# 5

# Making and responding – Foundation

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# Part A: Production – the basics

Supposedly anyone can make a video these days. Just look on YouTube if you want to see shaky camera shots, poor focus and little or no editing. Poor productions are all over the internet. For some, the idea of a start and finish seems to be jerky shots of the camera being turned on and off.

Film, Television & New Media (FTVNM) students want something better than that. One of the main reasons for studying Media is to become a creator of polished productions – ones that look impressive. That means having a good understanding of media production processes and being able to take a quality project through from concept to finished product, knowing that it is your creation.

**Figure 5.1** Production is one of the most enjoyable aspects of FTVNM. Each production will boost your skills. The finished product will be something you will want to show your friends and family. It will also be a record of your school days long into the future.

**Figure 5.2** Students shooting off the storyboard. Quality media productions involve pre-production planning as well as carefully prepared production stages.

## STAGES OF MEDIA PRODUCTION

All media productions, in whatever form or medium, go through three basic stages: pre-production, production and post-production. All the while, the needs and interests of the audience have to be kept in mind. Without an audience, all the effort will go unseen.

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**Figure 5.3** Pre-production (top), production (middle) and post-production (bottom) applied to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Pre-production is the planning stage. Production is the making stage. Post-production adds all the special effects. At each stage of production, the needs of the intended users should be kept uppermost in mind.

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## Pre-production

The planning stage of media production is called pre-production. This is a very loose term that covers everything that needs to be done before the stage of making the production.

More exact definitions depend on the size of the production company.

- A small production company will include almost all activity in the pre-production stage. For example, the pre-production stage for a film company might include research, meeting with finance people, location planning and scripting.
- A large production company will be more specific about what is done at this stage. For example, a film company will source all their financing, casting, staffing and even their scripting in advance – well before what they term 'pre-production'. Pre-production for a large company may then involve scheduling, location scouting and special-effects preparation. The script will be broken down into detailed scenes. All actors will have been involved in at least one read through.
- Film, Television & New Media students see pre-production as the stage when outlines, treatments, storyboards and scripts are drawn up. Pre-production plans could also include:
  - ideas generation
  - audience targeting
  - planning for casting, locations and so on
  - production timelines.

## Production

The production stage is the making stage. It tends to mean the same thing irrespective of the size of the company. Production for a film is the stage at which the footage is recorded.

- A small production company will not have the budget to hire a large crew, and so multi-tasking is normal.
- A large production company has already spent a lot of the budget by the time they arrive at the production stage. Production is often the point of no return – when it is cheaper to go ahead and make the film than to cancel it and lose all the money spent in pre-production and on actors' contracts.
- Film, Television & New Media students see production as the stage when the raw materials of the media product are created – for example, the scenes are filmed.

## Post-production

The final stage of media production is called the post-production. Again, this is a very loose term that covers everything that happens after the end of the production stage when the raw materials are created.


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**Figure 5.4** George Wilson's run-down garage at the edge of the Valley of Ashes, in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013). Post-production work for the film was shared between Cutting Edge, based in Brisbane, and Iloura, a company based in Melbourne. This scene was post-produced by Iloura. The mountains of smoking ash behind the garage were added in post-production.

Post-production takes the raw materials and turns them into a polished production ready for release. It is common for post-production to take as long as, or even longer than, production. An old rule of thumb in video production was that it took an hour in post-production for every minute of finished product.

- A small production company may complete its post-production in-house. Staff may be multi-skilled and may have been involved in both pre-production and production stages as well.

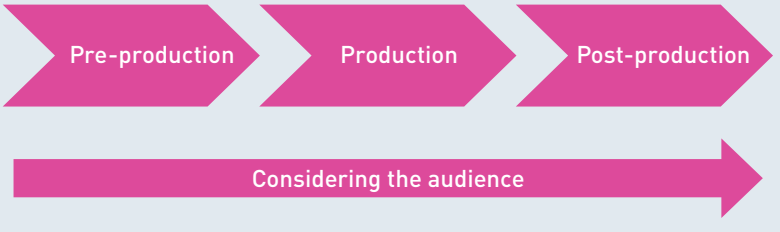


**Figure 5.5** The three stages of media production. Across the whole creation process, the audience is what it is all about.

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- A large production company will have specialised staff who may have had nothing to do with the earlier stages. Sometimes these services are contracted out to post houses – businesses that specialise in post-production. Many of these are scattered around major film studios.
- Film, Television & New Media students see post-production as the stage when the following take place:
  - editing
  - special effects
  - sound effects and music
  - titles and credits
  - reflections and evaluations.

## 5.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Search online for any news articles or documentation on the production stages of some of your favourite films. For example, use Google to search for 'pre-production' + your film choice.
**Explain** the pre-production processes they took the film through. Give **additional information** and **examples** to **illustrate** your explanation.
**Construct** a presentation for the class, highlighting any interesting information and visuals that you find.

2 Conduct a search for Australian companies that specialise in pre-production or post-production (these activities are often outsourced).
**Construct** a PowerPoint presentation about one of the companies and **illustrate** it with some of the work they have done.

3 Investigate online editions of special effects magazines, such as *Cinefex*. Their websites may provide limited access to their articles and give an insight into the special effects that have been added to various well-known films.
**Explain** the role that one company had in creating special effects and post-production for a well-known film.

# PRE-PRODUCTION FORMATS

A lot of work goes into moving-image pre-production, and several important texts are developed during this stage:

- one-liner (or log line)
- outline (or one-sheet))
- treatment
- script
- storyboard.

Television and film are primarily visual media. The script and soundtrack are important, but the pictures count for more. In the view of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), much pre-production work actually involves 'picturising' – putting ideas, facts and feelings into pictures.

## One-liner (log line)

The story is told that Hollywood moguls insist that if an outline can't be given in one sentence, the movie doesn't get up. Reportedly, they were most impressed when someone knocked on the studio door and said, 'Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger – twins!' This became the film *Twins* (1988).

The one-liner (sometimes called the log line) is a very concentrated summary of the concept. It is usually one or sometimes two sentences long. The purpose of the one-liner is to make the premise of the production very clear in the minds of those who are going to be involved in producing it. However, the one-liner does not give away the ending.

Log lines may contain the following:

- the protagonist (not by name)
- the protagonist's goal
- the blockage or antagonist (also not by name)
- what is at stake (for example, the future of the world).

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

**Figure 5.6** The main characters on board the USS *Enterprise* in the movie *Star Trek* (2009). The original television series was first proposed when Westerns such as *Bonanza* (1959–73) ruled the television screen. The one-liner used to pitch the new show is said to have been 'Wagon train to the stars'.

> 'The mark of a truly gifted pitcher is to present the concept whole – the miniaturisation of the idea. It must be succinct.'
>
> **Lynda Obst**, Hollywood producer

## Outline

The outline often accompanies the one-liner as part of the process of pitching a concept to studio executives or film finance companies. The outline (sometimes called a one-sheet) is a brief introduction to the story action. The outline provides a good indication of the structure of the whole production. It includes key events and the major decision-making points. In the industry, an outline can sometimes be around one page in length – hence its alternative name. However, some organisations require longer outlines of three to eight pages. An outline for a short film may well be less than a page, depending on what the requirements are.

Film, Television & New Media students should check the recommended length with their teacher if an outline is required.

An outline may include brief descriptions of:

- the key characters and their goals, including protagonist and antagonist
- the conflict and what is at stake
- the setting
- the opening scene
- the first turning point or disruption
- the midpoint climax
- the major climax
- the resolution.

View a sample outline by following the weblink.

## The treatment

In the industry, a treatment is often called for after a successful pitch. If a project gets the go-ahead, the writer will be asked to come up with a treatment. Scriptwriters often use the treatment as a development tool. It helps them get their ideas straight, and to see the final production as it will be from start to finish.

The treatment is a broad plan of the production describing each scene (or 'block of action') in a paragraph or two. It is basically an expanded outline. Treatments are written in terms of what the audience will see and experience. They are the first attempt at 'picturising' or converting the ideas into moving images. Treatments are usually written in the present tense as though the production is happening right before the reader's eyes.

### Treatments in FTVNM

In Film, Television & New Media, the treatment is different to an industry treatment. It has two purposes. The first is as a broad plan of the production – the same as for industry. However, in an educational setting there is an additional requirement. The treatment also reveals student knowledge of the key concepts and a clear intention to use that knowledge meaningfully.

Treatments read as though we are watching the production. In FTVNM they may include both story details and key concept understandings. These may be incorporated seamlessly into the treatment, or you could choose to include them in separate sections. Consult your teacher before you begin planning your treatment.

#### Key concepts and intent

Film, Television & New Media students demonstrate their understandings of the key concepts by providing an explanation of:

- the use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions to create representations and visual style
- the intended meanings
- the intended audience and audience response (including any interactivity – Unit 3)
- the technical choices that have to be made to suit the story
- multi-platform concepts and the technology required for participation (Unit 3)
- the unique style you have adopted and any influences on that (Unit 4).

#### Story details (Units 1–3, Years 11 and 12)

Narrative treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the premise
- the opening scene as it will actually play

- the disturbance to normality that begins the story
- some of the major scenes and their climactic turning points, including the main climax
- the resolution
- character introductions – usually just a few words immediately after their name the first time they appear.

### Digital game details

Game treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the premise or goal of the game
- available choices, actions and obstacles to action
- character representations (depending on game type)
- levels
- the resolution.

### Stylistic details (Unit 4, Year 12)

Stylistic treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the idea or concept
- the opening scene
- key scenes or shots that are important to the concept
- the resolution scene.

Treatments don't usually use phrases such as 'we see'. Action simply happens as it might occur in the production. It isn't common for treatments to include dialogue. Treatments don't usually give camera directions either. The treatment should be balanced so that it reflects the script – for example, it should not spend a long time describing the first act if this is short in the production.

A sample treatment is shown below.

## The script

> 'Few people will read a script for its own sake. A script really exists to enable something else to happen. It is a blueprint from which something much bigger and more spectacular is made.'
>
> **Robert Edgar-Hunt, John Marland** and **James Richards**, authors of *Screenwriting*

The layout of a television drama or film script is very different to that of a play script. There are variations between different production houses as to the exact style used for a screenplay. Variations also exist between countries – for example, the Writers Guild of America recommends a standard format that is very slightly different from the format used by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.

A script is the written version of a film or television program. The script is the whole story set out on paper, including all dialogue, acting directions and occasionally some limited camera directions. The script represents the narrative ready to be filmed.

5.2.1 Suggested script layouts
5.2.2 Screenplay format
5.2.3 How to format a screenplay
5.2.4 Screenwriting

### Show, don't tell

Moving-image media scripts cannot show internal thoughts and feelings. Unlike in a novel, there are rarely descriptive passages to take us inside the internal lives of the characters.

Getty Images/Hero Images

**Figure 5.7** The writer of the script sets up the whole production – the script is the backbone. A good script will always hold things together. This is a powerful responsibility for writers, yet many scriptwriters complain that they do not get enough credit for their work.

In television and film, if we cannot see it as action on the screen, then it does not really exist. All thoughts and feelings have to somehow be externalised. In filmed adaptations of novels, this is one of the most difficult things for the scriptwriter. Pages of internal thoughts must somehow be translated into visual action.

