microphones, or tie/clip on microphones are great. They achieve a clear sound from the person speaking and can be easily clipped to their shirt or jacket.



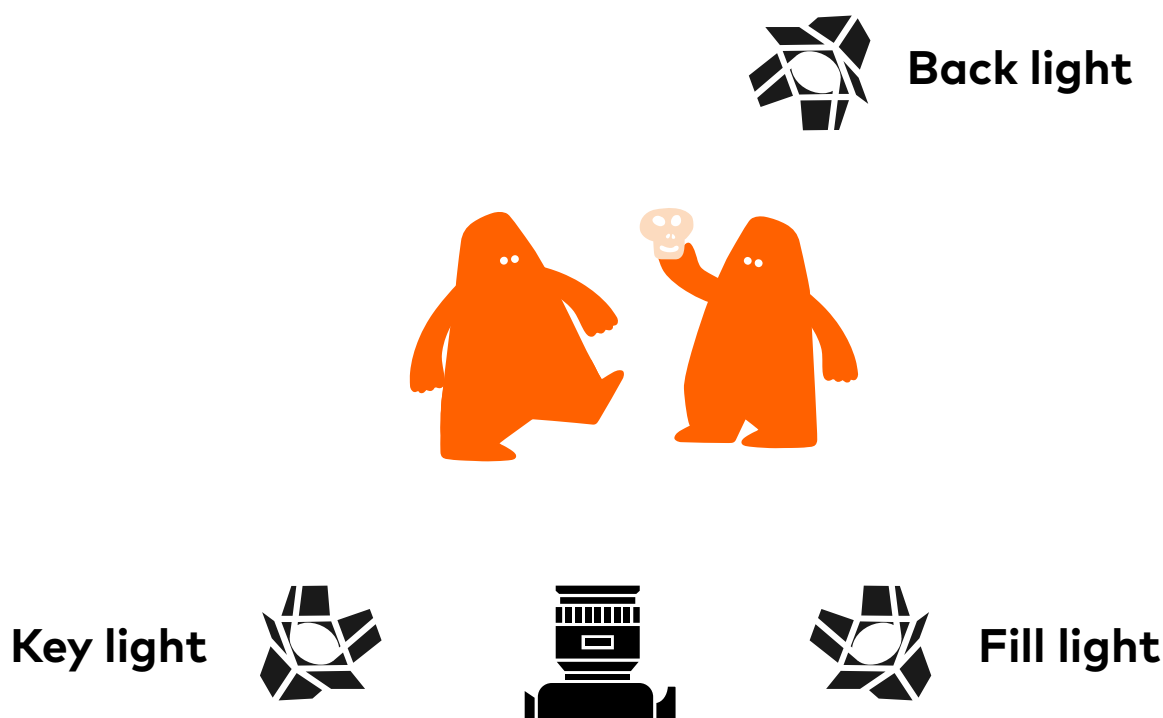
Top tip: The further away the camera is from the source of a sound, the worse the sound becomes - especially if you are using the internal microphone on your device.

It's always a good idea to keep your microphone as close as possible to the person talking or noise you want to capture. If that's not possible, then think about recording the sound separately and syncing the sound when you come to editing your final film.

4. Lighting

Lighting is quite a tricky thing to get right. If you position your subject matter in front of a light, they will appear as a silhouette. Likewise, the shot might be too dark and require extra lighting. If you are using extra lighting instead of daylight then it's advisable to use more than one light. If you have access to lighting, then the three point lighting set up works really well.

Here's a diagram of a simple three point lighting set up:



If you don't have lights to work with, then you can always get creative.

Use a **reflector** – it bounces natural light onto the subject you are filming to create a natural, even light.

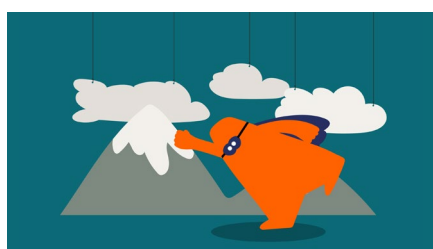


Top tip: If you don't have a reflector, don't worry as you can also use sheets of kitchen foil or large sheets of white card to reflect light.

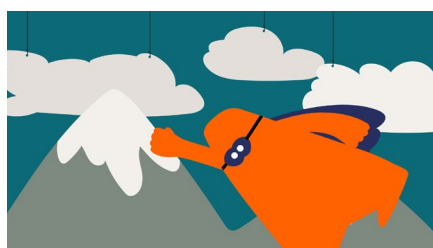
Shots

To make your film visually interesting, try and use a variety of shots and angles.

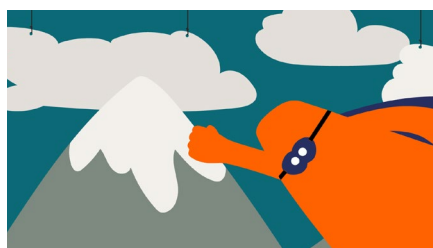
1. Shot types



Wide shot (WS) is used as an establishing shot. By this we mean the setting of a scene, to show us where you are e.g. a school playground.



Medium shot (MS) can introduce your subject matter or can give the impression of someone walking towards you.



Close up (CU) can be used if you are interviewing someone or if you are trying to show someone speaking to another person.



Extreme close ups (ECU) are great for capturing emotion as you are completely focused on the subject.

Top tip: Think about your background and whether you want this in your shot.

2. Framing

Framing your shot is key. All budding filmmakers or photographers will need to familiarise themselves with the rule of thirds. To simplify this, imagine that there is a grid on the lens of your camera.

A general rule of thumb is that the person's eye line should be in the top third and that the person should be in the first or last third. We want to see them, so make sure you don't crop off their head!

Top tip: Some devices allow you to show a 3 x 3 grid on the screen.



Rehearse

Have the actors rehearse to get into character and always have a practice run before you film the shot. That way, you can make sure that you are completely happy with the shot, frame, lighting, sound, and of course, the performance!

Top tip: If your actors are using costumes, see what this looks like on film before you film the shot as some colours and patterns don't work well on film.