



Graded Examinations in Filmmaking

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

M N A W A R D S

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ABOUT US

MN Awards was founded to address the lack of accessible, high-quality qualifications in Film & TV for young people. Following the launch of our Screen Acting qualifications, we are proud to introduce our second pathway: MN Graded Examinations in Filmmaking.

Our story began as an acting agency, before expanding into a Screen Acting Academy and later developing as an emerging production company. In 2023, we secured Ofqual regulation, becoming a UK-based awarding organisation rooted in the Film & TV industry. From the outset, our mission has been to champion screen skills and increase access to high-quality Film & TV education in the UK and beyond.

Over the past decade, we have developed, refined, and delivered film-based education across hundreds of schools, inspiring students to discover the creative and technical skills behind the camera. With Filmmaking, we continue our mission to create engaging, industry-relevant qualifications that nurture creativity, collaboration, and confidence.

MN Graded Examinations in Filmmaking are unique. They give learners the opportunity to develop practical skills in idea generation, directing, cinematography, editing, and sound – while also building transferable life skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. These awards are designed to reflect the real processes of film production, preparing students not only for further study and employment in the Film & TV industry, but also for creative collaboration in any modern workplace.

By taking part in MN Awards' Filmmaking exams, learners are not only gaining technical knowledge and creative understanding; they are building the essential skills and experiences needed for a future in one of the UK's fastest-growing creative industries.

AIMS AND PURPOSE

MN Graded Examinations in Filmmaking are designed for learners who want to explore the creative and technical skills required to make films. Each grade builds progressively, giving learners a practical pathway into the world of Film & TV production. With a focus on creativity, storytelling, and technical craft, learners are challenged with tasks that reflect the real processes of filmmaking – from developing an idea through to final edit.

The curriculum spans the whole production journey: generating ideas, writing synopses and storyboards, directing actors, capturing sound and cinematography, and editing for screen. At every stage, learners develop their voice as filmmakers while learning how to collaborate effectively as part of a crew.

The identified skills have been developed by MN over the past decade of teaching and working in the Film & TV sector. Alongside core filmmaking techniques, learners also build transferable life skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. These are invaluable for life in the 21st century and play a major role in preparing learners for the modern workplace.

What is the purpose of MN Award's Graded Examinations in Filmmaking?

1 Develop a learner's creativity and technical awareness

Planning, filming, and editing their own material while understanding the different production roles and responsibilities.

2 Recognition in achievement in Film & TV Production

The opportunity to earn a recognised certificate from an Ofqual-regulated awarding body, celebrating achievements in filmmaking.

3 Real world preparation

Equipping learners with skills that mirror the demands of modern film production, from pitching an idea to delivering a finished film.

4 Provide a route for progression

Inspiring the next generation of filmmakers, MN Awards could be the catalyst to further study, employment, or a future career in Film & TV.

MN AWARDS QUALIFICATIONS AND THE RQF



The Graded Examinations in Filmmaking are a suite of 8 qualifications:

Level	Qualification
1	MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 1)
	MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 2)
	MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 3)
2	MNA Level 2 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 4)
	MNA Level 2 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 5)
3	MNA Level 3 Certificate Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 6)
	MNA Level 3 Certificate Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 7)
	MNA Level 3 Certificate Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 8)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

MN Graded Examinations in Filmmaking are designed to appeal to learners of all ages and backgrounds and are open to all who are able to meet the required standard.

Where appropriate, learners are able to apply for reasonable adjustments or special considerations. For further information, please see the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy.

There is no requirement for Learners to have undertaken previous qualifications or completed the lower levels prior to the upper grades. However, due to the nature of the progressive development of the grades, it is assumed that the learner has achieved the necessary standard for previous level(s) when submitting to any given grade.

There is no age limitation for the qualifications, learners should be entered at the appropriate level at the teacher's discretion. A key philosophy behind MN's examination process is the belief that learners should be encouraged to reach their full potential and should receive credit for their positive achievement.

TEACHING THE AWARDS

We want teachers of our examinations to feel fully supported and inspired. Registered teachers gain free access to over 50 ready-to-use class plans, including scripts, video resources, and printable handouts. These resources are designed to make teaching filmmaking straightforward, engaging, and accessible, ensuring learners can create their films confidently within class time.



Teachers guide learners through the filmmaking process, from planning to production and editing. Once completed, the finished films, along with the learners' written coursework and assessment tasks, are submitted via the secure Teacher Dashboard.

Filmmaking Exams are available exclusively to registered Teachers & Centres to ensure compliance with MN Awards' quality assurance standards. Teachers and Centres must agree to the Terms & Conditions related to delivering the qualifications in order to submit learners for assessment. This is done via the Teacher's Dashboard.

There are no formal teaching qualifications required to deliver MN Awards, making the qualifications accessible to a wide range of educators and practitioners. Registered Centres and teachers also have access to CPD training opportunities to expand their own skills and gain hands-on experience with MN's filmmaking methods and resources.



Register as an MN
Teacher for free on
www.mnawards.co.uk

FORM OF ASSESSMENT

All examinations are graded externally by MN Examiners. Teachers and Centres book exams via the Teacher Dashboard, uploading both the learners' completed films and their written coursework/assessment tasks in accordance with the Teacher & Centre Handbook.

For Filmmaking, there is no live assessment option — all submissions are upload only, reflecting industry practice where films are created, edited, and presented digitally.

Assessment tasks are marked against the published criteria and examined by a single external examiner. However, for training and monitoring purposes, it may be necessary for two examiners to view a submission. This ensures fairness, consistency, and compliance with MN Awards' quality assurance processes.