> 'Screenwriting is telling a story using pictures. Writing a screenplay is therefore a "double procedure" that involves writing words on a page to produce events on the screen. As a screenwriter you are essentially dealing in words but thinking in pictures.'
>
> **Robert Edgar-Hunt, John Marland** and **James Richards**, authors of *Screenwriting*

### Script formatting for dramas

There are some basic rules for the formatting of television and film drama scripts:

- **The font** is usually Courier (traditionally).
- **Scene headings** are in underlined block capitals. The heading is left-aligned. First, each scene is numbered. Some script styles place the scene number twice – both before and after the scene name. Then comes an indication as to whether the scene is external or internal, which is always abbreviated and in block capitals (INT or EXT). This is followed by the location, again in block capitals. Sometimes the time is also given.
- **Scene and action descriptions** are in ordinary sentence case. The text is left-aligned and normal page margins are used. Character names that appear in the scene and action descriptions are in block capitals.
- **Dialogue tabbing** means that dialogue is placed in a narrower set of margins than the scene and action descriptions. The dialogue margins are tabbed in on both sides so that the dialogue appears to be placed within a central, narrower column. When using Microsoft Word software, do not use the 'centre' button on the paragraph toolbar for this. Character names are in block capitals when indicating a character is speaking and they are placed above the dialogue. (The dialogue is not placed beside the character names as in a theatre script.) Acting directions are placed below the character names and usually also placed in brackets.
- **Camera/editing directions** are written in block capitals. They are very limited in number and usually consist of just the following: CUT, CUT TO (for scene changes), FADE and DISSOLVE. A scene changes and a new heading is drawn up whenever the location changes.

  View a sample script by following the weblink.

### Script format for news, documentary and advertising

Standard news format is quite different to screen drama. It is presented as either two-column or three-column script. News, documentary and advertising script has the following basic rules:

- **Two-column script** has video heading the right-hand side and audio on the left-hand side.
- **Three-column script** has time or shot duration as the first column, then video, and then audio.
- **The video column** is written in ordinary sentence case. Shots are numbered and lined up with the voice-over or narration that goes with them. When preparing a news script in Microsoft Word, it is often best to use a table format and then make the borders invisible. The numbered shots in the video column will then be in alignment with the accompanying audio.
- **The audio column** contains dialogue, voice-over or news narration written in block caps. Block caps are used for speech because it is said to be easier to read on the auto-cue/tele-prompt. Other material in the audio column (such as sound effects) uses sentence case.

  View a sample news and advertising script by following the weblink.

### Scripts in FTVNM

A script in the television or film industry does not usually have annotations attached. Often a director will handwrite notes on the script afterwards, but they are not part of the standard layout.

In FTVNM, scripts may be annotated to show an understanding of the key concepts. In particular, the intentional use of codes and conventions can be highlighted in the notes. You can also highlight your understanding of story conventions, and structural features such as climaxes and the resolution.

Just as they do for an industry director, notes on the script can also help you think about how you are going to make the production.

## The storyboard

Advertising agencies rely heavily on storyboards. Creators of music videos and art films also use storyboards. Television and film producers use them

5.2.5
Storyboards

less often. When there is a complex scene to be filmed, the film director often relies on a storyboard.

A storyboard is a series of drawings representing the final images of the production. Cartoon-like picture frames show the action as it happens in scene-by-scene sequence. There are some variations in storyboard style, however most have the following features:

- **The drawing** is within a frame that represents the screen as audiences will see it. Therefore, no action can take place outside the frame, unless it is unseen. All screen shots are the same size. Shot sizes and camera angles are all drawn as they would appear in the finished production. Camera movement is depicted with arrows.
- **The text length** varies depending on the industry style and the individual storyboard. Some industry styles have a lot of text; others barely have a sentence or two. The amount of text required in an industry storyboard depends on the intended usage.

## Storyboards in FTVNM

Industry storyboards can vary a great deal, depending on their purpose. However, storyboards for educational purposes are intended to show the skills and knowledge of Film, Television & New Media students. The storyboard shows knowledge of the key concepts and provides a demonstration of your ability to use that knowledge meaningfully.

### Drawings/images

In FTVNM, storyboard images show the following:

- **Some degree of context and setting**, such as abbreviated elements of **mise en scène**, colour, costume and so on. These details should be enough to allow the reader to 'get the idea'.
- **Some sense of perspective or a feeling of depth** in the frame.
- **Intentional and considered use of the codes and conventions**, including camera conventions (such as angle and composition) and editing conventions (such as montage). Transitions can also be indicated (stated in-between or above the frames, or they can be included in the template).
- **Original work**, as defined by your teacher.

Storyboards indicate camera movement with arrows. If you are intending to zoom in or out, a smaller frame is drawn over the scene with arrows indicating the direction of the zoom (see Figure 5.8, left). Character movement is also indicated by arrows (see Figure 5.8, right).

### Storyboard text

In FTVNM the storyboard text required will depend on the usage – there is no one way to set out a storyboard. The storyboard text will include some of the following features:

- **Scene number** is often written at the top of the sequence.
- **Shot number** is often written underneath each frame. It can also be placed on top of the frame.
- **Shot sizes** are often written in block capitals underneath each frame and next to shot number.
- **Shot duration** is measured in seconds.
- **Camera angle** is included when it is necessary to point it out, or if it is required by the template.
- **The action** in each scene is briefly described. Usually this is in one sentence only.
- **Dialogue** (brief and only if required) is written in the manner of a stage script. Characters' names are usually given in capitals and the dialogue is written in lower case. Dialogue should be brief.


**Figure 5.8** (Left) A storyboard frame showing some key features. Note the arrows and smaller internal frame indicating a zoom out from a close-up shot. Reversing the arrows would indicate a zoom in. (Right) Character movement can be indicated by arrows.

- **Technical details** about how the shot will be achieved may be required. You will need to explain how you will apply the codes and conventions to maximum effect. This will include details about framing, lighting, camera movement and so on.
- **Sound effects** are given last, usually in capitals. If you are using a template, they may be placed before transitions to the next shot.

Storyboard text can appear below the image, or it can be placed at the side of each image.

## Shooting script

A shooting script (sometimes called the camera script) is a set of plans or instructions to the camera crew as to how to cover scenes in a script. The director prepares the shooting script after having visualised what the screenplay will look like as a finished production. A shooting script is prepared for each scene. The director decides how they want the scene to be 'covered'. This means they will decide how they want the camera to film the scene, and the total quantity of footage required. For example, the director would visualise whether they want close-ups or long shots for particular shots, or decide whether they want the shots filmed from a particular angle or vantage point.

A shooting script also indicates the most economical order in which the shots will be filmed. For example, all of the shots to be filmed in a particular city building could be filmed on the one day, irrespective of where they are in the story. Similarly, if an actor has to shave his or her head at the start of the film and then their hair grows back throughout the film, the shots may be filmed in reverse order.

A shooting script is often the result of a final collaboration between the writer and the director. Instructions to the camera crew are very specific. Of course, for a news script the shooting has probably already been done. The script is for the editor to cut the pictures while the journalist reads the voice-over.

Features of a shooting script include the following:

- **Four- or five-column script** format with column one showing shot number, column two showing shot size, column three describing what is to be filmed and column four describing audio. Often there is also a column for director's notes and acting instructions.
- **Shots** are numbered and briefly described.
- **Filming directions** are included.

View a sample shooting script by following the weblink.

## 5.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Construct an outline (pre-production element), including the key features of the outline as explained in this section (see page 91). Follow the design conventions for outlines, arranging story or premise elements to gain the maximum effect on your imagined audience (such as a studio director).

2 Write a treatment that responds to the areas of activity in the following table.

| CONSTRUCT | STRUCTURE | EXPLAIN |
|---|---|---|
| Construct a story idea using the specific codes and conventions of your chosen genre. | Structure descriptions of video and audio elements and sequence them into a pre-production product, systematically assembling the elements of the story. | Explain your intended use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions in the production, providing additional information about visual style.<br>Explain the intended audience for your production, identifying features that will appeal to the target group, and explaining any interactive features if available.<br>Explain intended meanings in your production. |

3 Construct a script for a production you would like to make. The general rule for scriptwriting is that one A4 page is approximately one minute in screen time.
Explain your use of codes and conventions by annotating the script to give additional information using media terminology.

4 Construct a storyboard for a key sequence from a film you would like to make. This could be the opening sequence or an action scene. It could be an artistically complex scene. Follow the conventions of storyboarding as outlined in this section (see page 93).
Structure video and audio elements, arranging shots using transitions to form a systematic sequence.

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5 **Structure** a shooting script for a film you would like to make that contains detailed directions for the filming crew, including schedules of location shoots. **Sequence systematically** the shooting order on the basis of location or time of day (or even weather). Select the **arrangement** and allow for **adaptations** based on actor availability or shooting conditions.
**Explain** the reasons for your choices.
Follow the conventions for shooting scripts as outlined in this section (see page 95).

# COPYRIGHT AND REFERENCING

'Integrity' is the word most often looked up in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the *Los Angeles Times* recently reported. This suggests that lots of people are looking for guidance in this area – in many aspects of life. Media production is one area of endeavour at the pointy end of integrity and ethics debates. For media producers, one of the most demanding concerns is the issue of originality. Modern technology makes the issue even more complex. Remixes, mash-ups and internet re-transmissions are all much easier to produce now because of file-sharing sites such as YouTube.

## Originality

Originality is something that most producers of media texts aim to achieve. However, in practice it is a difficult concept to pin down, and an almost impossible one to achieve in true and perfect form.

An original work is often thought to be one that is new and has never been done before. It is unique and the first of its kind. For most people, originality is also closely associated with the word 'creative'. This word has its genesis (origins) in the concept of creation – the biblical idea of the world being instantaneously created when nothing existed before.

The common definition of originality is more like that used in the patents office for new scientific inventions. Realistically, even they are based on previous discoveries.

The common definition of creativity is more like divine inspiration – something that just occurs to 'creative geniuses' without any process or hard work. The image of the light bulb suddenly turning on is what a lot of people think of. While this can happen, most of the time idea generation is a process.

Legal definitions of originality in music, art and literary texts are based on the results of a series of court cases called precedents. In law, originality does not suggest that the idea has never existed before. Originality means that the work has originated with the author and has not been copied from somewhere else – either in whole or in part. The creative thought itself may not be totally unique, but the way it is expressed is all the author's. With this definition, the potential for new stories is unlimited.

Most analysts agree that if the common definition was ever used to judge media texts, all artistic production would grind to a halt soon after. Totally new stories would be impossible to create. Hollywood may well run out of blockbuster premises immediately. The legal definition is freer and recognises that culture is a complex mix of influences. We draw ideas and influences from all over the place.

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**Figure 5.9** In many people's understanding of the term 'originality', completely new and totally original ideas just pop up out of nowhere in moments of sudden inspiration. Fortunately, this is not the legal definition of originality, as we would soon run out of wholly new stories.

'Original thought is like original sin: both happened before you were born to people you could not possibly have met.'

**Fran Lebowitz**, American author, public speaker and humourist

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'As for creativity, I've always thought that it operates pretty much like baking a cake. The ingredients are all the different kinds of input you might open yourself up to: music, books, news, yarns at a pub, or simply going for a drive somewhere. Once all that is in the mixing bowl you're halfway there. It just takes days, months, or years of letting the KitchenAid of your subconscious do its thing.'

**Anonymous blogger**, Meanjin.com.au

## How original does it have to be?

'The principle that "originality" is more about a kind of transformation of existing ideas than the invention of entirely new ones, is one that I can relate to as an artist and author.'

**Shaun Tan**, Australian illustrator, author and animator

It is often said that there are only seven basic stories in all of art, film and literature. Everything is just a variation on those. The Greek philosopher Aristotle actually argued that there were really only two – comedy and tragedy! According to French philosopher Roland Barthes, 'the text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'. Barthes suggests that not only are authors building on past works as they write from their side of the text, but so too is the audience, as they interpret stories from the other side of the text, based on their own past cultural experiences.

To be creative, you have to start with something in order to make something. Creativity can be seen as the ability to take existing objects and combine them in different ways for new purposes. When coming up with a concept for a video, you just have to combine things in new ways that are unique to you. You can draw on other sources for inspiration – all artists do (see 'Referencing', page 99).


Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

**Figure 5.10** Poster for Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). The creativity and originality lie in the unique vision that Luhrmann brought to transform, energise and modernise Shakespeare's famous play.

## Copyright

5.3.1 Australian Copyright Council

5.3.2 *Copyright Act 1968*

Copyright means the right to copy an original work. To be legally original, the work must have the following features:

- it must be an original work – that is, not plagiarised
- it must be in a final form that can be read, heard or viewed.

