"Write, write, write, and write again."

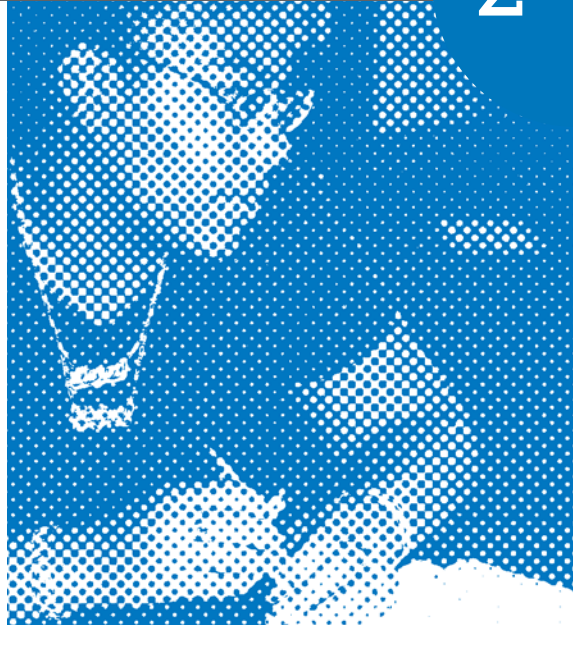
—Spike Lee

Director, Do The Right Thing

Chapter 2

From Story to Screenplay

- Scriptwriting
- What's Your Story?
- Writing Your Screenplay, Finally!
- Tips from the Experts
- Sample Screenplay
- Note to the Director
- Moviemaking Roles



SCRIPTWRITING





There is a critical step in taking a story idea and making it into a movie. It is a particular format that goes by two names — screenplay or script. All movies need a script. In a screenplay, the dialogue is written a particular way, and descriptions of settings and action are abbreviated.

SCRIPT EXAMPLE: Half Naked

Two guys are standing in an empty, school hallway, wearing nothing but underwear. They have been pushed out of the gym locker room. Delmont tries to get back in, but the door is locked; they are totally freaked out.

DELMONT: Oh my God!
ARTURO: What are we going to do?

Delmont looks down the hall, to the left, then to the right. The doors are all closed, and no one else is in the hallway.

DELMONT: I hate my life. I guess we should…

What happens next?
You decide. Practice writing a short movie script for Half Naked.
You have the starting plot of the story — you continue it, and include:
1 a short **description** of each scene.
2 **where** the action takes place.
3 **what** happens in the scene to make the story interesting.

A few challenges for this exercise:

- Keep the screenplay short — just two pages.
- Use dialogue *and* description of action *without dialogue*.
- There should be a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- All the scenes of the movie take place in one location — at the school.
- The story takes place over the course of one day.
- **By the way, are the guys wearing boxers or briefs?**

Write your screenplay on the following two pages:

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

The work you have done in the previous sections were stepping-stones on the path to writing your story, and ultimately, making your own film. To write a good screenplay for film, you need to:

1 decide the story you want to tell.
2 develop interesting characters for that story.
3 create obstacles and interesting solutions to the problems that your characters face.
4 write your idea in outline form.
5 expand your outline into a screenplay.

1. Coming Up with a Great Story Idea

Use your creative abilities to generate a list of possible story ideas. The next exercises should help you start thinking about some ideas.

Write down four interesting things that have happened to you:

Funniest:

Scariest or Weirdest:

Most thrilling:

Biggest conflict/problem that you have faced:

Can you think of two interesting things that have happened to someone in your family, to a friend, or someone in your neighborhood?

1.

2.

George Lucas, the man who directed and wrote *Star Wars*, has said in interviews that he came up with the idea for that movie because, as a kid, he loved *Flash Gordon, a* TV show about space. What is your favorite TV show?

Can you create a story idea for a movie, based on your favorite TV show?

TV show:

Story Idea:

Choose your best idea.