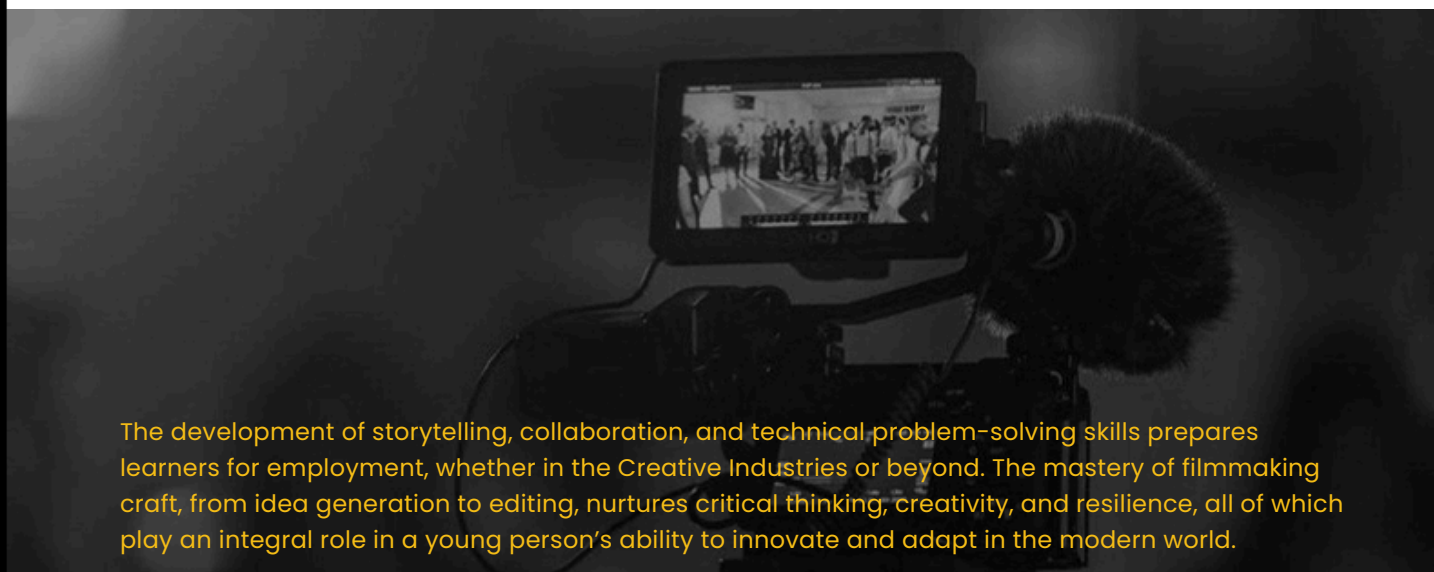
USE OF LANGUAGES

English is used throughout all assessment materials and throughout the examination process. The language used in all communications, assessment content and guidance is free from bias and appropriate to the assessment.

There is no reasonable adjustment or special consideration that can be applied for Learner's for whom English is a second language. MN Awards qualifications have been written, developed and are awarded in English, and therefore it is understood that Learners must have a good understanding of the English Language that enables them to achieve the necessary level. Whilst the Learner's use of English must be intelligible to the examiner, they are not required to conform to any particular model of pronunciation or usage. MN accept learners may have distinctive features of pronunciation for example, which are unique to the Learner, and these will not affect the marking of assessment criteria.

EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS

MN Graded Examinations in Filmmaking could help a learner in their application to Acting, Computer Science (special effects, animation, gaming), Film, Writing and any Media related Courses at further and higher educational institutions.



The development of storytelling, collaboration, and technical problem-solving skills prepares learners for employment, whether in the Creative Industries or beyond. The mastery of filmmaking craft, from idea generation to editing, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and resilience, all of which play an integral role in a young person's ability to innovate and adapt in the modern world.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS



Teachers may apply for special considerations or reasonable adjustments via the online portal. For Reasonable Adjustments, teachers should allow enough time for the application to be processed ahead of the examination. For full details of policy and procedure, please see the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy on the Online Portal.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All MN examinations take the form of external assessment. Our quality assurance processes ensure that all exams are marked fairly and accurately, to the same standard. Examiners are appointed, trained and standardised by MN. For more information on MN's quality assurance procedures, please see the Quality Assurance Policy.

HOW TO ENTER AN EXAM

Exams are entered for via the MN Online Portal. Please visit our website for further details.


Should a learner fail an examination, they are able to re-sit the examination in full. Learners are not permitted to re-sit part of the assessment tasks. The teacher or centre must book the exam on the portal as normal. The learner will be charged the exam fee in full each time they sit the exam.

MARKS AND ATTAINMENT LEVELS

All MN Grades in Filmmaking are single-unit qualifications, assessed through practical project work and accompanying written coursework. Each grade focuses on a series of filmmaking tasks that reflect the real stages of production, from planning and filming to editing and reflection. The specification below outlines these tasks in detail and explains what learners must prepare for submission. All assessment evidence must be the learner's own original work, supported by their pre-production documents (such as ABTs, storyboards, shot lists, or scripts) and final edited film.

Teachers must see the 'Exam Regulations' document for further guidance prior to submitting learners for examination. Upon submission of coursework, Learners are awarded the final grade of Distinction, Merit, Pass or 'Standard not yet attained'.

Each task has specified assessment criteria. These criteria are marked out of 3. At the end of the exam, the average mark for each criteria is calculated and added together to find the total marks awarded and resulting percentage.



MARKS	LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT FOR CRITERIA
0	Standard Not Yet Attained
1	Pass
2	Merit
3	Distinction

Learners must pass all criteria in order to pass the grade overall. If a learner achieves an average mark of '0' for one or more criteria, they will fail the grade regardless of the overall percentage.

MN aim to deliver the results of assessment within two weeks of the teacher uploading the submission .



The overall percentage is calculated to provide a grade within the following bands:

OVERALL PERCENTAGE	GRADE AWARDED
86 - 100%	Distinction
56 - 85%	Merit
33 - 55%	Pass
0 - 32%	Standard Not Yet Attained

Understanding Our Curriculum: The Core Creative Principles (CCP)

We've designed the Filmmaking Graded Exams with a clear progression, and a key element of that design is what we call the Core Creative Principles (CCP).

What is a CCP?

Think of a CCP as the "Big Idea" or central learning goal for each major section (or "Level") of our curriculum. It's the fundamental understanding that every task within each level is designed to build towards.

Instead of just teaching individual skills in isolation, the CCP ensures that all learning ties back to a single, powerful concept.

You'll find the CCP's detailed at the start of each Level within this document.

TOTAL QUALIFICATION TIME AND GUIDED LEARNING HOURS

All regulated qualifications are assigned a total qualification time. This information is guidance only.