Copyright does not cover ideas, concepts, styles, techniques and information. A completed script that you write is automatically copyrighted. Someone else could use a similar premise (idea) without breaching your copyright – but they could not use your wording.

Copyright law in Australia is based on the *Copyright Act 1968*. The Act has been updated many times. In 2006, it was brought into line with the American Copyright Act under the free trade

agreement between Australia and the US. The main changes were as follows:

- **Circumvention.** It has become illegal to bypass the technology that some creators use to prevent copying (see DRM below).
- **Time shifting and device shifting.** It is legal for an individual to record a program to watch at a later date, or on another device. However, it is not legal to share this recording.
- **Education.** Schools and universities gained certain exemptions for non-commercial use.
- **Comedy.** Parody and satire gained exemptions.
- **After death.** Copyright persists up to 70 years after the death of the creator of a work (previously in Australia it was 50 years).

Two important aspects of copyright law are intellectual property and digital rights management.

- **Intellectual property (IP).** Creations of an intellectual nature are covered by copyright. The term 'intellectual property' might include computer programs as well as other works such as inventions and technological creations.
- **Digital rights management (DRM).** Some companies use digital rights management to protect their intellectual property. DRM is a form of technological protection built into products to prevent illegal copying. DRM is commonly used in the exchange of digital media.

## Creative Commons licence

The Creative Commons system of licensing creative works was founded in 2001 by Stanford University law professor Lawrence Lessig. Creative Commons is a non-profit organisation set up in the university town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the United States – the home of the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Creative Commons has its origins in the free and open software movement.

The Creative Commons project aims to set up a new way of thinking about copyright. The goal is to allow people to legally share and re-use creative material without having to pay enormous copyright fees. However, the creativity of the original author is still protected legally. Any use of licensed content has to be acknowledged, or the name of the creator clearly stated (called attribution). A new user also has to respect the creator's wishes about how it is to be used. Some creators allow open use of their material, while others restrict it to non-commercial use (for example).

### Types of creative ownership

Creative control used to have two opposite ends: total creative control, or no control whatsoever. Creative Commons licensing allows for a middle ground where some rights are reserved.

- **All rights reserved.** Traditional commercial copyright uses an 'all rights reserved' model of operation. This means that all use of a work is regulated by the owner (the creator) or the distributor. A few exceptions exist for educational use and for comic or satirical use.
- **Some rights reserved.** Creative Commons licences allow for some protections of the creator's rights, while also allowing freer access for others wanting to use the content.
- **No rights reserved (public domain).** Work in the public domain can be said to be owned by the public. Anyone is free to use it in any way they like. No royalty fees have to be paid.


Shutterstock.com/Standard Studio; Shutterstock.com/Nazmul0; Shutterstock.com/icon99

**Figure 5.11** Creative Commons licensing seeks to be a middle ground between formal full copyright and the 'open slather' of the free public domain.

### Origin of the name 'commons'

Originally 'the commons' were those elements of the environment that everyone could access. These included the oceans, the beaches and the air. In other words, it was common to everyone and free to use. In some countries, such as England, common land was also set aside that did not belong to the king or other rich private owners. Ordinary people were free to access this land as well.

Today there are other commons, such as public health or education. Certain creative works can also be seen as a cultural common. Public art, nursery rhymes, folk music and historical landmarks are examples of cultural commons.

The 'tragedy of the commons' is a term coined by economist Garrett Hardin in 1968. According to Hardin, those things that are owned by nobody, but which can be exploited freely by anybody, are bound to come to a sad end. Hardin gave the example of a common cow paddock accessible to all. It would be in the best interests

of every individual cow owner to put their cows there until the paddock was totally eaten out and utterly degraded. Even the last green blade of grass would be worth it to someone. A series of sensible individual decisions then leads to the destruction of a common good.

The idea of the Creative Commons is to avoid the 'tragedy of the commons' and to preserve the benefits of accessible, commonly available cultural properties. Creators are not left exploited by others appropriating their works for their own benefit.

### Types of licences

Creators of cultural content who use a Creative Commons licence can choose different licence options. There are sixteen different licences made up of possible combinations of the four conditions shown in Figure 5.12. However, only seven of these licences are popularly used.

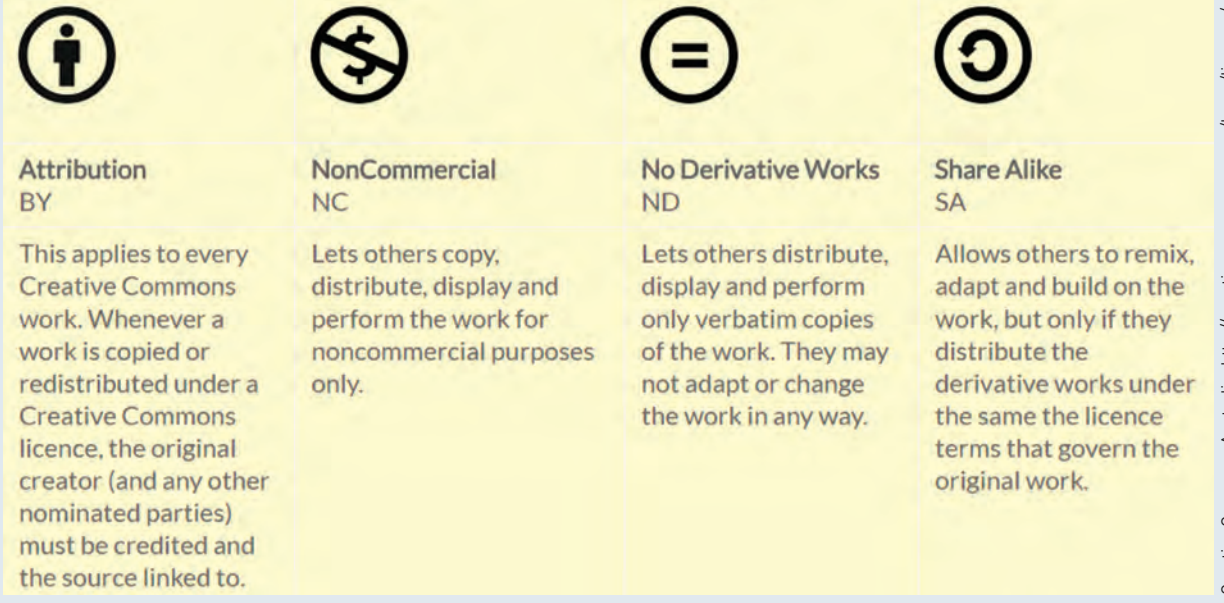
### Disadvantages of Creative Commons licences

The Creative Commons system is not without its critics. Perhaps the best way of looking at it is to not try to see it as a replacement for the existing copyright system. Instead it complements or works alongside that system for creators who want something different to the mainstream. Following are several objections to the Creative Commons system:

- **Creators do not get rewarded.** The usage is free. The main copyright system rewards creators.
- **Creators get more control.** It still gives power to creators and not those wanting to use their material (because creators still get to say how they want their work used).
- **Mainly online.** Most Creative Commons work is available online. This means it ignores any creative work that is not.
- **No withdrawal.** Creative Commons licences cannot be revoked or withdrawn. If you change your mind later about the work, it cannot be upgraded to traditional copyright.
- **Any use, really?** You may not be happy with all possible uses of your work. Some uses you might think are in bad taste, immoral, wrong or the opposite of your own beliefs.

## Referencing

Many filmmakers cite Alfred Hitchcock as someone who was important to the development of their own works. Some filmmakers, including Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese, deliberately reference Hitchcock. In *Jaws* (1975), Spielberg used a similar technique to Hitchcock's famous




Creative Commons Australia: http://creativecommons.org.au/learn/licences/

**Figure 5.12** The four main conditions of Creative Commons licences. There are sixteen possible licences made up of combinations of the four conditions. Licences are displayed with the symbols indicating what conditions the creator has imposed.

contra zoom in *Vertigo* (1958). In *Goodfellas* (1990), Scorsese deliberately makes reference to the title sequence in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Quentin Tarantino is a director with a vast knowledge of film history, and he is constantly referencing other films. In filmmaking and all media arts, referencing is a common way of acknowledging the important legacy of a director or particular work.

To reference something in the visual arts and the media arts is to indicate that there is a connection or link to another art form or artist in the field. Therefore, one work refers to another. Referencing can also mean that one work is actually based on another, but it has been changed in some significant and major way to add new meaning.

## Influences, inspirations and homage

Being 'influenced by' a media arts work means that what you do has been affected by the other work. This could mean that, as a result of another work, you have adopted a certain style or have become fascinated with certain themes.

Being 'inspired' by another work suggests that the work encouraged a burst of creativity in you. This may or may not be directly obvious in the finished work.

In media arts criticism, the term 'homage' is said using the French pronunciation (*om-arzh*). Homage means to pay affectionate respect to another artist's work. In practice, it tends to be similar to referencing. However, it can mean making a special tribute production.

age-fotostock/United Archives

**Figure 5.13** The re-made shower scene from Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* (1998). Van Sant declared the remake of *Psycho* shot for shot was paying homage to the classic film. The industry magazine *Variety* did not give high praise: 'Imitation, in the case of Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it's hardly the most scintillating. A faithful re-make ... contains nothing to outrage or offend partisans of the original, yet neither does it stand to add much to their appreciation.'

Important works of television and film have been influenced or inspired by or pay homage to other famous works. For instance, the *Star Wars* franchise has been influenced heavily by films. In the documentary *Everything Is a Remix* (2010), Kirby Ferguson claims that George Lucas was influenced by films such as *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *The Dam Busters* (1955). The droid C3PO looks like the robot from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), claims Ferguson. When Luke Skywalker returns home to discover his aunt and uncle have been murdered, it is very much like a scene in John Ford's famous Western *The Searchers* (1956). In that scene, the hero returns to find his brother's family murdered and the farm burning.

## 5.3 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a list of your favourite productions that are similar to the task you are planning to undertake for a media production.
**Explain** why you have chosen them by using the following questions as a guide.
- What appeals to you about them?
- How could you use those ideas as a stimulus and transform them into something of your own?

2 **Explain** your main influences in terms of media texts. **Give information** about these texts and include **examples** of specific scenes from them that you have found influential.
**Construct** a list of texts that you admire, and that you wish you could pay homage to in your own media production. Include thumbnail images from them showing aspects you really like.

3 List five media texts that you would like to reference (make a direct link with) in a production.
**Explain** what it is about these texts that has influenced you and that you would like to reference. **Identify** the key elements in the scene and **explain** what you would change and what you would like to use.
**Construct** a list and include thumbnail images.

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# PRODUCTION LEGALITY

The goal of production is to capture the images and sounds needed to present your story on screen. Production is not the end point in the creation process for film and television – the editing stage is still to follow. Production is the stage that provides all the raw material. Therefore, you will have to make sure that you have produced enough for the editing team to do their job in post-production.

## Filming legally – FTVNM students

Filming may be taking place on the school campus or outside in the community. Because you will be on location, there are special responsibilities of which the production crew need to be aware.

### Community standards

Whether on campus or out in the community, certain standards of behaviour are expected. Having a camera draws attention to you, and therefore there is also a greater level of visibility for your behaviour. You should try to observe the following standards:

- Noise levels should be as low as possible.
- Locations should be left clean and tidy.
- Offensive language should be avoided.
- Inconvenience or disruption to other people's activities should be avoided or minimised.

### Legal obligations

As well as keeping all film activities within the law generally, there are some specific areas of concern for students of Film, Television & New Media.

- **Trespass.** Filming on private property without permission can leave you liable for prosecution for trespass. Always check with the owner before you enter any property.
- **Shopping centres.** Although people feel free to come and go in a shopping centre as though it were a public space, it is actually private property. Permission for filming must be obtained from centre management.
- **City council areas.** In keeping with the law, most city councils in Queensland require a permit for filming on roadways, footpaths, parks and other council-controlled land. Applications for what is termed 'low-impact filming' can be processed in about five business days. Low-impact filming is defined as one camera and a total crew of six or fewer.
- **Public transport.** Filming on trams, trains or buses requires a permit. So too does filming at designated tram stops and train stations. Filming in peak hours is not permitted. Public transport authorities also have guidelines about what can be filmed – for example, vandalism, smoking, drinking and fare evasion are all off limits. They may require a film synopsis. You will have to gain individual permission from each identifiable person you film on public transport.


