FILMS ON FIRE!
Prevention 1st Short Film Competition
FILMMAKING INFO SHEET

So you want to make a movie? Here are some filmmaking tips to help you on your way.

What's your topic?

Choose a topic related to injury prevention, fire prevention, or fire safety. Research the topic so your movie will contain helpful tips. See prevention1st.org for topic ideas, especially the Film on Fire MESSAGING SHEET.

Remember, NO REAL FIRE should be used in your movie. If you want to suggest fire, be creative!

Write a script

When you're shooting a movie, you need to be prepared. Writing a script is the first step.

Questions that should be answered in your script:
- How does it begin and end?
- Who is talking and when?
- Where does it take place?
- What props and costumes will you need?
- What's the message for your audience?

A double-spaced page is about a minute of screen time, so to keep your movie under three minutes, write a two to three page script.

Make storyboards

You don't have to be a good artist, but it helps to draw out your shots.
- Do you need establishing shots to show where your story takes place?
- Who is on camera in each scene?
- Is it one person, or two?
- Do you need close-ups on people to show their emotions?
- Do you need close-ups on objects to make them clear to the audience?

Planning the shots lets you imagine how the final movie will be edited. See the next page for storyboard examples.

KNOW YOUR SHOTS!

Extreme close up

Close up

Medium shot

Long shot / WIDE SHOT

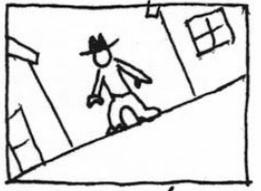Two shot

Over shoulder shot

ESTABLISHING SHOT

INSERT SHOT
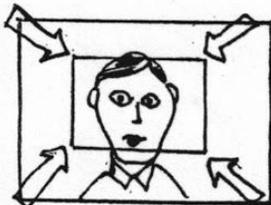
USE ANGLES FOR DIFFERENT MOODS ➡
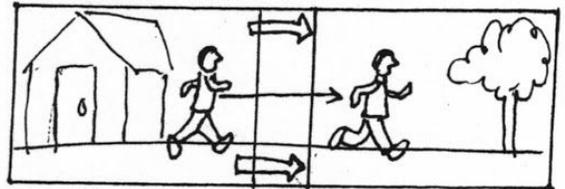
HIGH ANGLE

LOW ANGLE

TILT SHOT / DUTCH ANGLE

PUSH IN / TRACK IN

PULL OUT / TRACK OUT
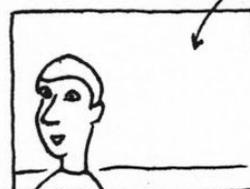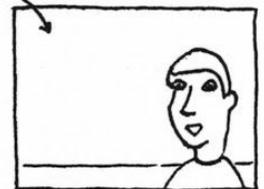
PAN (CONNECT TWO PANELS)

ESTABLISH THE P.O.V.

P.O.V. (POINT OF VIEW)