MN Awards view the below timings as the estimated time for the average learner to reach the required standard and serves as a guide for teachers with regards to time needed and commitment to independent study and research. These hours are dependent on each individual learner's rate of learning, experience and ability. Learner's may take more or less time than the below guide, at the teacher's discretion.

Level of Qualification	Guided Learning Hours	Independent learning hours	Total Qualification Time	Credit Value
Grade 1	20	40	60	6
Grade 2	25	55	80	8
Grade 3	25	75	100	10
Grade 4	50	80	130	13
Grade 5	50	100	150	15
Grade 6	60	110	170	17
Grade 7	60	130	190	19
Grade 8	70	180	250	25

Reference List: Basic Camera Shot Types & Camera Movements

This list can be used as a glossary for learners and teachers throughout the qualification.

Basic (Level 1) The fundamental building blocks used to establish a scene and frame a subject.

Shot Type	Abbreviation	Explanation
Establishing Shot	EWS	A very wide shot used at the start of a scene to show the overall location and setting.
Extreme Wide Shot	XWS / ELS	Shows the subject as very small in the frame, emphasizing the vastness of their surroundings.
Wide Shot / Long Shot	WS / LS	Shows the subject from head to toe, often including their immediate environment.
Mid Shot	MS	Frames the subject from the waist up. Balances character with body language.
Close-Up	CU	Frames a subject's face tightly to show emotion and reaction in detail.

Basic (Level 1) Simple movements that can be performed with any camera, ideally on a tripod or stable surface for smoothness.

Movement	Explanation
Static Shot	The camera does not move at all. Often locked down on a tripod or stable surface.
Pan	The camera swivels horizontally (left or right) from a fixed central point.
Tilt	The camera swivels vertically (up or down) from a fixed central point.
Zoom	Using the camera's lens (optical or digital) to magnify or de-magnify the shot. (Note: This changes focal length, not camera position).

Reference List: Intermediate Camera Shot Types & Camera Movements

Intermediate (From Level 2) These shots require more planning and are used to show relationships, perspective, and convey specific information.

Shot Type	Abbreviation	Explanation
Medium Close-Up	MCU	Frames a subject from the chest or shoulders up. More intimate than a Mid Shot.
Two Shot	-	A shot that frames two characters together, often used to show their relationship.
Over-the-Shoulder	OTS	A shot of a subject as seen from behind the shoulder of another character. Essential for conversations.
Reverse Shot	-	A shot of the character or object that the character in the previous shot was looking at (often follows an OTS).
Dirty Single	-	A shot of one subject that includes a small part of another character (e.g., shoulder, back of head) in the foreground.
High Angle	-	The camera is positioned above the subject, looking down, which can make them seem small or vulnerable.
Low Angle	-	The camera is positioned below the subject, looking up, which can make them seem powerful or intimidating.
Point of View	POV	The camera shows what a character is looking at, as if from their own eyes.

Intermediate (From Level 2) These movements involve moving the entire camera and require more practice to perform smoothly without specialised equipment.

Movement	Explanation
Push In / Pull Out	Physically moving the entire camera closer to (push in) or further from (pull out) a subject.
Handheld	The camera is held by the operator, creating a shaky, urgent, or realistic feel, often used to convey a character's perspective or chaos.
Pedestal	Moving the entire camera vertically up or down without tilting (e.g., raising/lowering a tripod, or carefully moving a phone up/down).
Arc Shot	The camera moves in a circular path around the subject, maintaining a consistent distance, often achieved by walking around the subject.

Reference List: Advanced Camera Shot Types & Camera Movements

Advanced (From Level 3) These shots are used for specific stylistic or emotional impact and require more technical control or creative staging.

Shot Type	Abbreviation	Explanation
Extreme Close-Up	ECU / XCU	Frames a very small part of a subject in great detail (e.g., an eye, a hand, a specific object detail).
Dutch Angle / Tilt	-	The camera is deliberately tilted to one side, creating a slanted image to convey unease or disorientation.
Bird's-Eye View	-	A shot taken from directly overhead, looking straight down, often used for establishing scale or unique perspective.
Insert Shot	-	A close-up of an object or detail (e.g., a letter, a clock, a clue) that is important to the story, often inserted into a larger scene.
Reaction Shot	-	A close-up or mid-shot that captures a character's immediate non-verbal response to an event or dialogue.
Reflection Shot	-	A shot that uses a reflective surface (mirror, water, window) to show the subject or action indirectly, creating visual interest or mystery.
Silhouette Shot	-	A shot where the subject appears as a dark, unlit shape against a brighter background, emphasizing their outline and often creating mood or mystery.

Advanced (From Level 3) These movements achieve dynamic effects and require significant practice for smoothness or creative staging with basic equipment.

Movement	Explanation
Tracking Shot	The camera moves alongside, in front of, or behind a subject, maintaining a consistent distance. Achievable by smooth walking or using simple wheeled devices (e.g., skateboard, office chair) for steadiness.
Whip Pan	A very fast, blurred horizontal pan used as a quick transition between scenes or to convey sudden action or frantic energy.
Smooth Walk/Run (Simulated Stabiliser)	The camera moves smoothly through space, often following a character or exploring an environment, achieved by careful body movement to mimic a stabilized shot.
360° Spin / Revolution	The camera rotates a full 360 degrees on its axis, or around a subject, to reveal the entire surroundings or create a disorienting effect.

LEVEL 1

The Beginning: The Audience's Eye.

At "The Beginning," we introduce students to the fundamental filming techniques that bring a story to life on screen. To help drama teachers with no film experience, we draw comparisons to stagecraft to make these concepts easier to understand.

For a drama teacher, think of it this way: In theatre, you use blocking, lighting, and staging to guide the audience's eye around the stage, essentially "framing" what they should pay attention to, even though they can look anywhere. In film, we have even more precise control because the camera itself becomes the audience's eye. We dictate exactly what they see, and when they see it.

At Level 1 we focus on two main techniques filmmakers use to do this:

1. **The "One-Shot" Method:** Filming an entire short scene in one continuous take, without stopping the camera.
2. **The "Coverage-Based" Method:** Filming the same scene multiple times from different camera angles, then editing them together.