Shutterstock.com/ChameleonsEye

**Figure 5.14** Public transport authorities require you to apply for a permit to film on board transport or at stops. You will also need the permission of each person you film if their image is identifiable.

## Fake weapons and Queensland law

Film scripts sometimes call for the use of toy guns and other kinds of fake weapons. There are strict regulations around the use of anything that can be mistaken for a real weapon. This is especially important when a member of the public is some distance from your film crew and may not be able to see that the weapon is just a toy. It should always be clear that you are involved in filmmaking. Signs should be placed around the set, and the police should be notified in advance if there is any risk of confusion.

In Australia, laws restricting the use of weapons are strict, reflecting the danger posed by fake weapons. This carries over into film and theatre, and the state of Queensland has clearly defined laws and processes involving the use of replica weaponry in films.

The Queensland Police define a replica weapon as *a reasonable facsimile or copy of a weapon, even if it is not capable of discharging a projectile or substance.*


Courtesy Channel 9

**Figure 5.15** Students caused a major police incident on the Gold Coast in 2012 while filming a group production. Police with bullet-proof vests arrived on a street near a school in Merrimac, closing the four-lane Robina Parkway and the equally busy Gold Coast Springbrook Road. A member of the public had reported a bloodied gunman roaming in bushland. It turned out to be a student actor filming a two-minute horror movie.

According to Section 57 of the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990*, a weapon includes:

- (a) an antique firearm, spear gun, longbow or sword; and
- (b) a replica of a weapon; and
- (c) a replica of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a)

The legislation (Section 57) continues that:

- (2) A person must not, without reasonable excuse, carry a weapon exposed to view in a public place.
- (7) In deciding what is a reasonable excuse for subsection (2) ... regard may be had, among other things, to whether the way the weapon is carried, or when and where it is carried, would cause a reasonable person concern that he or she, or someone else in the vicinity, may be threatened or harmed.

Section 58 is highly pertinent to film production activities:

**58 Dangerous conduct with weapon prohibited generally**

**(1)** In this section–

weapon includes–

- **(a)** an antique firearm, explosive tool, captive bolt humane killer, spear gun, longbow or sword; and
- **(b)** a replica of a weapon; and
- **(c)** a replica of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a); and
- **(d)** an explosive; and
- **(e)** a slingshot or shanghai; and
- **(f)** a laser pointer.

**(2)** A person must not–

- **(a)** without reasonable excuse; and
- **(b)** by the physical possession or use of a weapon;

engage in conduct, alone or with another, likely to cause–

- **(c)** death or injury to a person; or
- **(d)** unlawful destruction or damage to property; or
- **(e)** alarm to another person.



Technically, any item capable of 'causing alarm' can be legally considered a weapon. It is vital that filmmakers are aware of this, as the consequences of breaching the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990* can be severe. Jail terms can be imposed. The Act establishes that it is not just the item itself, but also the behaviour of the individual utilising it and how this is perceived by others that comes into question.

This legislation has a significant impact on choices of props in films. When selecting props, it is vital to consider how an item may be perceived by a member of the public who may be several hundred metres away, not just how an item might appear from close up.

Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive

**Figure 5.16** This infamous shot from *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) triggered early calls for censorship. The actor pointing and firing a weapon directly at the audience, even in a work of fiction, projected on a two-dimensional screen, caused such alarm among viewers that the film was banned in many cinemas.

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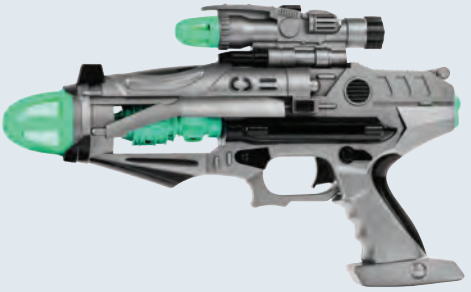
Shutterstock.com/dnd_project

A toy such as a Nerf gun is brightly coloured and does not appear to be a realistic weapon, therefore is unlikely to cause alarm. Painting this black would make it more likely to cause alarm and thus breach the legislation.



Shutterstock.com/Tatiana Popova

Weaponry in science fiction can appear highly futuristic, and therefore less realistic. However, some, like this blaster from the *Star Wars* series, no matter how fictional, still resemble familiar weaponry enough to cause alarm.

Shutterstock.com/Dario Lo Presti

A historical weapon, such as this 18th-century blunderbuss, is capable of causing alarm and therefore is still considered to be a dangerous weapon.

Shutterstock.com/vincent noel

While made of plastic and sporting the orange tip that indicates it's a toy, this replica gun may be perceived as realistic from a distance.

Shutterstock.com/Ch.Olena

This prop is highly realistic, even if fake. There is no orange tip to indicate that it's fake. It would be perceived as threatening from any distance and cause alarm.

**Figure 5.17** The weapons featured above are all props, but not all are acceptable for use on student film sets, due to implications of the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990*. The more believable or realistic the prop weapon, the more likely it is to cause alarm to the public and therefore breach the Act.

## Using replica weapons on set

The use of replica weaponry on a film set requires the presence of a trained and qualified armourer – an individual who is over the age of 18 and holds a weapons licence.

If intending to use replica weaponry, ensure the following steps are taken:

- The producer completes a risk assessment and seeks a permit from the local council and permission from the police.
- Neighbours are informed of the presence of weaponry on the set, in order to avoid false alarms and distress.
- The first assistant director is responsible for safety on set, in line with the producer's risk assessment.

A qualified armorer (with a theatrical ordinance licence) is required on set to oversee induction and safe storage and use of replica weaponry. Weapons are only issued when required in the script – at all other times they are kept safely locked up and accounted for by the armourer.

### Best practice

Ultimately, in filming student productions, the best way to ensure an effectively risk-managed sequence is to avoid using any form of realistic weaponry – instead 'implying' weapons through use of sound, shot construction and cutting. Fight sequences can be shot in ways that require no physical contact between the stunt performers, 'cheating' with angles and cuts. Any sequence involving weapons in the story can also be shot so props are not required. Contemporary audiences are highly literate in their understanding of genre conventions and will consequently be able to effectively interpret implications of gestures, sounds, actor expressions and cuts.

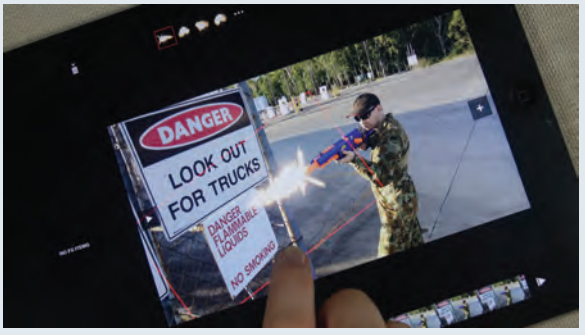



**Figure 5.18** Post-production special effects can add plausibility to futuristic weapons or toy guns. The maximum penalty in Queensland for discharging a real weapon (including sling shots) in public is four years imprisonment. Simply carrying a weapon capable of being discharged attracts two years in jail. If authorities misinterpret filming, a terrorism response may be possible.


**Figure 5.19** A sign indicating that filming is in progress should be placed in the filming location where it can be clearly seen by members of the public.

## 5.4 ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare letters of application to relevant authorities (such as a local shopping centre or council) requesting permission to film. **Explain** the following information:
   - your course of study and year level
   - the title of your film
   - a brief summary or outline of the film
   - how the requested location will be shown in the film and what it will mean.
2. **Symbolise** (by a quick sketch or diagram) a filming location and mark or **represent with a symbol** where you will strategically place 'filming in progress' signs so they will be visible to members of the public.
3. **Explain**, using a flow chart, the process involved in gaining permission to use a replica weapon on a film set. **Provide additional information** about the rules when using a replica weapon on a film set.
4. **Symbolise**, through storyboarding, a fight in a Western, *film noir* or action genre film without showing any weapons. (The narrative may involve weapons.) You will need to consider how to **represent** the scene using your knowledge of **codes and conventions**. **Represent** the fight considering how you will frame shots, actor gestures and expressions, when to cut, and how to utilise sound effects in order to effectively communicate the action without ever showing a weapon.
5. **Analyse** the difference between utilising replica weapons inside a private home, versus in public spaces. **Consider** the various elements of risk associated with each. **Examine** the legalities of replica weapons in each situation. Ensure you have researched the issue to support your conclusions.

# DRONES, TALENT AND LOCATIONS

## Drones and filming under the law

> 'The very best ones (aerial shots), you are only subliminally aware; they are just another smoothly flowing shot. We're not trying to prove here you're a great drone pilot. You're trying to prove that you're a great creator of imagery.'
>
> **Jerry Grayson**, drone masterclass leader and decorated navy and film pilot

The fun of flying a drone is a hobby for some and work for others. Drones have many shapes and sizes for different purposes, including meteorology, law enforcement, surveying and delivering. Drones are also used for spying, rescuing and reporting. In military fields of operation, they are also used for killing. Drones are not one type of machine. Light, high-quality cameras make drones useful for filmmaking professionals, and affordability makes them an option for amateur filmmakers. Stability control even means they can be a tripod substitute.

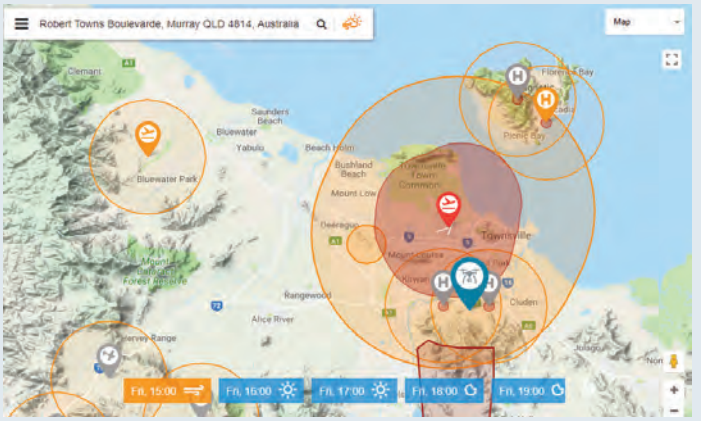
Alamy Stock Photo/David Stock

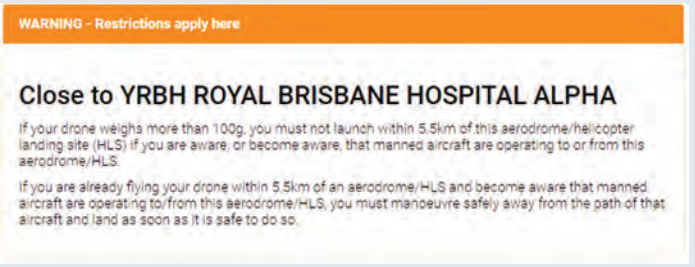
**Figure 5.20** Sponsored drone racing brought media interest to second-place Australian Nationals freestyler Rudi Browning of Brisbane. 'I love the sound! ... punch the throttle and it screams', says Rudi. As a 12-year-old, he was also vying for the $100 000 prize pool in Hawaii at the World Drone Championships. (ABC News (Australia), 2015)

**Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)** have hit passenger planes and have been used to smuggle goods into prisons. Commercial surveyors using drones report that 90 per cent of outback flight problems are wedge-tailed eagle attacks. Dutch Police and the French Air Force are using this knowledge in their defence against illegal UAVs by training birds of prey.

Australia was the first country in the world to have drone laws, introducing them in 2002. The **Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)** began reviewing 101 amendments in 2017. There are many conditions for all drone pilots to remain aware of. Filmmakers should check updated government advisories on filming laws, privacy and safety. The CASA DroneComplier web app *Can I Fly There?* is a free location check and pre-production planning tool.