EXTRA SPACE LOOKS BETTER IN FRONT OF CHARACTER

BAD COMPOSITION

GOOD COMPOSITION
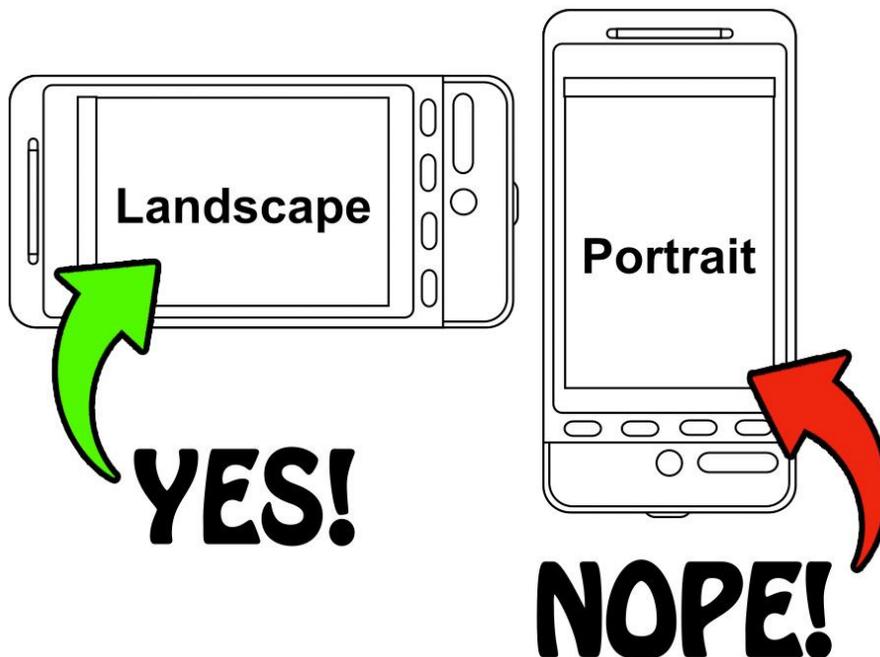
Think of a title

By this point, you should have a title for your piece. This will be handy when asking people to be part of your movie, and later when you post it online.

What camera will you use?

It can be a phone, an ipod, or an ipad. It can be a camcorder. Shoot some tests first, and then bring your files into your editing program. Make sure you're comfortable with the process before you shoot the real thing.

Shoot landscape (horizontal) not portrait (vertical)

Portrait videos have their place, but for movies that play on a big screen or TV, landscape is the way to go.

Landscape

YES!

Portrait

NOPE!

How's your audio?

Sometimes your camera's microphone isn't good enough, especially if you're far away from the actors. If the audience can't understand the audio, that's a problem. Consider using an additional microphone or using voice-over narration in some parts.

Where will you shoot?

Get permission for your shooting location. Treat it well! If you're using someone's home, be a good guest and don't damage anything. Make an announcement to your crew about being on their best behavior.

Lighting

This is especially important when shooting indoors. A camera is not as good in low-light as the human eye. So a little extra light is a good idea. Shooting in daytime helps, even indoors.

Gather your cast and crew, pick a date to shoot

Make sure everyone knows their job and what time you will shoot. Then double-check the day before so they don't forget! Double-check your location the day before, too!

Possible jobs:
- Director
- Actor
- Sound
- Lighting
- Camera
- Script supervisor
- Location manager
- Transportation
- Craft service (snacks)

How will you edit?

Maybe you'll edit on a mobile device, maybe on a PC or Mac. Here are some options:
- iMovie (Mac or IOS)
- Movie Maker (Windows)
- Premiere Elements (Mac or Windows) https://www.adobe.com/products/premiere-elements.html
- Shotcut (Free! For Mac or Windows) https://shotcut.org
- Wevideo (For Mac, Windows, Chromebook) http://wevideo.com
- PowerDirector (For Android, Chromebook, in Google Play Store)

Music

Filmmakers get permission! You might love the latest pop song and want to use it, but it's wrong to use music without getting permission from the people who own it. Also, uploading a video with music you don't own means Youtube might take it down for copyright reasons.

So, what to do? You can perform your own music, or use music from a friend or family member who gives you permission. See the MUSIC RELEASE FORM at prevention1st.org

Or you can use what's called "royalty free" music. It's free to use, or available for a small fee.
- Incompetech.com -- Kevin McLeod's music is Creative Commons. Just give him credit! Tons of free music at http://incompetech.com/music
- FreeSound.org has music and sound effects. https://freesound.org/
- Audioblocks.com isn't free, but some schools or professionals like it for $100 a year. http://audioblocks.com

The final steps

When you've got a finished edit of your movie, export it! You'll want to choose H.264 or MOV as your file format. Those are best for the web.

Have an adult help you upload it to Youtube or Vimeo, then follow the submission steps at prevention1st.org

Happy Filmmaking!