Traditional filmmaking often blends both of these techniques. An audience, for example, might watch an intense moment unfold in a single, unbroken take, (one-shot) only for the film to then seamlessly transition to the next scene, which is carefully constructed from multiple angles and cuts (coverage-based). In Level 1, we separate them out into individual grades so students can master each one. Then, at Grade 3, we bring them together, enabling students to combine these methods effectively.

Minimum crediting requirements

For all film submissions, learners must include end credits:

- Director/Camera/Sound/Edit: [Learner Name]
- Cast: [Names]
- Assistants (role): [eg: Name – boom operator, if applicable]
- Music/SFX: [Source or "Original"]
- Special thanks/Permissions: [If applicable].

For Guidance on the below elements, please see 'Further Guidance' on **page 34**.

- Understanding One-Shots
- Understanding the 'Coverage-Based' Method
- Combining One-Shots with Multi-Camera Techniques

MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 1)

Core Focus: Shoot a “one-shot” film, between 1 to 2-minutes in length.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABT: Learner’s must submit a written “And, But, Therefore” (ABT). This ABT should focus on and summarise the learners short film. See the “And, But, Therefore” document for details. Learners should decide on and include a title for their film. • Storyboard: Submit a storyboard for key sequences.
Production	<p>Single Take Requirement: The entire film must be one continuous, unbroken take.</p> <p>Time Limits: A minimum of 1 minute 30 seconds and a max of 2 minutes in length. No cuts or edits.</p> <p>• Clear Dialogue: Ensure all dialogue (if any) is clearly audible throughout.</p> <p>Film Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Three Actor Movements: The main actor(s) must perform at least three distinct, planned movements, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Walking from point A to B. ◦ Picks up an object and move said object to a new position. ◦ Walks from point B back to point A. • During the film, learners must execute the following two camera movements from MN’s “Shot Types & Camera Movements” reference list (Page 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ One ‘pan shot’: The camera swivels horizontally (left or right) from a fixed central point. ◦ One ‘tilt shot’: The camera swivels vertically (up or down) from a fixed central point.

Pre-Production L01: Plan a short screen story using basic pre-production tools, including an ABT and storyboard, to outline narrative progression.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure in film through a submitted ‘And, But, Therefore’ (ABT) document outlining the story’s progression.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates the ability to plan and construct a film by producing a storyboard of key sequences, showing awareness of framing and narrative flow.
Production L02: Operate the camera to communicate action and space, constructing a clear and coherent on-screen narrative.	AC2.1 Demonstrates the use of at least two distinct camera movements appropriate to the scene.
	AC2.2 Communicates a clear and coherent narrative within a single, continuous take.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates an understanding of blocking and the ability to direct performers effectively to support the scene’s narrative.

MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 2)

Core Focus: Shoot a “multi-angle” film, 1 to 2-minutes in length. Demonstrating intentional use of multiple camera angles and basic editing.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABT: Learner’s must submit a written “And, But, Therefore” (ABT). This ABT should focus on and summarise the learners short film. See the “And, But, Therefore” document for details. Learners should decide on and include a title for their film. • Storyboard: Submit a storyboard for <i>key sequences</i>.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film Length: The final film must be a minimum of 1 minute 30 seconds and a max of 2 minutes in length. • Minimum Edits: The final film must contain at least 4 distinct edits (cuts), demonstrating the use of multiple shots. • Clear Dialogue: Ensure all dialogue (if any) is clearly audible throughout. • Minimum Three Camera Shot Types (Basic): The film must include at least two Basic Shot Types from MN’s “Shot Types & Camera Movements” reference list (Page 8) • Minimum Two Camera Movements (Basic): The film must include at least two distinct camera movements from MN’s “Shot Types & Camera Movements” reference list (Page 8) • Demonstrate Basic Continuity: The edits must demonstrate basic visual continuity.

Pre-Production LO1: Plan a short screen story using basic pre-production tools, including an ABT and storyboard, to outline narrative progression.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure in film through a submitted ‘And, But, Therefore’ (ABT) document outlining the story’s progression.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates the ability to plan and construct a film by producing a storyboard of key sequences, showing awareness of framing and narrative flow.
Production LO2: Operate the camera to communicate action and space, constructing a clear and coherent on-screen narrative.	AC2.1 Demonstrates the ability to film and edit a sequence using multiple shots, with a minimum of four distinct cuts.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates the use of at least two basic shot types to support the narrative.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates the use of at least two distinct camera movements appropriate to the scene.
	AC2.4 Demonstrates an understanding of continuity, ensuring visual and narrative consistency across the edited sequence.

MNA Level 1 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 3)

Core Focus: Shoot a film, 2 to 3-minutes in length. Combining a distinct "one-shot" sequence with a distinct "multi-angle" (coverage-based) sequence within the same narrative.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABT: Learner's must submit a written "And, But, Therefore" (ABT). This ABT should focus on and summarise the learners short film. See the "And, But, Therefore" document for details. Learners should decide on and include a title for their film. • Storyboard: Submit a storyboard for key sequences.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film Length: The final edited film must be a minimum of 2 minutes and a max of 3 minutes in length. • Narrative Flow: The transition between the one-shot sequence and the multi-angle sequence must be smooth and make sense narratively. • One-Shot Sequence Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This section must be one continuous, unbroken take, with no cuts or edits within it, at least 30 seconds in length. ◦ Must contain at least two distinct camera movements from MN's "Shot Types & Camera Movements" reference list (Page 8) • Multi-Angle (Coverage) Sequence Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This section must be filmed using multiple separate shots (coverage) and edited together, at least 30 seconds in length. ◦ Must contain a minimum of 3 distinct edits (cuts). ◦ Must demonstrate basic visual continuity. ◦ Must contain at least two basic shot types from MN's "Shot Types & Camera Movements" reference list (Page 8)

Pre-Production LO1: Plan a short screen story using basic pre-production tools, including an ABT and storyboard, to outline narrative progression.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure in film through a submitted 'And, But, Therefore' (ABT) document outlining the story's progression.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates the ability to plan and construct a film by producing a storyboard of key sequences, showing awareness of framing and narrative flow.
Production LO2: Operate the camera to communicate action and space, constructing a clear and coherent on-screen narrative.	AC2.1 Demonstrates the ability to transition between different filming techniques, including a single continuous (one-shot) sequence and a multi-angle edited sequence.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates the ability to create an edited sequence using multiple shots, with a minimum of three distinct cuts.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates the use of at least two basic shot types to support the narrative.
	AC2.4 Demonstrates the use of at least two distinct camera movements appropriate to the scene.
	AC2.5 Demonstrates an understanding and application of continuity, ensuring consistency of action and narrative across the edited sequence.