5.4.1 Office of the e-safety Commissioner-drones



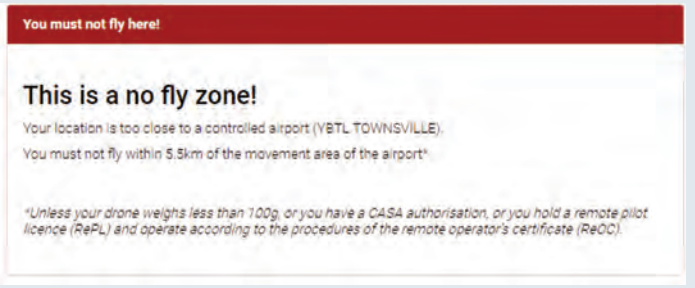




**Figure 5.21** (Top) Townsville has Lavarack Army Barracks, national parks, an international airport, an air force facility at Garbutt, and a bombing range further west. Restrictions may vary within short distances in such areas, even bisecting sporting ovals. As the address bar is adjusted, pop-up alerts summarise any restriction at your proposed location, such as when near the Royal Brisbane Hospital (middle) and Townsville Airport (bottom).


**Figure 5.22** CASA's drone safety phone app *Can I Fly There?* is designed for drones under 2 kilograms (excluded category), and is useful on location. It has built-in weather warnings and shows current permissions.

If an accident is caused by an uninsured drone, the drone pilot could be solely liable for damage to property and injuries to people, making it very important for everyone to abide by the current law. Use the weblink to access dangerous flyer complaint links and other resources, including a rules quiz, at the Droneflyer website.

5.4.2
Droneflyer.
com.au

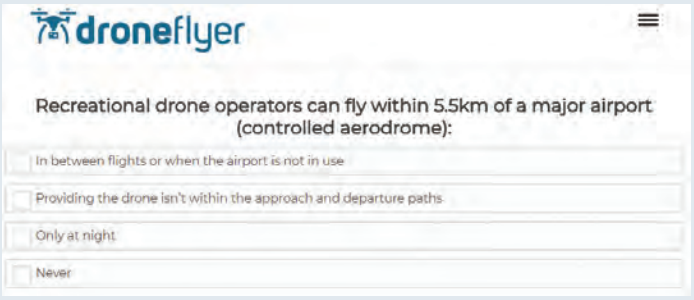



**Figure 5.23** Visit the Droneflyer website and test your knowledge about drone laws.

## Queensland drone regulations

Prior to aviation, private land ownership included the full height of airspace above the land. Nowadays, flying a drone over private property, even at drone-legal heights, is considered to be trespassing. Schools, sports clubs and councils are able to impose restrictions as the landholders.

There is currently no law preventing photography shot from outside the private land boundary, regardless of owners' wishes. There is also no specific legislation against photographing other people in public, as the *Privacy Act 1988* only covers organisations that turn over more than three million dollars and large database video and photo collections, not an individual citizen's photography.

However, if a person is made to feel apprehensive by idle waiting, following or watching, it may be a breach of Queensland's stalking laws, even if it is a one-time event. Recording conversations when people can expect to have privacy may also break the law.

### Non-commercial UAV rules (under 2 kilograms)

- Drones cannot fly near emergencies.
- Maximum height is 120 metres, measured from the ground.
- Drones must be in line of sight of the operator; phone screens and FPV goggles do not count.
- No people apart from the operators of the drone are to be within 30 metres of the UAV.
- Drones are not to be flown over people.
- Only one drone at a time can be controlled by an operator.
- No flying in low visibility conditions or night.
- If the UAV is more than 100 grams and flying within 5.5 kilometres of an occasionally used aerodrome it must land if aircraft appear.
- If the UAV is more than 100 grams, it cannot be flown within 5.5 kilometres of a controlled aerodrome (usually with a tower).

### Commercial use

- If someone pays for the drone to fly and it is over 2 kilograms, the pilot needs to be licensed (RePL) and covered by an operator's certificate (ReOC).
- If someone pays for the drone to fly and it is under 2 kilograms and no licence is held, the operator must:
  - apply for a reference number and provide identification.
  - provide details of your intention to fly at least five business days ahead (on-line form).
  - comply with all conditions for non-commercial drones under 2 kilograms.

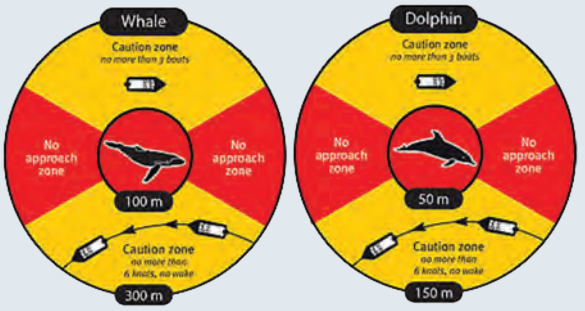



**Figure 5.24** Many visitors film along the coast and must obey exclusion zones around animals that apply to all boats and aircraft. Drones themselves must also keep 30 metres away from boats, just as with vehicles and buildings. When inside a national park, a permit is required to operate recreational aircraft or land a drone at an airstrip.

### Flying outside Queensland

Other countries, and even other states and territories of Australia, have different drone laws and regulations:

- Sweden has banned drone filming without a surveillance permit.
- In the US, all drones over 250 grams must be registered. Washington, DC, the national capital, is a 'No Drone Zone'.
- New South Wales has a maximum monetary penalty for individuals of $132 000 (tier 2 fine) for breaching approach zones for whales and dolphins, and also has a complicated list of different distances for various animals south of the Tweed border.

## Talent and locations

Dealing with your performers (talent) and arranging your locations are great challenges enabling you to develop project management skills that are relevant beyond just filming a production.

### Selecting locations

Locations need to be selected for their ability to contribute to visual storytelling. Fallback options should be used if problems cannot be solved for permissions, weather, audio or transport. *Mise en scène*, not convenience, is the priority for deciding where to shoot.

Complicated scenes with chases or many actors may need a diagram (using apps or paper) to help exclude backgrounds that break the illusion of era or mood. Dress, props, colours and buildings should support the mood of that scene. Marking character positions will help avoid jump cuts. These might occur if the shot size is not changed enough when cutting to the same subject, or if the shot does not move enough and breaks the **30-degree rule** (see page 200).

**Figure 5.25** Areas can be surveyed remotely online to check for food, toilets and sun direction. (Left) The 360-degree photo shows a clear contrast to each side of the road. (Right) A site visit will locate power and taps, and also allow the location to be evaluated. Despite being in an industrial zone construction site, a small surrounding oasis of green will allow this church to look peaceful and welcoming when combined with other visual support, including the golden tint applied to the top left of the frame.

**Figure 5.26** (Left) Looking at all directions at once in the wide-angle panorama shows one building out of context and surrounded by bitumen. (Right) Careful framing and audio replacement can make this busy intersection an option for a more sombre church architecture, if the large, modern buildings nearby can be framed out. Use your hands, a cardboard rectangle, or a device to plan framing at potential locations. Taking some **stills** will help with planning to speed up the shoot when the full crew is present. Mood can be further manipulated using filters in post-production.

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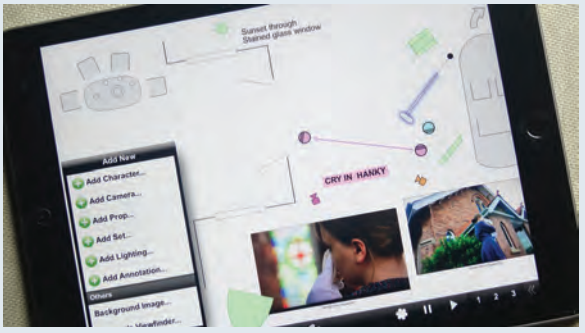


**Figure 5.27** Computer software or apps can be used to draw a map of your location. This allows the placement of lights and cameras to be planned. Movements can be assigned, and layers can be created for cameras and actors to ensure the **180-degree rule** (line) is not crossed (see page 207). When mapping a camera position needed (such as for a focus pull), shots can be inserted from the location visit.

## No permission needed

Filming people in public spaces and publishing those images is legal, although some people may object. Faces can be covered, or hands can be placed near the camera lens, but memory cards and deleting cannot be demanded (except under the *Defence Act 1903*). No permit is required for filming on private property with the owner's permission or in public spaces, and councils generally allow wedding photography, news, current affairs and live reporting on land under their control.

Photographing trademarked buildings such as the Sydney Opera House or a Commonwealth Reserve such as the Great Barrier Reef is allowed without permit if there is no profit from the image.

## Permits

5.4.3 Permits: GBRMPA

Some areas feel like public space but require a permit to film, such shopping centres, train stations and some water catchment and council land situations. Such places and private commercial premises are likely to ask for the crew to supply insurance details.

Brisbane City Council (BCC) is Australia's largest local authority and requires student crews needing a permit to obtain a Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance from their study institution, for a minimum of AU$20 million, noting BCC as an interested party for personal injury and damage to property, with dates covering the proposed filming and **wet weather cover**. Councils usually waive any professional permit fee for students who provide proof of enrolment, a letter confirming subject studies, and course content.

## Permission needed

A permit and permissions should be applied for as soon as you think you may need them. Organisations can take some time to respond, and you need to contact the right person.

Once the location is decided, apply for a permit if there is a need to restrict public access, use a vehicle in a park or footpath, use cables on the ground, leave unattended tripods or create a danger. Regardless of permits, crews must not interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of a public place or act in an offensive way (see section 6, Public Nuisance, of the *Summary Offenses Act 2005*).

- Police can take your property and footage if they believe it may have evidence of an alleged offence.
- Security guards cannot search people without their consent but can ask people to leave private property for any reason, or even make an arrest if an offence is being committed.
- Any member of the Defence Force or Australian Police Force can arrest people who sketch or photograph a military base.
- The **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** can issue a **take-down notice** for prohibited content that has been posted, or where access has not been restricted to material that would likely be rated as R18+ or MA15+.

A talent **release form** is signed by actors to agree that filmmakers can reproduce their image without them making additional payment demands. A talent release form should state the project name and media formats, and be dated and signed by someone over 18 years of age.

It is possible to be fined under the *Copyright Act 1968* for associating a building or a person's image with a commercial purpose without permission. Therefore, copyright applies to a person's face filmed in public if it is used to sell something or boost a reputation, such as in a corporate ad.

## Penalties

Certain breaches of the law carry substantial penalties for creators of inappropriate content and those who store or share it.

- **Offensive images.** Demeaning acts, torture and some nudity are considered offensive for legal purposes. This also includes private parts of the body that are covered by underwear. Jail-time penalties for filming and sharing such content

vary depending on the ages of people involved. It can also be a crime to share sexually explicit images of someone who *looks like* they are under 18 years of age, even if they are not.

- **Defamatory content.** Photographs and videos can be considered defamatory if they cause a person to be ridiculed or if they damage their reputation, just as written material can. Courts can impose monetary compensation to be paid, as in the 2013 case of a former student ordered to pay $105 000 to his music teacher for comments on social media.

## 5.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Identify a potential filming task you may be involved in that requires drone shots, and identify the desired location elements to explore pre-production considerations. Contrive a suitable aerial shot where necessary.

| SYMBOLISE | APPLY | EXPERIMENT |
|---|---|---|
| **Symbolise** the laws governing drone flight (starting with CASA) in a flow chart, **representing** restrictions for various conditions. Use software-like binary questions to **identify** options stemming from the **convention** of yes/no output from diamond shapes as **symbols** of choice. Incorporate red as a **sign** that flight is not possible at permission dead-ends. | **Apply** digital **literacy skills** to locate potential locations, searching maps, photo-spheres and online images to **distinguish** between the visual **language** potential most **appropriate** to **communicate** your intended **meaning**. **Apply literacy skills** to construct a formal email using **appropriate language conventions and grammar**, for the **particular purpose** of gaining location filming permission from the relevant authority/owner, and **citing** legal compliance and safety concerns you will address. | **Experiment** with digital tools from CASA to **discover** what restrictions apply to the **context** of your current location, using the smartphone app, and investigate its features. **Experiment** by selecting the **context** of your potential filming location and **trying out** the website-based **method** to check maps and make **problem-solving** notes for drone filming and other permissions. |

2 **Symbolise** the impact of other legislation on your drone law flow chart by extending the use of the same **conventions** to incorporate emergencies, privacy, property rights and environmental law.