Re-read all your ideas. Choose the idea that fits in all these categories:

- You like the idea.
- It seems like one that you could make into a movie using locations near your house or school.
- You can make it work with the number of actors you can count on being in your movie.
- You can tell the story in a 5-10 minute movie.
- Remember, this is going to be the basis for your movie, so pick an idea you really like.

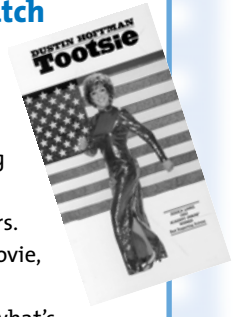
Story Idea:

Congratulations, you have a story.
Now you need an outline. Why make an outline? Two reasons:

- It will help you think about the story in a format that is easier to make into a movie.
- An outline is easy to expand into a screenplay.

The next two sections give ideas and exercises for developing interesting characters and designing obstacles.

A Movie to Watch



Tootsie, directed by Sydney Pollack.

A successful, well written, entertaining comedy full of interesting characters.
As you watch this movie, ask yourself:
Are you wondering what's going to happen next?
How do you think the director is able to accomplish that?
Is it funny?
What makes it funny?
The film has wonderful performances by the entire cast.



Tootsie
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2. Developing Your Characters

Character sketch

After you identify your characters and your **plot** (the major event in the story), create details to make your characters more interesting.

Write a **character sketch** describing your character. Include information about his/her:

- childhood
- favorite foods
- clothes
- relationships with friends and family
- major problems he/she faces in life
- things she/he loves
- music she/he listens to

Here is a short character sketch from a non-existent movie. The movie is about a girl who tries to win a spelling contest.

> **Natasha Lake** is a fifteen-year-old, African-American, high school sophomore. She grew up in South Central, Los Angeles. Her parents own and run a barbershop near their home. Natasha helps out in the barbershop, sweeping the floor and running the cash register. She is shy, and has spent most of her life listening to other people — especially men getting their hair cut.
>
> She loves movies and wants to be an actress. Once, she watched for three hours while a movie was being shot on her street. She saw Danny Glover, and was impressed with all the film equipment, and how much fun everyone seemed to be having on the hectic set.
>
> Jimmy and Patrice are Natasha's only friends. None of them are popular. Patrice, the wild one, likes to get them in trouble. Jimmy is quiet, like Natasha, and both of them secretly enjoy the attention they get from hanging out with the outrageous Patrice.
>
> Natasha is attractive, in a subtle way. There is something about her that seems special — a quiet intelligence. While she does not think of herself as very smart, she knows she has a talent for spelling. Unlike most people her age, she likes blues and jazz — the kinds of music played at the barbershop.

Write a character sketch of your main character. Remember, you are making it all up, but the more you develop your character, the easier it will be to write good dialogue, so the words that come out of his or her mouth can sound natural.

Your character sketch

Name: Age:

What are some of your hero's personality traits? (Funny, irritating, a troublemaker, athletic, easily embarrassed, gentle, angry, not very smart...)

Write down as much as you can:

Describe the home life of your main character.
Does he or she live with parents, a roommate, a dog, brothers or sisters, alone?

Who are his or her best friends? What are they like?

3. Creating Obstacles and Interesting Solutions to the Problems That Your Characters Face

This is the middle part or plot of your screenplay. Come up with at least one conflict —unexpected things that go wrong and get in your protagonist's way. Be clever. Keep your audience guessing.

What problems/obstacles stand in the way of your main character (also known as the protagonist) from achieving a goal?

1.

2.

3.

Think of unique ways your protagonist will deal with the problems he or she encounters. You want the audience to root for your protagonist...or at least care about what happens.

How does your protagonist handle these obstacles? Write two possible solutions.

1.

2.

What kinds of problems occur because of the solutions your protagonist tries?

Does your protagonist succeed or fail? This is the end of your story. Make it memorable. Obviously, not every story has a happy ending, although many movies made in Hollywood do.