LEVEL 2

The Middle: Storytelling Language.

Building upon the foundational filming methods of Level 1 (The Audience's Eye), Level 2 guides students to explore the crucial difference between dialogue-driven and visual storytelling, and how each uniquely shapes the screen narrative.

For a drama teacher, think of it like you are devising your own play – what is the play's primary language: Is it a "talking play" where words carry the plot and emotion, or a "physical theatre" piece where movement, staging, and imagery tell the story? Both are valid, but they demand different directorial choices.

We've identified two main techniques filmmakers use to do this:

1. Dialogue-Driven Film:

- What it is: Here, the plot, character development, and emotion are primarily conveyed through spoken words. (Verbal exposition)

1. Visual Storytelling Film:

- What it is: In contrast, this technique tells the story through actions, expressions, camera choices, imagery, and symbolism, often with minimal or no dialogue. (Visual exposition).

While writers often blend these two storytelling approaches within a single script, Level 2 empowers students to actively explore these approaches firsthand. To truly understand their impact, in Grades 4 and 5 learners (as filmmakers) will be given creative authority. This means they may make changes to a script's primary storytelling mode, where a traditional filmmaker might not, ensuring they master each approach. We do this to enable them to make sophisticated choices about their own narrative in Level 3.

Minimum crediting requirements

For all film submissions, learners must include end credits:

- Director/Camera/Sound/Edit: [Learner Name]
- Cast: [Names]
- Assistants (role): [eg: Name – boom operator, if applicable]
- Music/SFX: [Source or "Original"]
- Special thanks/Permissions: [If applicable].

For Guidance on the below elements, please see 'Further Guidance' on page 37.

- Project Overview
- Shotlist
- Master Shots
- Dialogue Driven Narrative
- Visual Storytelling
- Original Scripts

MNA Level 2 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 4)

Core Focus: Shoot one KEY scene (not a short film) with a total length of 2 to 3 minutes in length, the KEY scene should be selected for its importance.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Overview: Film synopsis & scenes. Submit a 1-2 paragraph synopsis for an entire feature film idea. This must also clearly explain where the learner's one KEY scene sits within that larger feature film's narrative. Learners should decide on and include a title for their film. • Original Scene Script (written in film format): Learner must write and submit an original script for the dialogue-driven scene. (Use free screenwriting software like Celtex to assist with formatting). • ABT (for the Scene): Learner's must submit a written "And, But, Therefore" (ABT). This ABT should focus on and summarise the learners KEY scene, not the larger film synopsis. See the "And, But, Therefore" document for details. • Shotlist: Submit a comprehensive shotlist.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scene Length: The final filmed key scene must be a minimum of 3 minutes in length and a maximum of 5 minutes. • Master Shot Capture: Capture the entire key scene using a master shot. Master shots will be submitted separately alongside your final edited scene. (See below for definition of master shot for grade 4) • Clear Dialogue: All dialogue must be clearly audible and understandable throughout the scene. • Dialogue-Driven Narrative: The KEY scene's plot, character development, and key emotions must be clearly conveyed predominantly through spoken dialogue, demonstrating the learner's ability to make words the main driver. • Dynamic Scene Staging: The KEY scene cannot be entirely static; all actor movements should be deliberately planned to serve and remain clearly visible within the master shot's continuous frame. • Single Location: The entire KEY scene must be filmed within a single, contained location (e.g., one room, one defined outdoor area). • Intermediate Camera Shot & Movement Use: Across the KEY scene, the learner must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ At least two Intermediate Camera Shot Types from MN's "Shot Types" doc. ◦ At least one different Intermediate Camera Movements from MN's "Camera Movements" doc. • Minimum Edits: The KEY scene must contain at least 4 distinct edits (cuts).

Pre - Production LO1: Develop scene materials to an industry-like pre-production standard through a clear synopsis, formatted script, and organised shot planning.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of film structure by clearly communicating a synopsis and scene context within a project overview.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates an understanding of screenplay formatting, presenting work to an appropriate technical standard.
	AC1.3 Demonstrates an understanding of shot selection and sequencing through a comprehensive shot list.
Production LO2: Capture scenes that clearly convey plot and emotion using either dialogue-driven or visual storytelling methods. LO3: Apply intermediate cinematography and continuity techniques, using purposeful shot types, camera movements, and edits that maintain narrative flow	AC2.1 Produces a clear and effective 'master shot' for the scene.
	AC2.2 Dialogue is audible and understandable.
	AC2.3 The film communicates the plot, character development, and key emotional beats of the scene, with a primary focus on spoken dialogue.
	AC2.4 The learner utilises at least two intermediate shot types within the scene.
	AC2.5 The learner utilises at least one intermediate camera movement appropriate to the narrative.
	AC2.6 Demonstrates an understanding of editing by producing a sequence with a minimum of four distinct cuts, maintaining continuity throughout.

MNA Level 2 Award Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 5)