3 **Experiment** with the CASA DroneComplier web-based app to **create ideas** for aerial-looking **moving images** in adjacent areas of different restrictions, such as a variety of camera-mounting **techniques** that would be allowed.

4 **Analyse** posted drone videos and **make a judgement**, according to current Australian law as **set criteria**, regarding the legality of the videos. **Consider** only evidence from within the **examined** footage.

5 **Construct** a list of Queensland locations used for significant productions that required a diverse *mise en scène* (see page 107).
   (a) Copy images from the productions, **systematically** searching maps, street view and images to locate the 'real life' view of the location closest to the image. **Arrange** images side by side with a caption commenting on the likely potential identified by the **pre-production** crew when the locations were **proposed**.
   (b) Include the closest location you can find to your community in the list above, even if it is first-hand knowledge of a news story, with a comment about the *mise en scène*.
   (c) Research failures in **pre-production** of filming **plans** geographically closest to your community. **Construct** a list of the reasons for failure, such as lack of finance, official permission or near-failure due to community concerns.

# PRODUCTION SAFETY

## Risk management – FTVNM students

There are risks associated with filming a video. Your role as a member of a production team is to be aware of the risks and manage them. This process should reduce the risks to an absolute minimum.

Adult supervision is a key factor in the reduction of risk when the production team is a group of teenagers. You are advised to have an adult present during the filming process.

### Risk management

Working out the level of risk for each scene in your video production is a worthwhile activity. Its purpose is to protect your team members and actors. The following steps are part of the risk management process:

1 **Identify hazards.** Make a list of all possible hazards at the filming site or that may be encountered during the filming process.

2 **Assess the level of risk.** Work out how dangerous the hazards are. Ask yourself what the risk of injury is and how serious that injury could be. Some risks are obvious but others, such as the age of the participants, are less obvious to those involved.
3 **Decide on control measures.** To deliver the highest level of protection to your cast and crew, it is necessary to reduce the level of risk as far as possible. This will mean putting in place some procedures to ensure everyone's safety.
4 **Implement control measures.**
5 **Monitor progress.** Make sure the control measures are working by monitoring constantly.

**Consequence**

| Descriptor | Level | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Insignificant | 1 | No first aid required |
| Minor | 2 | Injury/ill health requiring first aid |
| Moderate | 3 | Injury/ill health requiring medical attention |
| Major | 4 | Injury/ill health requiring hospital admission |
| Severe | 5 | Fatality |

**Risk Level**

| Likelihood | Consequence | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Insignificant | Minor | Moderate | Major | Severe |
| Almost certain | High | High | Extreme | Extreme | Extreme |
| Likely | Medium | High | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| Possible | Low | Medium | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| Unlikely | Low | Low | Medium | High | Extreme |
| Rare | Low | Low | Medium | High | High |

**Figure 5.28** A risk assessment matrix can help when you are working out the severity of consequences and the level of risk. It is useful to perform a risk assessment for each major scene in your film.

## Safety on set

Safety conventions for crews have been established over a long time because they work to minimise the typical risks many sets have in common.

### Useful items

It is a good idea to have a small set of general purpose items with you on set. These include the following:

- **Oven mitts or a handkerchief.** **Barn doors** (light attachments used to shape the light beam) must be black to control light spill, causing them to absorb heat. Carry a handkerchief or use oven mitts to adjust them.
- **Wooden clothes pegs.** Use timber pegs to secure **gels** and **diffusers**, as wood will not melt or hold the heat. Do not use any other kind of peg because there will be a fire risk.
- **Bulldog clips.** These are excellent for securing background objects but the heat in the metal and the pressure from the squeezing will give you a nasty line burn if used on hot lights.

- **Gaffer tape.** Tape has hundreds of uses and should be on hand at all film sets.
- **Fire extinguisher.** Only particular types of extinguishers can be used for a fire involving electricals, which is most likely to be the case on a set.

**Figure 5.29** Among items to have on hand at a set is gaffer tape (waterproof cloth tape). Named after the film job, gaffer tape is used to secure cables on music and theatre stages. Sound crews need to tape audio cables separately, crossing power cables at 90 degrees to reduce the buzz created by induced current in the audio trip hazard cables. Tape is also used for 'marks' on the floor for actors, and camera tape has a particular meaning for the crew depending on the colour and where it is applied, such as a film can or magazine.

## Personal safety

Supervising a film shoot involves taking on a level of employer-like responsibility for the safety of the cast and crew. An almost parental attitude to the welfare of actors in front of your lens should inform decisions regarding any risk and reaction. Their safety must come first.

Shooting can often take longer than anticipated and locations can be away from facilities. Water and first aid should be considered, and cast and crew should always have hats, sunglasses and sunblock for exteriors. Especially in Queensland, the sun is a serious long-term danger, and continuity will be affected if pale skin in a morning shoot is beetroot red in the afternoon!

The most catastrophic risk on a set is usually fire. The most appropriate extinguisher type for a film set likely to have electricals is the 'AB(E)' powder type, indicated by a white band.

If a home or car extinguisher is on set, it is important to realise that a 1-kilogram bottle only gives around 10 seconds of extinguishing time. A fire blanket or a bucket of sand may be appropriate for your shoot, but buckets of water should only be considered if there is no electrical risk.


Shutterstock.com/John Mackintosh

**Figure 5.30** A chemical powder fire extinguisher.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services provides fire safety recommendations for crews to check before needing extinguishers, including the following advice: '… *you can extinguish the fire quickly if you are not putting your safety at risk by staying in the vicinity of the fire; and if all other persons have been evacuated from the area.*'

5.6.1 Fire extinguishers

Cast and crew should be aware of exits that are always kept clear for emergencies. Places of business, schools, public buildings and professional studios should have exits marked, extinguishers in place and evacuation assembly points outside.

## Safety for lighting

There are many artistic and technical reasons to use tungsten lights rather than LEDs. No globe-based light should be used without a safety screen. A bulb blowing can send showers of glass fragments over everyone. Several television hosts have even hidden under their desks live on-air when bulbs exploded. Battery chargers can also be a risk, and power cables create more heat when

**Figure 5.31** Lighting stands should be arranged to create the broadest base possible, and secondary safety chains must be used when rigging lights to a properly installed and rated studio ceiling grid.

left coiled up. Light cables should be run under the light stand so that any trip is likely to move the entire stand sideways, and not topple it by pulling at the top of the light itself.

**Figure 5.32** Safety glass or gauze provides a barrier between talent and broken hot glass – do not use bulb lights without them. Incorrect diffuser set-up causes smouldering, even with fire-resistant materials, as evidenced by the light on the right. Gels are to be pegged to the end of barn doors, as on the left.

Gels, **scrims** and **spun** should be pegged to the end of barn doors so that heat from the light is not trapped. When turning on lights, the protocol should be to say aloud: 'Watch your eyes.' Floor stand lights should have a hand initially blocking them to prevent accidentally looking directly at the light, as the temporarily blinding after-image creates an immediate danger of walking into objects. Larger, professional HMI lights take longer to reach full brightness, but they produce enough ultra-violet light to cause sunburn within a few minutes and can burn retinas like sunlight. These lights should never be operated without the filtering supplied with them, and never stared at.

Some productions make use of strobe lights, fog machines or bee smokers. Allergies, asthma and epilepsy can be triggered by such physical special effects on set.

## Outdoor considerations

Lighting stands in open air are more likely to need weighing down with sandbags due to wind. School bags filled with heavy books or tent pegs are other options. Large shade scrims or reflectors are very difficult to handle in bad weather and should be secured with any protruding stand ends made safe.

Three 800-watt lights will normally run off a domestic power supply, but they should be connected to different circuits wherever possible. Kettles, ovens or pool pumps should not be left running to reduce the chance of tripping the circuit.

**Figure 5.33** Electrical cables should not be on the ground near water or rain. Dew can even get into extension cable joins on an early morning shoot. Plastic bags reduce moist air in the cable ends, and a loose knot helps prevent cables detaching. Adult supervision would be expected for using electricity, and a cable on the ground of a public footpath is one of the triggers for some councils to require a filming permit.

## Safety of the equipment

There is a social, economic and environmental responsibility to make all equipment function well for as long as possible. Whatever type of camera is used, lift the tripod off the ground by the camera at every set-up – this ensures it is secure and will not fall off the tripod when you let go. Cameras are not to be left unattended on the tripod – detach it if no one can stay with it. Cases should be with cameras on set to protect them from continual sun or unexpected rain.

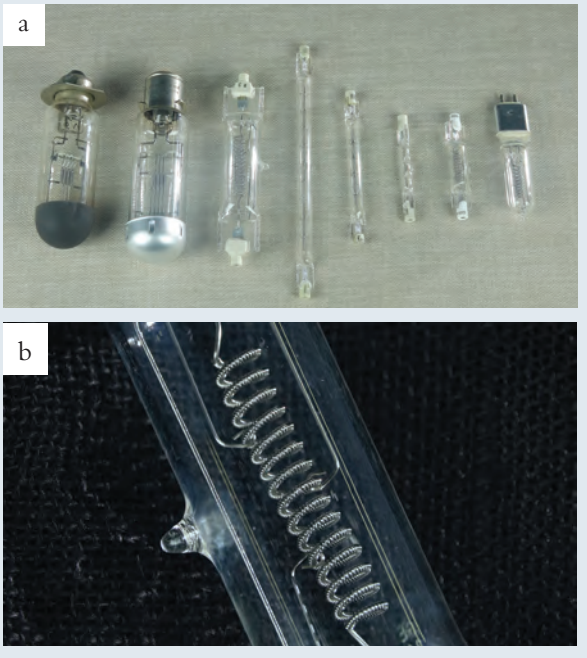


**Figure 5.34** Filament bulb lights will blow if moved when hot, or if the bulbs are touched by the oil on human skin. Let them cool before packing up so the tungsten is less fragile.

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Boom mics should never be leaning where they can fall or be tripped over. Mud and sand should be wiped off all telescopic legs to protect the locking systems in tripods, booms and light stands. Cables should be rolled in figure eights or over-then-under loops – rolling cables over elbows eventually kinks them in one direction.

## Well-being in post-production

Screen time must be managed for work, study or entertainment. Creative screen pursuits such as editing can be absorbing, creating health risks for eyesight, posture and sleep patterns. Set up your post-production area with an appropriate chair and desk. Keep the screen at arm's length and look away from the screen to a distant object every 20 minutes for at least 20 seconds. Optometrists say to get at least five minutes' break every hour, as two hours on a laptop causes significant increases in eye problems.

Studies show sitting for extended periods increases the risk of many diseases and early death, even if you do other exercise. Experts recommend moving and stretching for two minutes and standing for eight minutes for every 20 minutes seated. The Australian Government Department of Health produces the *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines* for young people aged 13–17 years, which recommends accumulating 60 minutes of activity per day, and no more than two hours of electronic media entertainment.

5.6.2 Physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines

## 5.6 ACTIVITIES

1 Conduct a risk assessment for all of the scenes in your planned film. Use the matrix shown in Figure 5.28. **Explain** the reasons for your decisions in your risk assessment. **Identify** and **locate** all potential risks and **give information** about how these can be managed.

2 **Construct** a table that lists the best-practice location behaviours and safety concerns in the situation shown in Figure 5.35.
Examine the situation intently to **systematically** identify poor practice and areas of danger, and list these in the first column of your table.
For each of the concerns you have noted, in the second column of your table list the appropriate safety **conventions** and practices that should be implemented to minimise the risk.
Based on your own **pre-production proposals**, **systematically** record any risks and remedies that apply to your **plans** – refer back to the 'safety on set' section (see page 110).

