

SHORT FILM FESTIVAL



REMOTE LEARNING
WHOLE SCHOOL
PROGRAM

SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

For students, staff and parents.

The Principal Team will be running a short film festival giving students the opportunity to showcase their creative, artistic skills. The films must be PG and be based on original ideas with original characters. Short films can be animation, live action or a combination of both. Your film can be a narrative, documentary, mockumentary, music video or any other genre that you would like to use.

The following pages will provide you with further information on creating a short film for the Wantirna College Short Film Festival.

Films should go no longer than 5 minutes and must be submitted as a video file (e.g. mp4, .mov) to Mr. Kruger by **Friday 12th June 3.30pm**. Films can be submitted by email or Google Drive. If you have difficulty submitting your film, please contact Mr Kruger on kru@wantirnacollege.vic.edu.au

The Short Film Festival will take place online in the last two weeks of Term 2. The date that your films will 'go live' will be announced closer to the date.



THE SHORT FILM FORMULA

BY BRETT LAMB

The most engaging short films are made by people who understand story. Technology doesn't matter. It's not about the camera you have or the editing software you use. Stop for a moment and consider that your smartphone is far more powerful than any of the filmmaking tools Alfred Hitchcock used. If you want to become a better filmmaker you need to become a student of story.

WHAT IS A GOOD STORY?

Making an effective short film requires an understanding of what stories are and how they are structured. At its most basic, a story is the tale of a character who overcomes obstacles in the pursuit of a goal. As David Howard notes in *How to Build a Great Screenplay*: "Somebody wants something badly and is having difficulty getting it. This dramatic circumstance is at the heart of every well-written scene and is a significant element in every well-told story."

Stories have a beginning, middle and end. This three act narrative structure is a fundamental storytelling concept. Screenwriters call these stages Act 1, Act 2 and Act 3. In *How to Build a Great Screenplay*, David Howard uses the following analogy: "...in the first act you tie a knot, in the second act you tighten that knot, and in the third act, you untie it again."

While a short film won't slavishly follow the beats of a ninety minute screenplay, this structure provides useful ideas for making a compelling short.

Information in
this document has
been adapted
from
lessonbucket.com

For more information on the narrative structure, please visit

<https://lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/filmmaking-filmmaking/short-film-formula/#more-2743>



HOW DO YOU TELL A GOOD STORY?

BY BRETT LAMB

Film is a visual medium. Remember that you are telling your story through a combination of:

- camera techniques (including shot composition, camera movement, camera angle, shot size and focus)
- acting (including moment, gesture, body language, facial expression and tone of voice)
- mise en scene (including set design, props, costume, make up and colour)
- editing
- lighting
- sound (including sound effects, dialogue and music)

One of the weaknesses of many student films that there is often too much focus on dialogue. How do you convey an important fact about your character without having them talk about it?

The answer is visual storytelling: a combination of camera, acting, mise en scene, editing, lighting and sound.

Let's just say that your main character's father died and it has taken a huge toll on his life. Using dialogue is the lazy way to establish this for your audience. "I've been finding it really tough since Dad died," he tells his friend. A more sophisticated filmmaker will show this to his audience. Perhaps you have a whole sequence where the character is alone at home, wan light spilling in through the kitchen window. Cut to a framed photograph of the character and his father, pull focus to reveal a vase of flowers in the foreground, then cut to a handwritten card with the words 'loving memory' visible.

A sombre piece of piano music plays in the background. Sure it's a little cliched but it's definitely a more interesting way to establish this for the audience than simply conveying it through dialogue.

When you're first starting out as a filmmaker, it's very tempting to show everything. Let's imagine that in the opening sequence of your film, your protagonist meets a girl on his way to school and falls madly in love. An inexperienced filmmaker would feel compelled to show every aspect of the character's morning routine: the alarm clock, feet hitting the floor, turning on the shower, taking a towel off the rack, toast popping up in the toaster, getting a jar of peanut butter from the pantry, spreading the peanut butter on the toast, pouring a glass of orange juice, grabbing his schoolbag and heading out the door. All of this is utterly unnecessary. It has nothing to do with the story. It's irrelevant. A much better way to do this would be to start with your character picking up his school bag and leaving for school. While he's walking down the street, we cut to a point of view shot of a girl walking in the opposite direction. Cut to a close up of his gobsmacked expression. Throwing the audience directly into the action is a much more engaging way to start your film. Some screenwriters suggest entering a scene late and leaving early. What does this mean? Basically start the scene in the middle of conflict. End the scene before it gets boring. If you find yourself falling into this trap, consider revisiting the ways that filmmakers can manipulate time.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

BY BRETT LAMB

When you are making a short film, here are ten things to think about when you are crafting a good story.

1. Developing an idea
2. Pre-Production
3. Casting
4. Opening Credit
5. Footleather
6. Too much story
7. Cliches
8. Sound
9. Lighting
10. Acting

Detailed information on the above can be found at <https://lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/filmmaking-filmmaking/short-film-formula/>

RESOURCES

The below links will take you to website pages that will be able to assist you with your film making. All resources are located on the website [lessonbucket](https://lessonbucket.com).

[Cinematography](#)

[Structuring time](#)

[Film making ideas](#)

[Developing your story](#)

[Student Film making advice](#)

[Shot Composition](#)

[Sound](#)

EXAMPLES OF SHORT FILMS

A variety of short films can be found on YouTube at the VCE Top Scen playlist page. They are also available on the lessonbucket webpage.

Click on the below images to be taken to these pages. Watching some short films will be a great starting point to get some ideas on how to construct your own short film.