Core Focus: Shoot two KEY scenes (not a short film) with a total length of 3 to 4 minutes in length, the KEY scenes should be selected for their importance.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Overview: Film synopsis & scenes. Submit a 1-2 paragraph synopsis for an entire feature film idea. This must also clearly explain where the two KEY scenes sit within the larger feature film's narrative. Learners should decide on and include a title for their film. • Original Scene Script (written in film format): Learners must write and submit an original script for two sequential/interconnected scenes. Using visual storytelling, i.e. minimal dialogue. (Use free screenwriting software like Celtex to assist with formatting.). • ABT (for the Scene): Learner's must submit a written "And, But, Therefore" (ABT) that outlines the narrative progression for the entire two-scene sequence. See the "And, But, Therefore" document for details. • Shotlist: Submit a comprehensive shortlist.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scene Length: The final filmed scenes must be a total of 3 minutes to 4 minutes in length. (Learners decide how to distribute this time across the two scenes, they do not need to be equal in time). • Number of Scenes: The film must comprise two KEY scenes. • Master Shot Capture (per scene): Capture each of the two KEY scenes using a master shot. All master shots will be submitted separately alongside your final edited film. • Any Dialogue Present Must Be Clear: Any minimal dialogue used must be clearly audible and understandable throughout the film. • Visual Storytelling Narrative: The scenes' plot, character development, and key emotions must be clearly conveyed predominantly through visual means (actions, expressions, camera choices, imagery, and symbolism), demonstrating the learner's ability to tell a story with minimal dialogue. • Intermediate Camera Shot & Movement Use: Across the two KEY scenes, the learner must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ At least three Intermediate Camera Shot Types from MN's "Shot Types" doc. ◦ At least two different Intermediate Camera Movements from MN's "Camera Movements" doc. • Minimum Edits (per scene): Each of the two KEY scenes must contain at least 6 distinct edits (cuts).

Pre - Production LO1: Develop scene materials to an industry-like pre-production standard through a clear synopsis, formatted script, and organised shot planning.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of film structure by clearly communicating a synopsis and scene context within a project overview.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates an understanding and technical ability in formatting screenplays to an appropriate industry standard.
	AC1.3 Demonstrates an understanding of shot selection and sequencing through a comprehensive shot list.
Production LO2: Capture scenes that clearly convey plot and emotion using either dialogue-driven or visual storytelling methods. LO3: Apply intermediate cinematography and continuity techniques, using purposeful shot types, camera movements, and edits that maintain narrative flow.	AC2.1 Demonstrates an ability to produce a clear and effective 'master shot' for each key scene.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates an ability to communicate the plot, character development, and key emotional beats of the scene predominantly through visual means, including actions, expressions, camera choices, imagery, and symbolism.
	AC2.3 The learner utilises at least three intermediate camera shot types across two key scenes.
	AC2.4 The learner utilises at least two intermediate camera movements across two key scenes.
	AC2.5 The learner demonstrates an understanding of editing by producing sequences with a minimum of six distinct cuts per scene, maintaining continuity throughout.

LEVEL 3

The Director's Vision: Authorial Voice

Building upon the filming mechanics of Level 1 (The Audience's Eye) and the narrative methods of Level 2 (Storytelling Language), Level 3 challenges students to combine all these skills to become true film authors. The focus shifts from how to tell a story to what unique story you want to tell and how you want the audience to feel. This is The Principle of Authorial Voice.

For a drama teacher, think of it like directing a classic play, such as Romeo and Juliet. One director might stage it as a gritty, modern street tragedy with intense, fast-paced action. Another might stage it as a beautiful, romantic period piece with sweeping, graceful movements. The script is the same, but the director's vision—their unique voice—results in two completely different emotional experiences for the audience.

We've identified two main components of an Authorial Voice that learners will develop in this level:

- **Consistent Tone & Style:** What it is: This is the director's ability to decide on a specific mood for their film (e.g., scary, funny, sad) and then ensure that every creative choice—camera angles, editing pace, music, performance—consistently supports that single feeling from beginning to end.
- **A Clear Point of View (Using Genre):** What it is: This is where the director uses the established rules and audience expectations of a genre (like Horror or Comedy) as a framework to express their vision. They are not just copying the genre; they are using its language to communicate their unique perspective and control the audience's emotional journey.

Minimum crediting requirements

For all film submissions, learners must include end credits:

- Director/Camera/Sound/Edit: [Learner Name]
- Cast: [Names]
- Assistants (role): [eg: Name – boom operator, if applicable]
- Music/SFX: [Source or "Original"]
- Special thanks/Permissions: [If applicable].

For Guidance on the below elements, please see 'Further Guidance' on page 40.

- Project Declaration Pack
- Production Plan
- Casting
- Genre Execution
- Intentional Lighting Design
- Separate sound recording (for voice/dialogue)
- Layered Sound Design
- The Director's Analytical Commentary

MNA Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 6)

Core Focus: Shoot either a short film or KEY scene(s) (as part of a feature film), between 5 and 7 minutes in length.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Declaration Pack (PDP): Includes a film synopsis, scene context & project declaration, learner must submit either one of the following docs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Short Film PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The short film's title ▪ The short film's intended genre. ▪ A short film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. ◦ OR KEY Scenes PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The feature film's title ▪ The feature film's intended genre. ▪ A feature film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. (Learners must clearly explain where the KEY scenes sit within the larger feature film's narrative). ▪ The KEY scene(s) you choose must be key moments—turning points that significantly impact the feature films story or character development. ▪ Learners decide how to distribute the time across the KEY scenes, they do not need to be equal in time. (Should be between one and three scenes in total). • Script: Please submit a fully completed script for either a short film, or a set of KEY scenes - formatted according to standard film industry screenplay guidelines. (Use free screenwriting software like Celtex to assist with formatting). • Production Plan: Submit a comprehensive production plan, including a shot list and storyboard for key sequences. • Casting: All roles must be cast age-appropriately. Actors should perform roles that are close to their own age.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project & Length: The learner must create either a complete, self-contained Short Film OR a cohesive set of Scenes. The final edited project must be between 5 and 7 minutes in length. • Genre Execution: The project must clearly reflect the chosen genre through its use of story, style, and tone. • Cinematography (Shots): The project must demonstrate the use of at least one Advanced shot type from the MN Shotlist doc. • Cinematography (Movements): The project must demonstrate the use of at least one Advanced camera movement from the MN Camera Movements doc. • Integration of MN Principles & Grades: The project must demonstrate a clear application of principles from previous grades.

Stage	Task requirements
Post-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director's Analytical Commentary: Must record and submit a 'Director's Analytical Commentary' video. In the commentary, the learner must appear on camera and verbally answer the following five prompts in detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prompt 1 (Genre & Authorial Voice): "State the genre of your project and explain what you used to create a consistent tone for that genre." ◦ Prompt 2 (Storytelling Methods): "Choose one key scene from your project. Explain whether it is primarily Dialogue-Driven or Visual Storytelling and justify why you made that choice for that specific moment." ◦ Prompt 3 (Filming Methods): "Discuss your overall filming approach. Did you use a 'one-shot' style for any parts of your project, or was it entirely a 'coverage-based' editing style? Explain your reasoning." ◦ Prompt 4 (Cinematography for Genre): "Explain why you selected and used the advanced shot and camera movement from MN's Shotlist/Camera Movement document, and how they supported your chosen genre." ◦ Prompt 5 (Reflection): "What was the biggest challenge you faced in making this project, and what key lesson did you learn from it?"