5.6.3 Safety on location: Where's Wally

**Figure 5.35** Crews must manage simultaneous aspects of good production practice. There are many areas for improvement on this location shoot.

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# Part B: Producing film trailers

## FILM TRAILERS

A film introduces itself to the world through its trailer. Most people learn about a new film by watching the trailer – either randomly (such as by seeing it screened before they watch the film of their choice in the cinema) or by choice (such as by watching the trailer on YouTube).

The internet has given movie trailers a long life, making them important media texts in their own right. We can now just as easily watch trailers of films that are 60 years old as we can watch the trailer of a film released this week. The life of a movie continues long after its release through DVD sales, rentals, television presentation and online delivery. Across all of these, the trailer is probably the most important advertisement for the movie that studios have available.

A film trailer is a dramatically condensed version of a film created to advertise the film's theatrical release. A trailer uses selected imagery from the film to invite the audience to go to the cinemas to see the whole movie. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) mandates that a trailer must be a maximum length of two minutes and thirty seconds.

A film trailer is a 'paratext' (some analysts use the term 'circumtext'). Paratexts are texts that are grouped around the original text. They are associated with the original text, but often escape notice – usually because they are of lesser importance. However, movie trailers are now receiving serious academic attention.

5.7.1 Big Screen Touring Program Trailer

5.7.2 Cinema Australia Trailers

5.7.3 Trailers at the cinema


Alamy Stock Photo/Stephen Shepherd

**Figure 5.36** The first time many people are introduced to a film is through the trailer. Often people see trailers while they wait in the cinema for the start of the billed movie. A trailer is a condensed edit of many of the best elements in a film. It aims to show the audience how good the complete film is.

'The first trailer was shown in 1912 at Rye Beach New York. One of the amusement park concessions hung up a white sheet and showed the serial *The Adventures of Kathlyn*. At the end of the reel Kathlyn was thrown in the lion's den. After this 'trailed' a piece of film asking, "Does she escape the lion's pit? See next week's thrilling chapter!" Hence the word trailer.'

**Lou Harris**, former head of Paramount trailer division

# Features of film trailers

> 'Trailers are about raising expectations. A trailer doesn't reveal the whole movie. It pitches the promise of the premise.'
>
> **Stephen Garrett**, Jump Cut trailer productions, New York

Not every trailer follows a formula, but most have some of the following genre features:

## Narrative enigma

The narrative enigma is the mystery of the story. The audience must be given enough details to be excited by the story and create an imaginary film out of the fragments. However, none of the loose ends are tied up. There is no closure or resolution of any kind. The enigma or mystery can only be solved by going to see the movie.

## Mini three-act structure

Just like the original film text, the trailer often uses a three-act structure. Segments of this structure can be very quick, or they can sometimes be combined.

- Opening shots set the scene for the movie and give an indication of the story. Setting can be a key part of the appeal to audiences. Opening shots also introduce characters.
- Developing complications in the trailer show the central problem that the characters must overcome.
- The resolution does not resolve the film story, but instead resolves the trailer by asking the audience to go and see the movie. Sometimes the trailer resolution is referred to as the 'kicker' – its role is to kick the audience into the cinema.

## Characters and stars are introduced in action

Showing characters in story action is necessary because the climactic events have to happen as soon as possible. Recognisable stars are shown early to draw in their fans.

## Faces in close-up

Use of the close-up is a common feature of trailers and gives a window into the emotional intensity of the story or the ordeals suffered by the characters.

## Sharp transitions

Sudden changes prevent the audience from getting involved in the story, because they have to be reminded of the main purpose – to persuade them to buy tickets to the cinema. Transitions include:

- sound effects that are sharp and loud to create breaks in the narrative
- sudden cuts and wipes that move the trailer into the next scene
- story elements such as explosions that provide a shock and allow a jump into the next scene
- title cards that break up sequences and cover missing details.


Getty Images/Lonely Planet Images

**Figure 5.37** The film trailer is an advertising text. Its main purpose is to push audiences to buy tickets and increase box office sales.

## Climactic action

Dramatic events are shown from the best scenes in the film. The action is shown happening, but it is not resolved. The audience does not find out what the outcome is. Plot details are rarely given away.

## Discontinuity editing

Breaks in the usual continuity editing are used to create short shocks for the audience, and to prevent them from forgetting that they must go to see the full movie. Scenes may be jumbled, and conversations may be cut up. Shots that are not

connected to each other can be alternated. The use of montage and the Kuleshov effect is often very noticeable. The important editing elements are:

- **Visual highlights of the film.** These are often separated out and do not have to be used in the same way as they appear in the story.
- **Dialogue highlights of the film.** These are commonly used to heighten the tension and intensify conflict.
- **The soundtrack.** This provides unity and rhythm for the whole trailer. The soundtrack suggests the genre and helps build a strong audience response.
- **Sound effects.** These provide realism and often add shock and wonder to the trailer. Sound effects also work as transitions and markers of the rhythm.

### Voice-over

The main purpose of the narratorial voice-over is similar to that of a street-side spruiker: to sell the product. Trailer voice-overs have the following features:

- **A male voice** is used in almost all trailers. Most trailers are loud, and a deep, resonant male voice can cut through the music and sound-effect sequences. Many in the industry argue that a male voice conveys more credibility, and that helps sales. A movie that uses a female voice-over in the trailer is *Gone in Sixty Seconds* (2000).
- **A story teaser** via voice-over provides an introduction to the narrative in about 25–30 words (without giving away the ending).
- **The film title is often stated** in the voice-over.
- **Star actors** are often referred to by name.
- **Asynchronous style voice-over** is the most common when title cards are used – what the voice is saying is different from what is written in the titles. There is no point in telling the audience what they can read for themselves – except for the film title, where the voice-over intensifies what is read.

### No voice-over

Many modern trailers are dispensing with the voice-over. Instead they are just using fast-paced scenes from the movie with the dialogue providing the logic or sense of the narrative. Title cards fill in the gaps.

## Film trailer conventions

> 'Trailers have their own internal logic and should function separately from the movie they are promoting. If cut well, a trailer can be something you want to watch again and again. But (of course!) it should also make you want to see more.'
>
> **Stephen Garrett**, Jump Cut trailer productions, New York

The conventions of film trailers have been established over a long period of time. Important conventions are:

- **Film classification.** The trailer usually begins with the classification information. This is mandatory.
- **Company logo.** The studio logo lends credibility to the trailer and places the film in context for the audience. Usually the logo appears at the beginning of the trailer.
- **Cast.** Additional cast and credit information is given at the end of the trailer.

Shutterstock.com/REX/Kobal/Warner Bros/Paul Faherty

**Figure 5.38** The famous car chase scene from *Bullitt* (1968) is said to be the best of its kind ever filmed. The chase starts the trailer for *Bullitt* and scenes from it are intercut throughout. The final outcome of the chase is not shown in the trailer. As a rule, trailers take the best and most climactic action from the original film. The action is shown happening, but not being resolved. It may also be edited in a jumbled way.

## 5.7 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a pre-production proposal, such as a storyboard, for a new trailer for an existing movie, game or television program. Structure climactic scenes or action from the original text into a systematically arranged sequence.
2 **Synthesise** an existing movie or game trailer into a trailer for a different genre. For example, solve the problem of converting an action movie trailer into a romance movie trailer (see 'Genres', page 15).
3 Produce a film or game trailer that follows many of the features of trailers outlined in this section. Your trailer should include a soundtrack and the main conventions, such as classification details and a production company logo.
Respond to the areas of activity in the table below to complete the task.

| CONSTRUCT | STRUCTURE | SYNTHESISE |
|---|---|---|
| **Construct** an idea for a trailer using the **specific codes and conventions** of your film genre – e.g. action movie. **Arrange** the **elements** into a pre-production format such as a storyboard. | **Structure** descriptions of video and audio elements and **sequence** them into a pre-production product, such as a storyboard, **systematically** assembling the elements of the trailer. **Structure** the trailer proposal into a series of **sequenced** climactic events. | **Synthesise moving-image media elements** into a completed film trailer video. **Solve** technical or creative issues, keeping the finished product within the scope of the original **concept**. Maintain the conventions of the film trailer. |

# Part C: Producing music videos

## MUSIC VIDEOS

A music video (sometimes called a video clip) is a video produced to go with a song. Although there is no requirement that this be a pop or rock song, it almost invariably is. This is partly because music videos are produced as short promotional films to sell CDs and downloadable songs.

Music videos are three to five minutes long. They do not follow a traditional narrative structure – instead, they reflect the structure of the accompanying music. Music videos rely on rhythm, pace and lyrical imagery for their effect. As a communication form, music video works by combining images and sounds together inseparably.

Some critics argue that music videos are really a form of advertising, whereas audiences usually see video clips as entertainment. For the filmmaker and the artist, many music videos are regarded as short artistic films. However, music companies see them as providing free advertising for their products. An American survey found 60 per cent of pop CD sales came as a result of music video exposure.

Shutterstock.com/Olyy

**Figure 5.39** Music videos make heavy use of special photographic effects. The aim is to grab viewers' attention and to keep hold of it.

Music videos are aimed at an audience range between 14 and 34 years of age. This is also the age range of the big music buyers. It is no accident that many music videos are made at studios well known for their production of television commercials. Sometimes the same directors do both.

Packaged into rock programs, music videos amount to wall-to-wall commercials. Obsolescence is also built in – no sooner is the song bought than the music video is out of date. There is a new music video and another urge to buy, to stay with the fashion. Nonetheless, unlike the television commercial, the music video is not explicitly selling anything. It is a disguised commercial.

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## Types of music videos

The music industry divides music videos into two main types: conceptual and performance.

### Conceptual videos

Conceptual music videos are based on a central theme. They often have a plot and tell a story, but sometimes they are made up of jumbled images that work with the music.

Conceptual videos can be further divided into two types:

- **Narrative music videos.** A simple or complex narrative can turn music videos into mini films. Simple narrative music videos provide a basic situation for a fantasy but lapse into jumbled imagery in between. The spaces in the story allow the audience to create their own fantasy. Complex narrative music videos often demonstrate the genre divisions of their full-length counterparts. Music videos can be horror, melodrama, *film noir*, and so on. Complex narrative music videos move the song towards the ballad.
- **Non-narrative music videos.** A dreamlike reality can be created by non-narrative music videos as images and music combine to produce an emotional effect.

Hundreds of scenes can be cut into a music video lasting just three minutes. This constant shifting of topic resembles the structure of dreams. Like dreams, non-narrative music videos follow a loose theme rather than a story. Often the topic is approached from many angles in a short space of time. Perhaps the factor most similar to dreams is the use of images with powerful mental associations. These work like symbols, calling to mind thoughts that would normally take much longer to express.

### Performance music videos

Performance music videos concentrate on the stage appearance of the musicians. The performance clip can look old-fashioned to modern audiences, because it was at its most popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Some modern artists use the performance clip as an anti-commercial statement.

It is rare for a music video not to show the performers somewhere in the clip. When they do appear, they often look directly at the camera – something movie actors avoid. Looking at the camera is a direct appeal to the imagined audience and follows the conventions of musical performance on stage.

## Features of music videos

Music videos have several general features: they use poetic imagery, they use a high number of symbolic images and they have rapid shot changes.

Shutterstock.com/Stokkete

**Figure 5.40** Performance music videos focus on the performances of the artists. Most music videos include some performance shots. Some music videos focus exclusively on the performance.

### Poetic images

Music videos use poetic visual imagery to build ideas and emotion in the minds of the audience. Grabbing attention and holding on to it are the two main aims of music video makers. This has led them to search for ever more bizarre and shocking images.

