








1. Pre-Production Lesson Guide

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from **ONE EARTH** FILM FESTIVAL

1.1 Introduction to Filmmaking

Welcome to the Young Filmmakers Online Academy, from One Earth Film Festival. Filmmaking is the art of storytelling for the screen. The most memorable films teach audiences lessons about how we live and inspire creative problem-solving. You will learn all of the steps of filmmaking and telling environmental stories from this Academy. By the end, you'll make a theater-ready film to enter in the One Earth Young Filmmakers Contest.

For your film, we want you to research issues and solutions to environmental problems in one of seven categories. The contest categories are...

About Filmmaking

Filmmaking encompasses so many different roles and responsibilities. Starting from imagining your story, all the way through when you publish your final film. The phases of work during filmmaking are 1. Preproduction. 2. Production. and 3. Post-Production & Distribution.

Preproduction

Preproduction is imagining your story, writing a script, and planning out your film recording. During this session, you're going to work on imagining your characters, settings, and scenes. Next, you'll learn how to write and plan out your film through scripts and storyboards. You'll even get the knowledge to learn how to ask your



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characters questions in an interview. These are all of the steps we take before we're ready to go out and record our movie. And remember, filmmaking is a team sport! Join with friends or classmates in imagining stories and making movies.

Now, think!

Choose an environmental topic to research from one of the seven categories.

- What's a problem you've discovered through researching or knowing about this topic?

1. Climate	5. Waste
2. Energy	6. Water
3. Food	7. Wildlife & Ecosystems
4. Transportation	



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1.2 Sample Flim

We lead by example. View the sample film, "Something Murky Above the Water".

Synopsis

Brought to her attention while watching The Pond Times News, Farmer Pat learns how farming practices contribute to eutrophication. After initial doubts, she comes face to face with a scientific fish, and works to end the harm of fertilizers in the local area pond.



1.3 Genre, Tone, & Three-Act Structure

Genre

Genre is different methods by which stories are told. For example, there's a difference between watching a movie and watching the news. They can tell similar stories but in different ways. Examples of film genre include: narrative, commercials, documentaries, news, and music videos. Narrative films are made from the imagination. Narrative can mean any number of films, like drama, comedy, action, fairy tale, mystery, and more.

Tone

Tone is the attitude or emotions of a film or scene within a film. The tone of your film could be funny, serious, informative, sad, happy, sarcastic, or any other emotion. Depending on the scene or movie, there are better types of tone to write in your film.

Three-Act Structure

Overall, stories are told in three sections: beginning, middle, and end. Filmmakers call this "three-act structure". There's Act One, Act Two, and Act Three. You may also know this as "The Hero's Journey."

Act One Act One is the introduction to your film. This section is where you meet the characters and see where they live. While they're in this normal state, something out of the ordinary must happen. This 'something' is called an inciting incident. This incident causes your character to go on an unexpected journey.



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Earlier, you wrote about a specific problem with an environmental topic. Use this problem as guidance for your story's inciting incident.

Act Two Act two is when your main characters take risks and have obstacles as they try to work out a solution to the environmental issue. They may travel to new locations, have strange encounters with new people, and face small challenges. But in the next act, act three, they face the largest challenge.

Act Three Act three is the climax and resolution of the film. The climax is the point in the story where everything will change– for better or worse. This is either a big battle or a big decision to make. After the climax of your film comes the resolution. It's important to show the outcome of your story. How does the story change after the climax? when an environmental issue is solved, how does it help the environment?

Call-to-Action A call to action is unique to environmental films. It is a plea for viewers to change their behaviors to help the environment. Use a specific behavior for people to change to help the environment.



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Now, think!

- In lesson 1.1, you researched an environmental problem in one of seven categories. Now think of a solution to this problem.

- What genre will you choose to convey your message? (choose one)

Documentary	Public Service Announcement
Narrative	Music Video
News Report	Other (Write in here)
Commercial	

- What tone (or attitude) will your story have? (Example: dramatic, silly, awkward)



1.4 Scriptwriting & Storyboards



Scriptwriting is the art of taking your imagination and putting it into words on a page. Scripts are one-half story and one-half direction. Scripts are sometimes called a “Screenplay”. When writing your script or screenplay, think about two things: What do viewers see in this scene? And what do they hear in this scene?