Pre - Production LO1: Design and manage a viable screen project from concept to shoot through a coherent Project Declaration Pack, industry-formatted script, realistic production plan, and appropriate casting.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of a clear project concept through the production of a Project Declaration Pack.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates an understanding and technical ability in formatting screenplays to an appropriate industry standard.
	AC1.3 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to create an accurate and realistic production plan.
	AC1.4 Demonstrates an understanding and application of appropriate casting choices aligned with genre, tone, and narrative.
Production LO2: Produce a cohesive short film or set of scenes that sustain narrative purpose, tone, and genre. LO3: Select and control advanced cinematography and camera movement, integrating visual and sound elements to reinforce authorial intent.	AC2.1 Demonstrates an ability to produce a fully realised short film or cohesive set of scenes with a clear and effective narrative.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates an ability to communicate genre through story, style, and tone.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates an advanced understanding of cinematography by utilising at least one advanced shot type.
	AC2.4 Demonstrates an advanced understanding and ability in camera movement by utilising at least one advanced camera movement.
	AC2.5 The learner utilises editing accurately and effectively, ensuring continuity is maintained throughout the film.
Post - Production LO4: Analyse, evaluate, and reflect on creative and technical decisions through a Director's Analytical Commentary demonstrating critical insight and professional self-awareness.	AC3.1 Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate storytelling and filming methods by justifying chosen approaches and explaining how they support the film's narrative purpose and audience engagement.
	AC3.2 Demonstrates reflective understanding by identifying challenges faced, evaluating the effectiveness of chosen methods, and outlining key lessons learned for future creative development.

MNA Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 7)

Core Focus: Shoot either a short film or KEY scene(s) (as part of a feature film), between 7 and 9 minutes in length. With a specific focus on intentional Lighting.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Declaration Pack (PDP): Includes a film synopsis, scene context & project declaration, learner must submit either one of the following docs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Short Film PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The short film's title ▪ The short film's intended genre. ▪ A short film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. ◦ OR KEY Scenes PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The feature film's title ▪ The feature film's intended genre. ▪ A feature film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. (Learners must clearly explain where the KEY scenes sit within the larger feature film's narrative). ▪ The KEY scene(s) you choose must be key moments—turning points that significantly impact the feature films story or character development. ▪ Learners decide how to distribute the time across the KEY scenes, they do not need to be equal in time. (Should be between one and three scenes in total). • Script: Please submit a fully completed script for either a short film, or a set of KEY scenes - formatted according to standard film industry screenplay guidelines. (Use free screenwriting software like Celtex to assist with formatting). • Production Plan: Submit a comprehensive production plan, including a shot list and storyboard for key sequences. • Casting: All roles must be cast age-appropriately. Actors should perform roles that are close to their own age.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project & Length: The learner must create either a complete, self-contained Short Film OR a cohesive set of Scenes. The final edited project must be between 6 and 8 minutes in length. • Genre Execution: The project must clearly reflect the chosen genre. • Cinematography (Shots): The project must demonstrate the use of at least two Advanced shot types from the MN Shotlist doc. • Cinematography (Movements): The project must demonstrate the use of at least two Advanced camera movements from the MN Camera Movements doc. • Intentional Lighting: The project must demonstrate the conscious use of lighting to enhance the genre, atmosphere, or narrative of the film. • Integration of MN Principles & Grades: The project must demonstrate a clear application of principles from previous grades.

Stage	Task requirements
Post-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director's Analytical Commentary: Must record and submit a 'Director's Analytical Commentary' video. In the commentary, the learner must appear on camera and verbally answer the following six prompts in detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prompt 1 (Genre & Authorial Voice): "State the genre of your project and explain what you used to create a consistent tone for that genre." ◦ Prompt 2 (Storytelling Methods): "Choose one key scene from your project. Explain whether it is primarily Dialogue-Driven or Visual Storytelling and justify why you made that choice for that specific moment." ◦ Prompt 3 (Filming Methods): "Discuss your overall filming approach. Did you use a 'one-shot' style for any parts of your project, or was it entirely a 'coverage-based' editing style? Explain your reasoning." ◦ Prompt 4 (Cinematography for Genre): "Explain why you selected and used the advanced shot and camera movement from MN's Shotlist/Camera Movement document, and how they supported your chosen genre." ◦ Prompt 5 (Intentional Lighting): "Describe a specific lighting choice you made in your project and explain how it helped to enhance the genre or the mood of a particular scene." ◦ Prompt 6 (Reflection): "What was the biggest challenge you faced in making this project, and what key lesson did you learn from it?"

Pre - Production LO1: Design and manage a viable screen project from concept to shoot through a coherent Project Declaration Pack, industry-formatted script, realistic production plan, and appropriate casting.	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of a clear project concept through the production of a Project Declaration Pack.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates an understanding and technical ability in formatting screenplays to an appropriate industry standard.
	AC1.3 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to create an accurate and realistic production plan.
	AC1.4 Demonstrates an understanding and application of appropriate casting choices aligned with the genre, tone, and narrative.
Production LO2: Produce a cohesive short film or set of scenes that sustain narrative purpose, tone, and genre. LO3: Select and control advanced cinematography and camera movement, integrating visual and sound elements to reinforce authorial intent.	AC2.1 Demonstrates an ability to produce a fully realised short film or cohesive set of scenes with a clear and effective narrative.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates an ability to communicate genre appropriately through story, style, and tone.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates an advanced understanding of cinematography by utilising at least two advanced shot types.
	AC2.4 Demonstrates an advanced understanding and ability in camera movement by utilising at least two advanced camera movements.
	AC2.5 The learner utilises editing accurately and effectively, ensuring continuity is maintained throughout the film.
	AC2.6 The learner demonstrates appropriate and conscious use of lighting to enhance the genre, atmosphere, or narrative of the film.
Post - Production LO4: Analyse, evaluate, and reflect on creative and technical decisions through a Director's Analytical Commentary demonstrating critical insight and professional self-awareness.	AC3.1 Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate storytelling and filming methods by justifying chosen approaches and explaining how they enhance narrative meaning and audience engagement.
	AC3.2 Demonstrates an advanced understanding of cinematography and lighting by analysing how intentional lighting choices and camera techniques are used to reinforce tone, atmosphere, and genre conventions.