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### Symbolic images

Music video makers rely on images that are easily understood. The images are often highly symbolic. They create a host of associations in the minds of the audience. In three minutes, a huge number of shots are screened. None of them must be allowed to confuse the audience. Nazi rallies, scenes of witchcraft and images of romance are all easily understood by the audience in a few seconds. References to famous works of art or well-known movies will also be easily understood. Music videos rely on these flashes of understanding to keep up the rate of ideas per minute.

Shutterstock.com/Ollyy

**Figure 5.41** Music can be a powerful emotional expression. Music video makers look for poetic images to create a matching emotional effect visually.

### Rapid shot changes

> 'Keep the interest – that's an obsession with us. We know why people are turned on or turned off. You've got to keep their attention – create movement where there isn't any. Keep the rhythm. Eliminate any visual slack. We measure in IPMs – ideas per minute. If you keep up your IPM, you'll do all right.'
>
> **John Weaver**, Keefco (production company)

To keep the ideas-per-minute rate high, music video makers make rapid-fire shot changes. A three-minute video may contain hundreds of shots, often cut to the beat of the music.

Until the arrival of the music video, most filmmakers considered the shortest possible shot to be two seconds. Anything shorter was considered too brief to be understood. Today, music videos often have shots lasting less than one second and occasionally one-third of a second. The increase in shot speed corresponds to an increase in the amount of visual information the viewer receives.

## How video works with the music

There are three ways in which music can be visualised in a music video:

1 **Illustration.** The video is illustrative if the imagery tells the story of the lyrics. It is also possible to think of the music as illustrated if the imagery is cut to the beat and the visuals seem to give a rhythm and feeling to the music. Video clips can illustrate a singer's or band's performance. Dance can also be used to illustrate the song.
2 **Amplification.** The video is amplifying if it adds new layers of meaning to the music or the lyrics. The performance can also be amplified through the use of close-ups to give a view that would not be possible if you attended the live performance.
3 **Counterpoint/Disruption.** A video can stand in contrast to the music and lyrics, and the disjointed feeling this creates can add extra meaning.

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## 5.8 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a list of all the factors that make music videos similar to commercials. Next, **construct** a list of the factors that make them different from commercials and more like entertainment programs.
**Analyse** the two lists by **considering** differences and similarities. **Make a judgement** as to whether music videos are closer to advertisements or entertainment.

2 Music videos can be divided into two main types: conceptual and performance. Watch a number of music videos and write down their titles.
**Explain** why you think they fall into one or the other category.

3 The images used in music videos can be divided into several categories. A study by Richard Baxter and others separated the images into categories and then counted their frequency. Look through the results in Table 5.1, then complete the following tasks.
**Explain** reasons for the heavy use of visual unreality in music clips.
**Explain** the high incidence of sex, dance, violence and celebration.

**Table 5.1** Categories of images and frequency with which they appeared in music videos.

| CATEGORY OF IMAGE | FREQUENCY IMAGES APPEARED (PER CENT) |
|---|---|
| Visual unreality (use of special effects to produce odd, unusual and/or unexpected images) | 90.3 |
| Sex (portrayal of sexual feelings or impulses) | 59.7 |
| Dance | 56.5 |
| Violence and/or crime | 53.2 |
| Celebration (portrayal of happy, festive occasions) | 45.2 |
| Friendship | 41.9 |
| Isolation (alone or apart from others) | 41.9 |
| Wealth | 38.7 |
| Transportation (use of vehicles) | 35.5 |
| Bizarre (odd) | 27.4 |
| Physical restraint (holding back a person or thing) | 24.2 |
| Androgyny (gender combination) | 22.6 |
| Religion | 17.7 |
| Political issues | 14.5 |
| Fitness | 14.5 |
| Animals | 14.5 |
| Maturation (growing up) | 12.9 |
| Death | 9.7 |
| Health | 1.6 |

Source: Taylor & Francis/Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media

4 **Explain** how the words of most popular songs support the findings of Baxter's study. **Identify** what sorts of image are most often suggested by the lyrics.
**Explain** why you think groups often refer to wealth.
**Appraise** whether or not the frequency of images of wealth has **significant** audience appeal. Interpret the **significance** of the frequency of images of wealth in Baxter's study. **Make a judgement** as to whether it is **worthwhile** that these images appear so frequently.

5 Watch a number of music videos and score the frequency of Baxter's categories of images for yourself. Baxter's team scored the videos by stopping them every 30 seconds and ticking off each category that had appeared.
**Construct** your own table similar to Baxter's, **arranging** each category to match those in his study.

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Analyse your findings by comparing your results with Baxter's and examining similarities and differences in each of the constituent parts of both tables. Make a judgement about the degree to which things have changed over the time since Baxter's work was completed.

6 Count the number of shots or scenes in several music videos.
Explain what seems to be the normal number of scene changes.
Explain what the rate of 'ideas per minute' means.

7 Prepare an investigation of five music videos. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

| EXPLAIN | ANALYSE | APPRAISE |
|---|---|---|
| Explain the nature of the clips as a whole, identifying whether they are performance or conceptual music videos.<br>Give information about each of the music videos and the kinds of imagery. | Analyse at least 10 images from the music videos overall, examining each image and considering its effect.<br>Interpret the meanings of each image in conjunction with the music.<br>Make a judgement about the aesthetic/artistic appeal of each image. | Appraise the effectiveness of each music video, drawing conclusions about the significance of each of them to audiences.<br>Rank the clips from one to five on the basis of their status or worth to the modern audience. |

8 Create a music video. The video may be in the narrative or non-narrative genre.
Symbolise your ideas for the music video in a pre-production format, such as a storyboard.
Structure the images in the music video so they are systematically sequenced and united through a central theme or narrative, but also leave interpretative room for images that allow the audience to create their own meanings. The vision should interpret and amplify the meaning in the song as well as illustrating it. Make adaptations and changes until you believe you have achieved this purpose.
Synthesise your plans into a filmed and edited music video, solving conceptual and technical problems using your understanding of production techniques and moving-image media codes and conventions.

# Part D: Film reviews

## FILM REVIEWS

5.9.1 Film Critics Circle Australia
5.9.2 Australian Film Critics

> 'I go to the movies with every experience I can muster – not only in terms of knowing what a particular movie is, but also my experiences of life. Once I start watching a film, I let the movie happen to me. Then I try to combine myself and the movie into my review.'
>
> **Roger Ebert**, film critic, *Chicago Sun-Times* 1967–2013

The film review is a personal and critical response to the experience of watching a movie. It belongs to the expository genre. Like all expository genre texts, the film review contains a point of view and provides evidence to support that point of view. Film reviews have different characteristics depending on their purpose and audience.

In a daily newspaper or online, all the reader really wants to know is: 'Is this new movie worth seeing?' The magazine or newspaper audience is crucial in deciding the tone of the review. A daily newspaper may encourage a loose, informal style. A magazine may be even more informal.

At the other end of the spectrum, specialist journals require the reviewer to provide deeper critical analysis. Readers of movie magazines such as *Metro* or *Empire* (for example), demand that the reviewer research extensively and present sophisticated interpretations of the reviewed films. The central exposition or argument may be developed over several pages.

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## Purposes of the film review

Film reviews have the following basic functions:

- **Analysis.** Reviewers analyse a movie by breaking it down into its component parts. These may include film techniques, actors' performances and the story line. The amount and kind of information readers demand depends on the type of publication.
- **Evaluation.** Audiences expect the reviewer to make critical judgements about the movie. If they haven't seen the movie yet, the audience expects a judgement about quality. On the other hand, if the audience has already seen the movie, they may expect a 're-view' or second look, contributing a deeper level of understanding. This second look can also offer a specialist perspective on the film that might not have been immediately apparent to the untrained audience.
- **Persuasion.** Some reviews perform an advertising function for the movie. Studios regard positive film reviews as free advertising.
- **Entertainment.** The average person attends a cinema five times in a year. The readership of film reviews is significantly higher. It follows that many of the people reading film reviews do not go on to see the movie. To some extent, the enjoyment of reading the review substitutes for the pleasure of seeing the film. Both filmmaker and critic are in the entertainment business. Some reviewers deliberately set out to write in an exciting style to capture some of the energy of a popular film. Bad-mouthing a film also draws in audiences for reviewers; everyone loves to see reviewers really skewer a film occasionally.
- **Psychological needs.** The review also meets other needs, such as to appear knowledgeable among friends.

Alamy Stock Photo/Casimiro

**Figure 5.42** A review aggregator such as Rotten Tomatoes or Metacritic collects reviews of movies, games and television programs then uses a scoring system to provide a combined comparison. They make their profit by selling advertising space and details about consumer searches and choices.

## Features of the film review

The film review is a very flexible genre whose form and content vary according to the medium and the outlet. One important variation is length. Long reviews in quality newspapers can exceed 1000 words. Short reviews may be just four or five sentences. Even a short review will give plot details and an evaluation (usually in the last sentence).

Common features of film reviews:

- **Exposition.** A review is a personal critical response and therefore consists of a point of view supported by evidence from the film. This use of an argument sustained by evidence is called an exposition. The reviewer uses analysis and evaluation to carry the exposition to its conclusion.
- **Classification, cast and credits list.** Most reviews provide basic information about the film, perhaps in table format, near the start of the article. Although these details are minimal, they provide some evidence for the exposition and reader evaluation.
- **The plot.** This gives the story line or the outline of what happens in the film. Reviews usually provide the main details of the plot (except the ending) and also evaluate the plot.
- **The stars.** Filmgoers are interested in the acting stars and will often choose a movie on the basis of who appears in it. Responding to audience demand, reviewers devote some of the review space to evaluating the performances of well-known actors.
- **Other elements of the film.** Evidence to support the exposition is often drawn from a number of other film elements.
  - **The theme** of the film is the point it is trying to make, or what is learnt from the film. For example, the film may be about gender or racial issues, love or courage.
  - **The script** is the written text of the film, including dialogue and stage directions.

Reviewers may examine the effectiveness of dialogue, characterisation and the use of climaxes.

- **Acting** is important to the success of the film and a significant area of comment for reviewers.
- **Setting, costumes and make-up** help give life and atmosphere to a film. They are especially important in period films.
- **Direction** of the film is crucial in bringing all the component parts together. Some film theorists regard the director of the film as similar to the author of a novel – this is called ***auteur* theory**.
- **Cinematography** is the art or technique of film photography. It is often evaluated in aesthetic terms.
- **Editing** in film involves techniques that help build the story (see chapter 2).
- **The sound** is important both in creating a sense of reality and in intensifying emotion. **Diegetic sound** (such as a lifelike sound effect) helps create reality. **Non-diegetic** sound (such as a music soundtrack) does the opposite in helping build drama. Some realist drama has little or no non-diegetic sound.

## 5.9 ACTIVITIES

1 Analyse several reviews by the same reviewer. Examine them according to the following tasks.
Examine the most common film elements the reviewer chooses to evaluate; for example, does the reviewer concentrate on the stars, the camera work or the director's vision?
Consider each of the constituent parts of the review, breaking it down to decide how much of it is analysis and how much is evaluation. Mark the areas of evaluation with a highlighter pen.
Make judgements about what seems to be the personal taste of the reviewer. Using the reviews as evidence, try to work out this reviewer's various viewpoints and prejudices.

2 Analyse reviews of the same film drawn from a wide variety of publications, such as newspapers, magazines and cinema journals. Consider them according to the following tasks.
Consider what audience each review is intended for, and how you can tell this from the review itself.
Make a judgement about which areas of interest in the film are common to most of the reviews.
Consider if there is a common negative criticism of the film, or, alternatively, make a judgement as to whether one review is very different in its criticisms from most of the others.

3 Explain the plot of a selected movie in 120–180 words. Identify the key plot points leading up to the resolution. Do not reveal the ending. Use this as part of a film review.

4 Appraise one of the common review elements in a movie of your choice. For example, make a judgement about the significance of sound, editing, plot, the stars or the themes. Some examples of movies that are useful for particular review elements are:
   - Sound: *Citizen Kane* (1941)
   - Editing: Alfred Hitchcock's movies
   - Plot: action movies

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