

## Pre-production

Plan in advance so you can be relaxed and successful during the shoot and the edit. Use your imagination to *see the finished product in your mind's eye* so you can “de-construct” it in pre-production. You will see there is some work to do.

Go through the following processes in pre-production. Take your time. Think carefully. Remember-you are planning to create an illusion for your audience. Everything must be designed, planned and invented by you and your crew so you can make MOVIE MAGIC.

Follow these steps

**THE IDEA:** What story do you want to tell? When you put yourself in the mind of the viewer, what will it take to make the most successful story? For commercials, it is important to think who you are talking to and what you want them to think or do after they see your commercial. Writing this down helps you think it through.

**PRACTICE:**

1. Write down a description of your audience. Imagine seeing through their eyes. Who are they? Where are they when they see your film?
2. Write a description of what you want your viewer to do or feel after they watch your film.
3. Write a description of what you want to do to make the point. (“I want to feature a disgusting looking lung to scare people into not smoking”)

**RESEARCH:** You may need a starting point for your story or some facts to support your point. Do some research during the idea phase.

**PRACTICE:**

1. Go to [www.keep-it-real.us](http://www.keep-it-real.us) and click on the “Did You Know” button to find statistics you can use to develop your storyline.

**STORY OUTLINE:** A good story has a beginning, middle and end and a character your audience can identify with. Create an outline of your story where we meet the character, something happens to the character, the character emerges on the other side of the conflict.

**EXAMPLE:**

1. Teenagers, 13-14 years old, are smoking cigarettes – thinking they look cool like an older kid in the neighborhood.
2. The teenagers don't know the older boy's mother has lung cancer and that the boy is struggling to quit himself.
3. The older boy realizes the teenagers are copying him, which prompts him to finally quit and at the same time, get them to quit, too.
4. They all attend the boy's mother's funeral.

PRACTICE:

1. Write a story outline that includes some character description and a beginning, middle and end.
2. Think about how to make a surprise ending for more impact.

SCRIPT: Once you have the outline, you'll need to write some lines for your actors (you may or may not have speaking parts). Each time you change locations or time in a script becomes a different SCENE, for instance; *Scene 1* in the park, *Scene 2* in the house, *Scene 3* in the car, etc. A script is made up of a sequence of scenes.

Things to remember:

1. Each character has a personality that should come out in the script.
2. Make every word necessary.
3. Make it real-write in the language of the character.
4. Be careful with obscenity. It might limit your airtime.
5. Develop the conflict between characters with the script you write.

PRACTICE:

1. Write several lines of dialogue between several characters.
2. Include at least one change of scene.

CAST: A good cast will help sell the story to the viewer. Take a little time to pick you cast. Make sure they learn the lines and rehearse.

Things to remember:

1. Choose your cast for their ability to deliver the lines convincingly.
2. Choose because they have the appropriate look for the character.
3. Choose because you can count on them to be there. Make sure the cast members have time to commit.
4. Do a "table reading" of the script, where potential cast member sit around the table and simply read the lines from the script.
5. Change the line-up during the table reading.

PRACTICE:

1. Do a table reading of your script or another script
2. Have somebody read the scenic descriptions

LOCATION: You want to borrow or create the location or locations that will make your film believable. The more locations you have, the more time your production will take.

Things to remember:

1. Locations are part of your story.
2. Pick a location you can control. Anticipate if these are any other users of the space and avoid locations with conflicts.
3. Be polite to people that loan you their space – ask permission – say "Thanks."
4. Scout potential locations for interference from SOUND, LIGHT, PEOPLE and any other DISTRACTIONS.

5. Remember that things always take longer than you think. Plan for enough time on location.
6. It takes time to set up and take down. Plan ahead.

**PRACTICE:**

1. Use the location scout sheet to determine the viability of a location.
2. Make sure to use your eyes and ears as well as your logistical skills.

**BUDGET:** You may have to spend some money on wardrobe, props or pizza for the crew. Small independent productions often have no budget. Blockbuster productions cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

**EQUIPMENT:** You may borrow equipment or have your own.

Things to remember:

1. Plan what gear you need; audio, lighting, power cords, camera, tripod, cables
2. Bring everything you plan to use
3. Bring spare parts
4. Account for everything at the end of the day

**STORYBOARD:** One of the best things you can do to help plan your production is draw a storyboard – simple drawings that represent the shots you will capture on production day. After all, filmmaking is a visual art and *you see the pictures in your head before you shoot*. When you draw them, you can share them with your cast and crew so everyone will understand what you hope to accomplish. Storyboards also help you solve problems in advance.

Things to remember:

1. You already “see” the finished product in your mind’s eye.
2. Share this vision with your cast and crew with a storyboard.
3. Simple drawings are fine. No worries about being “an artist.”
4. Storyboards help you plan for the right variety of shots – resulting in a stronger edited product.

**PRACTICE:**

1. Read the short scene provided and envision what shots you want.
2. Make a simple drawing for each shot- in the order they occur.
3. Be sure to change up the shots – wide close – medium close.
4. Remember – everyone will have a different interpretation of what the shots will look like.

**SCHEDULE:** Plan your time so everyone will know what to expect. The cast, crew and locations may have other obligations.