How does everything end? How does the main problem get solved?

Here is an example of a story outline from a real movie. It pulls the story ideas together and keeps it simple. Use it as a guide for your own outline.

4. Story Outline

Movie: Home Alone, directed by Chris Columbus

The story idea is:
A young boy must save his home from burglars when he's left alone during vacation.

Is it a comedy, adventure, drama, romance, or horror movie?
Comedy

Where does the movie take place?
The family's house, mainly. Also, at the airport and a grocery store.

Who is the hero?
Kevin, a resourceful, smart and mature-like 8-year old

What does the protagonist want?
Kevin wants to prevent the burglars from robbing his house.

Who are the other characters? Are they the hero's friends or his opponents?

Harry, a bungling burglar	Opponent
Marv, Harry's dumb partner	Opponent
Kate, Kevin's mother	Friend

What exciting thing (the "hook") happens at the beginning of the story? What gets the audience interested?
The family leaves for vacation and forgets Kevin.

Who or what gets in the hero's way?
Harry and Marv, the burglars

What problems stand in the way of your hero getting what he/she wants?
- Kevin needs to get food and money without his parents.
- Burglars break into Kevin's house.
- Kevin needs his family.

What solutions does your hero come up with?
- Kevin first scares away the burglars with a BB gun.
- Then Kevin rigs his house with contraptions, scaring away the burglars.

How does everything get resolved?
Kevin succeeds in foiling the burglars. His family comes home.

Does your hero learn anything?
Kevin learns to appreciate his family.

Now it's time to outline your story.

You should try and pick only one location. You want to spend your time shooting, not moving around from location to location. Keep it simple and realistic. Try to avoid things like major battle scenes.

Where does the movie take place?

Your hero can be good or evil, female, male, child, adult, animal, or alien.

Who is your hero or your main character?

This is the goal your main character will try to accomplish by the end of the movie.

What is the goal of your hero?

Who are the other characters important to the story? Are they the protagonist's (hero's) friends or enemies?

1.

2.

3.

This is the beginning of your story. It starts on the first page of your script. The exciting thing that happens is the **hook**. It sets the tone for the entire movie.

Do you have a plan to "hook" your audience?

Who or what gets in the hero's way?

What problems stand in the way of your hero getting what he/she wants?

What solutions does your hero come up with?

How does everything get resolved?

Does your hero learn anything that teaches something to the audience?

" Whether it be a lyric, a novel or a screenplay, what separates the professional from the amateur is not so much the ability to write, as the ability to rewrite."

—Alan and Marilyn Bergman
Lyricists, The Way We Were

WRITING YOUR SCREENPLAY, FINALLY!

You have your idea. You have a good sense of the characters in your story. You have an outline. So, you are just about ready to start writing your screenplay. But first, you'll need to know the format, some special language, and abbreviations.

A short film screenplay is about nine or ten pages long. It will be written and re-written, because as you proceed in the filmmaking process, you will be changing and adapting the screenplay based on the obstacles you encounter and the things you discover.

Try and break it into sections:

Page 1: The Set-up (where the audience learns what the hero wants). This is the beginning, with a good hook.

Pages 2-7: The Middle (who or what opposes the main character and why). The problems the hero has to overcome.

Pages 8-9: The Ending (where the problems are resolved). The protagonist either wins or loses.

Scenes

Screenplays are written scene by scene.

A scene is a part of the story that happens in <u>one</u> place over <u>one</u> period of time.

For example, if a movie starts out with a guy getting ready for work in the morning, there might be three separate scenes:

Scene 1. brushing his teeth in the bathroom
Scene 2. getting dressed in his bedroom
Scene 3. eating breakfast in the kitchen

Every time the *location or the time changes,* it is considered a new scene.

Each scene should lead naturally into the next one, and keep the audience guessing about what will happen next. In written form, a scene can be any length, from a couple of lines to a page, or even longer.