Slugline: Information at the top of each scene to describe location and time.

Example: EXT. POND - DAY

Use INT. to describe inside (interior) locations. Use EXT. to describe outside (exterior) locations.

Scene Descriptions & Actions Introduce a new scene by describing the things that are happening there. Scene descriptions don’t describe thoughts or ideas, they describe actions. Use actionable descriptions to move your story.

Three-Act Header ACT I

Slugline EXT. CROP FIELD - DAY

**Scene
Description**

A giant tank of fertilizer slowly empties as the FARMER sprays her crop field in a thick coat of the liquid. Small drops dot all of the crops and form puddles in the soil. The fertilizer liquid pools, and drifts down a small water channel where it then flows into a small wooded creek.

EXT. WOODED CREEK - DAY

The liquid fertilizer runoff enters the small stream, where it combines with water and continues to flow. The water reaches a small beaver dam and rushes down a waterfall before slowing to a trickle at the base of...

EXT. POND - DAY

A soundscape of crickets and bullfrogs engulfs the winds of a wooded-lined pond. The water, seemingly teeming with life is coated with a thick, mucousy sludge... Algae, lots of algae.

INT. POND TIMES NEWSROOM - DAY

Sitting atop a log in the semi-aquatic television studio, THE REPORTURTLE prepares to deliver grim news.

THE REPORTURTLE

Character Heading

Dialogue

From today's Pond Times-News, we return to this special update. Have you been running short of breath lately? If so, you wouldn't be alone. Fish and other aquatic creatures have been experiencing a lack of oxygen in the water. Why is this happening? Well, early tests point to one source-algae. We have THE SCIENFISH in the studio to discuss more. Mr. Scienfish...

THE SCIENFISH

(From TV Interview)

Parentheticals

Thank you, REPORTURTLE. Every year, blooms of algae naturally form in the pond. But in recent years, it is growing out of control! Algae breathes a lot of the dissolved oxygen in our water, which we fish need to live.



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Characters & Dialogue

Center and capitalize the character's name in the center of a page. The character's name goes atop the dialogue they're about to say. Dialogue is the words a character says in a movie. Writers use vocabulary to reflect the personality of their characters. Think about the background of your character. How does their life change the words they say? Think about these to add unique dialogue.

When formatted on a page, the dialogue is in the center one-third of the page size. You can also use parentheticals to help share specific directions about a character's line of dialogue. (Example: gasp, sneeze, whisper, tremble)

Three-Act Header: Place the heading of each act centered, capitalized, and underlined at the top of the page.

As a script writer (or team of writers), you will certainly need to make revisions to your story. Nobody gets their script right the first time, but as long as you keep working on it, something great and imaginative will come.



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Storyboarding

Storyboards are a sequence of drawings that depict your scenes through images. They include the characters, the props, and the types of camera angles to record during production. You can use our template and write out your scenes and draw out your frames.

Reference!

- Read the sample script to better understand character writing, dialogue, and script formatting.
- Download the storyboard template so you can use this to draw out your scenes.



1.5 Interviews & Asking Questions

In news, documentaries, and even some commercials, filmmakers often set up an interview to create an organic conversation about a topic. Here you ask a character (or an expert) a series of questions and record their answers. When you ask the right questions, it can lead to previously unimagined ideas, or the interview may even reveal important information. When interviewing somebody, try your best to leave open-ended questions. In general, if your interview subject can answer a question with one-word, you need to reframe the question.

The Filmmaker can organize their interview questions with the five “W’s”: Who, What, Where, When, and Why?

Practice!

- Write three questions to ask an expert about an environmental issue or solution you’re interested in making a film about.



1.6 Conclusion

During this session, we discussed...

- The three phases of filmmaking (Pre-Production, Production, and Post-Production)
- The work to do during Pre-Production
 - Research environmental issues and solutions
 - Imagine the story, characters, and conflicts & resolutions.
- Scriptwriting: how to format a script and tips for writing
- Storyboards: drawing pictures of our scenes and describing them
- Asking the right questions in an interview

Time for Action!

To do: Get your pencils or keyboards ready, it's time to write your script! And once you complete your script, time to draw a storyboard.

Use the sample script and storyboard template for guidance and reference.