Parts of a Screenplay

- The **elements** that make up the screenplay are:
- **Slug Line –** when and where the scene is taking place
- **Action –** what is happening
- **Characters and Description –** who is in the scene
- **Dialogue –** what the characters are saying
- **How** the characters say their lines



Men in Black
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Slug Line

The first part of a screenplay is called the **slug line**.

A slug line lets everyone know *where and when* the scene is supposed to take place. Every scene in your screenplay should start with a slug line.

Following is a slug line from the screenplay for: *Men in Black*, directed by Barry Sonnenfeld:

```
EXT. DESERT CLEARING - NIGHT
```

This slug line means:

- EXT. is an abbreviation for EXTERIOR, which means outside.
  If it were an inside shot, it would say INT., short for INTERIOR.

- The next part of the slug line gets more specific about the location of the scene; in this case, a DESERT CLEARING—a big, empty place in the desert.

- The final part of the slug line tells you when the scene will take place— in this case, at NIGHT.

With just four words, the screenwriter gave the director a lot of important information. They knew they needed to look for someplace outside to shoot this scene and the place had to be, or had to *look like*, a desert clearing.

Since it takes place at night, they knew they would need to shoot the scene after dark. (Shooting outside at night often requires special lighting and equipment, so if the director shooting *Men in Black* could not get that kind of equipment, they would have to talk to the writer about changing the scene to take place during the DAY.)

Explore:
deciphering slug lines

Here are a few more examples of slug lines from *Men in Black*.

After each line, write down, in plain English, the information that the slug line gives you. (A few hints: A *morgue* is a place where police sometimes store dead bodies before they are buried and MIB BUILDING means Men in Black Building.)

Example:

EXT. ROAD - TEXAS/MEXICO BORDER - NIGHT

Plain English: Outside, on a road, at the border of Texas and Mexico, at night.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER -

EXT. MORGUE (SIDE STREET) - DUSK

INT. MIB BUILDING - HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A Movie to Watch

Back to the Future, directed by Robert Zemeckis.



Pay close attention to the unique storyline and how the character changes his future by traveling into the past and back.



Back to the Future
Inventor Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) and time traveller Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) exchange concerned looks when Marty's future mother (Lea Thompson) pays them a visit.
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Action

Another element in a screenplay is the **action**.

The action comes after the slug line, and it describes the scene (including the setting, the characters, and what is happening) in greater detail.

The action should be no longer than a few sentences. Sometimes there are lines of action in a screenplay, without a slug line.

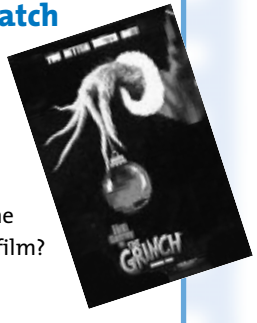
Here are a couple of action elements from *Men in Black,* with their slug lines:

> EXT. WORLD'S FAIR - LANDING TOWER - NIGHT
> Edgar climbs the outside of the landing tower of one of the spaceships, pushing Laurel up ahead of him, headed for the saucer at the top.

> INT. GARAGE - DAY
> The next morning. A door opens on a garage and an ORKIN MAN steps inside, carrying a tank of toxic gas. The morning light spills on an abundance of spiders, crawling everywhere — big ones, small ones, hundreds of them have moved in and taken over this dusty place.
>
> The Orkin Man sighs and sets down his tank.

In both cases, the action is described simply and quickly. The trick is to give just enough detail to get across what is happening, and no more.

A Movie to Watch



Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas, directed by Ron Howard.

Can you pick out the protagonist in the film? How about the antagonist?



Photo: Ron Batzdorff

Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas
Little Cindy Lou-Who (Taylor Momsen).
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Characters

The names of *new* characters are always capitalized in a screenplay. You should write a simple, brief description. This is how the characters of "Kay" and "Dee" are introduced in the third scene of the movie:

> TWO MEN get out of the car, dressed in plain black suits, crisp white shirts, simple black ties, shiny black shoes. KAY, fiftyish, is extremely world-weary; his partner, DEE, mid-sixties, is just weary.

Once they are identified as KAY and DEE, their names are never capitalized in the *action* again. But they are still capitalized in the DIALOGUE.

Using capital letters tells the person reading the screenplay, "Hey, pay attention, there's a new character here!"

Sometimes, characters do not have names, but are identified by a short description instead. Usually it is a minor character, someone who plays a small part, like the ORKIN MAN, who is in the movie only for a minute or two.

Tips from the Experts

- Every movie tends to have at least one main character — or protagonist — and his or her enemy, called an antagonist. The protagonist is not necessarily good or bad, but he or she is the person who carries the action of the movie forward. The movie is usually the protagonist's story.
- For example, the protagonist in *Star Wars* is Luke Skywalker. The antagonist is Darth Vadar.

Tips from the Experts

- The beginning part of a screenplay is called the **setup** — that's where the protagonist and the problem he or she wants to overcome is introduced. In a ten-page screenplay (the kind you would write for a ten-minute film), the setup will be on the very first page or so.
- Putting in lots of twists and turns (surprises) can make the film more fun to watch, and it keeps the audience interested.
- Let other people read your screenplay to get some feedback.
- Keep re-working scenes and characters as you get more familiar with your story. A script is a work in progress. You will probably even rewrite dialogue or include new thoughts while you are filming your story.

Dialogue

Dialogue is, of course, what your characters say. Here is more of the scene, showing how **dialogue** fits in with the **slug lines** and the **action**.

EXT. DESERT CLEARING - NIGHT
Kay and Dee lead their captive into a clearing in the desert brush. Dee pulls an enormous handgun from a shoulder holster and stays a pace or two off, covering him. Kay has an arm draped around the man's shoulders.

KAY
I think you jumped off the bus in the wrong part of town, amigo. In fact, I'll bet dollars to pesos that you're not...

He pulls out a small laser device, which he ZIPS neatly down the front of the man's clothes.

KAY (CONT'D)
...from anywhere near here.

The man's clothes fall to the ground, revealing what he really is underneath — A SCALY SPACE DUDE, about four-and-a-half feet tall, with a snout, snail-like tentacles, and independently moving eyes on stalks at the top of his head.

Dialogue is always indented, with the name of the character speaking written in capital letters in the center. There are no quotation marks around the dialogue.

SAMPLE SCREENPLAY

Game Time by Todd Newman

FADE IN:

EXT. high school soccer field - NIGHT

The field is empty. The lonely sounds of crickets can be heard.

CUT TO:

A man sits alone on the bleachers. His silhouette is dimly lit by the moon. He strikes a match. The flame invades the darkness and reveals the face of a rugged looking man. He is EMIL McGILVRAY, mid 30s. He is deep in thought as he lights a cigar and scans the field with his eyes.

SUDDENLY, JERRY JOSEPH, an elderly night watchman, approaches and shines a flashlight in Emil's face.

JERRY
Who the hell are you?
Emil lifts his hand to shield his eyes from the blinding light.

EMIL
I'm sorry. I played soccer here years ago.
I graduated in '86.

Jerry takes a step closer.

JERRY
(sarcastically)
Well, good for you. But I didn't ask for your resume.
I asked who you were.

EMIL
My name is Emil McGilvray.

JERRY
It's two o'clock in the morning. What are you doing here?
Emil puffs his cigar. He takes a deep breath and sighs.

EMIL
I'm not sure.
(beat)
I guess I came here to find my youth.

Jerry chuckles to himself. He turns his flashlight off and puts it in his coat pocket.

JERRY
Let me tell you something kid. You still have your youth.
I'll be seventy five years old this March. One thing I've
learned in my old age is not to dwell on the past.
Thinking about what used to be won't do you any good.

Embarrassed, Emil looks away from Jerry and begins to cry. Jerry sits down next to him.
He pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and hands it to Emil.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(consoling)
Whatever problem you've got kid, I'm sure there's a solution.
(beat)
There's a coffee machine in the teachers lounge. I'll go grab
you a cup while you take a few minutes to pull yourself
together.

EMIL
(clearing his throat)
Thanks.

Jerry stands. He gives Emil an encouraging pat on the shoulder and walks off. Emil solemnly stares down at the handkerchief. He decides to use his sleeve to dry his tears instead. As he regains his composure, he gazes upon the soccer field. His mind begins to wander.

CUT TO:

SUPERIMPOSE: 1986
EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Anxious students and fans fill the bleachers waving banners displaying pride for their schools. Cheerleaders dance and tumble up and down the sidelines in perfect rhythm to the music being played by the marching band on the field.

CUT TO:

INT. BOYS LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The boys on the soccer team put on their uniforms and prepare for the game. A young Emil, now 16 years old, is already dressed. He stands by the locker room window and stares at the action that is going on outside. He notices a beautiful girl sitting on the bleachers.

CLOSE UP on JENNIFER NEWMAN, 16 years old. She sits and gossips with a group of her friends. She must feel Emil's gaze. She turns and sees him in the window. Excited, she waves and blows him a kiss. Emil smiles.

SUDDENLY, A harsh voice breaks Emil's concentration.

VOICE (O.S.)
McGilvray! Stop flirting with the girls and get your butt over here.

Emil snaps to attention. COACH MATTERA, mid 40s, a pit bull of a man, enters the locker room. The boys huddle up around the coach as he gives them a pep talk.

COACH MATTERA (CONT'D)
I won't bore you with a long speech. Today is the championship game. The one we've worked for all season. I want 110 percent from each and every one of you. Focus, play hard, and make me proud.
(beat)
Let's go get 'em.

The boys clap their hands and roar with enthusiasm.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

The opposing team is stretching and warming up on one half of the field. Emil and his teammates burst through the locker room door followed by coach Mattera. The fans applaud as the boys take their positions.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - DAY

MONTAGE:

From various camera angles, we see Emil playing an aggressive game. The action is heated. Goals are scored. Shots on goal are blocked by diving goalkeepers. Coaches scream instructions from the sidelines. Fans cheer from the stands. Players slide on the ground fighting for possession of the ball. Both teams are drained as the game nears an end. An exhausted Emil glances at the score board.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on the score board. It's a 3-2 game. Emil's team is down by one goal. There is only one minute left to play in the game.

BACK TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The ball is passed to Emil. He beats one man, then another. Desperately, he darts up the field toward the opposing goal. There are ten seconds left on the clock. SUDDENLY, He is tripped up by a defensive player. Pandemonium breaks loose on the field. Players shove one another. Coaches argue as the referee tries to calm the chaos. Emil is awarded a penalty kick.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD SIDE LINES - MOMENTS LATER

The boys huddle around as coach Mattera gives Emil last minute instructions.

COACH MATTERA
Emil, this is a chance of a lifetime. We need this goal to go into overtime. If you score, you'll be a hero. That girl you like to flirt with will love you forever. So will the rest of us.

Emil walks onto the field and prepares the ball for his shot. He glances at Jennifer who is standing on top of her seat with her fingers crossed. He turns and stares hard at the opposing goalkeeper. The referee blows his whistle and motions for Emil to take his shot. Emil's P.O.V. The goalkeeper tries to break Emil's concentration by pounding his hands together and jumping from side to side. In slow motion, Emil approaches and shoots. The ball cuts through the air, hits the goal post, and bounces off the field. Devastated, Emil falls to his knees. The game is lost.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT - PRESENT
Emil stares up at the dark night sky. His face is engulfed by the smoke from the cigar that still burns between his fingers. SUDDENLY, he is snapped out of his trance by a tap on his shoulder. Jerry has returned with two cups of coffee.

NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR

Telling a story on film involves real challenges.

The challenge of space

If you were writing a book instead of making a movie, your story could be a thousand pages long. Before you start shooting your movie, you will have to decide how long that movie should be — a short one is usually about 5 to 10 minutes long. You will have to work within a time framework to tell your story.

Finding actors

In a written story, you could write a scene in which your main character and thousands of barefoot people walk out of a desert. In your movie, a scene like that would be difficult to pull off. Try and adapt your story so you do not need a lot of actors.

Making scenes look realistic is hard

In a written story, you could have the action take place anywhere in the world — or even another planet. You could write about a computer whiz who lives at the South Pole, in a research station. *In your movie, you will be limited by where you can actually go to shoot the movie — or how easily you could make neighborhood places look as if they were somewhere else*. Think it through.

Wacky weather

Let's say you are ready to shoot your happy, sunny, outdoor scene then you discover that it is cold and about to rain. You may have to wait, and shoot on another day. The visuals have to be right and making them right is not always in your control.

Time can be your enemy

You probably have a very limited number of days — and number of hours in each day — when you can shoot your movie. You have to squeeze all your shooting into that period of time, or cut scenes out. Plan ahead as much as possible before you start shooting a movie. The more you plan, the more you will be able to get everything you need done when the time for production (shooting your movie) begins.

Money

Suppose you were making a werewolf movie. You find the *perfect* werewolf costume at a props shop, but the costume costs $500. But your entire budget is only $40. You might have to do some creative costume making at that point, or rethink the entire werewolf idea. Making a film is about telling a great story *and* figuring out a way to tell that story *on film*, in a way that your audience will believe.

MOVIEMAKING ROLES

What are the roles necessary in making your short film? The answer depends on how many people are available to help. If there were six people, the roles would be:
(These are not exactly how the roles are played out in a large Hollywood production, but these basic definitions should be very helpful.)

Director

Responsible for the entire production and finishing the film. Defines and communicates his/her vision for the film, sets the schedule, creates storyboards, (see page 42) and works with the actors. The director selects the location sites (or approves/ disapproves them if someone else is doing the scouting). He or she also sets up the shots with the cinematographer and works with the editor to put together the final cut.

The best directors are those who have a clear vision of what they want, and they work well with others. Getting the most from your crew while being responsible for the production is a tough job. Great films are created when the ideas of everyone on the crew are heard, respected, and considered seriously, and the director makes the right choices.

Producer

Works with the director to make sure everything happens according to schedule and budget.

Writer

Writes the screenplay. Works closely with the director on rewrites.

The key to writing is rewriting. You should do several drafts of the screenplay. Hopefully, each time it will get better. You will be getting a lot of feedback from your director. One of the toughest challenges about being a screenwriter is figuring out how to gather others' suggestions and incorporate them well. Take every suggestion seriously.

Cinematographer

Shoots the film, frames the shots, and comes up with camera and lighting ideas. Works most closely with the director on determining what will be shot and the mood that needs to be communicated by the shots. Responsible for caring for the camera and making sure that tapes and batteries are available.

Sit down with the screenplay. Think about all the different ways the scenes can be shot. Consider each one and write down some of your favorite ideas. Go over these ideas with the director. Think visually.

Actors

The people who act in the film. They work closely with the director to find out how their characters can best be played.

Go beyond just memorizing your lines. Think about how your character would say his/her lines and use body language. Pay attention to the character you are going to play, and think about what that character wants in the scene. If it is not clear to you, work with the director to clarify your character's goals, desires, or needs. Scenes work better when the desire of one character conflicts with the goal of another character.

Editor

Edits the film. Works closely with the director to determine the order of the shots, the mood to be conveyed by the editing, and the use of music and other sound.

Pay attention to the screenplay as it is being written. Think about how you would like to see the film look, and communicate your ideas to the director. Watch movies, television shows, and TV commercials. Pay attention to how the shots were put together.