MNA Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examinations in Filmmaking (Grade 8)

Core Focus: Shoot either a short film or KEY scene(s) (as part of a feature film), between 9 and 11 minutes in length. With a specific focus on intentional lighting and layered sound design.

Stage	Task requirements
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Declaration Pack (PDP): Includes a film synopsis, scene context & project declaration, learner must submit either one of the following docs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Short Film PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The short film's title ▪ The short film's intended genre. ▪ A short film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. ◦ OR KEY Scenes PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The feature film's title ▪ The feature film's intended genre. ▪ A feature film synopsis, 1-2 paragraphs long. (Learners must clearly explain where the KEY scenes sit within the larger feature film's narrative). ▪ The KEY scene(s) you choose must be key moments—turning points that significantly impact the feature films story or character development. ▪ Learners decide how to distribute the time across the KEY scenes, they do not need to be equal in time. (Should be between one and three scenes in total). • Script: Please submit a fully completed script for either a short film, or a set of KEY scenes - formatted according to standard film industry screenplay guidelines. (Use free screenwriting software like Celtex to assist with formatting). • Production Plan: Submit a comprehensive production plan, including a shot list and storyboard for key sequences. • Casting: All roles must be cast age-appropriately. Actors should perform roles that are close to their own age.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project & Length: The learner must create either a complete, self-contained Short Film OR a cohesive set of Scenes. The final edited project must be between 8 and 10 minutes in length. • Genre Execution: The project must clearly reflect the chosen genre. • Cinematography (Shots): The project must demonstrate the use of at least two Advanced shot types from the MN Shotlist doc • Cinematography (Movements): The project must demonstrate the use of at least two Advanced camera movements from the MN Camera Movements doc. • Intentional Lighting: The project must demonstrate the conscious use of lighting to enhance the genre, atmosphere, or narrative of the film. • Separate Sound Recording: Dialogue must be recorded using a device separate from the camera (e.g., a smartphone) and synced in post-production to ensure clarity. • Integration of MN Principles & Grades: The project must demonstrate a clear application of principles from previous grades.

Stage	Task requirements
Post-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layered Sound Design: The project's soundtrack must be intentionally designed, featuring at least three distinct layers of post-production sound, including diegetic sound effects, ambient sound, and a musical score. • Director's Analytical Commentary: Must record and submit a 'Director's Analytical Commentary' video. In the commentary, the learner must appear on camera and verbally answer the following five prompts in detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prompt 1 (Genre & Authorial Voice): "State the genre of your project and explain what you used to create a consistent tone for that genre." ◦ Prompt 2 (Storytelling Methods): "Choose one key scene from your project. Explain whether it is primarily Dialogue-Driven or Visual Storytelling and justify why you made that choice for that specific moment." ◦ Prompt 3 (Filming Methods): "Discuss your overall filming approach. Did you use a 'one-shot' style for any parts of your project, or was it entirely a 'coverage-based' editing style? Explain your reasoning." ◦ Prompt 4 (Cinematography for Genre): "Explain why you selected and used the advanced shots and camera movements from MN's Shotlist/Camera Movement document, and how they supported your chosen genre." ◦ Prompt 5 (Intentional Lighting): "Describe a specific lighting choice you made in your project and explain how it helped to enhance the genre or the mood of a particular scene." ◦ Prompt 6 (Intentional Sound): "Describe a specific sound choice you made in your project and explain how it helped to enhance the genre or the mood of a particular scene." ◦ Prompt 7 (Reflection): "What was the biggest challenge you faced in making this project, and what key lesson did you learn from it?"

<p>Pre - Production</p> <p>LO1: Design and manage a viable screen project from concept to shoot through a coherent Project Declaration Pack, industry-formatted script, realistic production plan, and appropriate casting.</p>	AC1.1 Demonstrates an understanding of a clear project concept through the production of a Project Declaration Pack.
	AC1.2 Demonstrates an understanding and technical ability in formatting screenplays to an appropriate industry standard.
	AC1.3 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to create an accurate and realistic production plan.
	AC1.4 Demonstrates an understanding and application of appropriate casting choices aligned with the genre, tone, and narrative.
<p>Production</p> <p>LO2: Produce a cohesive short film or set of scenes that sustain narrative purpose, tone, and genre.</p> <p>LO3: Select and control advanced cinematography and camera movement, integrating visual and sound elements to reinforce authorial intent.</p>	AC2.1 Demonstrates an ability to produce a fully realised stylistic short film or cohesive set of scenes with a clear and effective narrative.
	AC2.2 Demonstrates an ability to communicate genre appropriately through story, style, and tone.
	AC2.3 Demonstrates an advanced understanding of cinematography by utilising at least two advanced shot types.
	AC2.4 Demonstrates an advanced understanding and ability in camera movement by utilising at least two advanced camera movements.
	AC2.5 The learner utilises editing accurately and effectively, ensuring continuity is maintained throughout the film.
	AC2.6 The learner demonstrates appropriate and conscious use of lighting to enhance the genre, atmosphere, or narrative of the film.
	AC2.7 Demonstrates an understanding and technical ability in creating multi-layered sound design, with accurately synced audio, incorporating diegetic sound effects, ambient sound, and a musical score.
<p>Post - Production</p> <p>LO4: Analyse, evaluate, and reflect on creative and technical decisions through a Director's Analytical Commentary demonstrating critical insight and professional self-awareness.</p>	AC3.1 Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate storytelling and filming methods by analysing creative decisions and explaining how they support authorial intent and emotional impact.
	AC3.2 Demonstrates an advanced understanding of cinematography, lighting, and sound design by analysing how these combined elements create a cohesive visual and auditory style that enhances genre and audience experience.
	AC3.3 Demonstrates reflective understanding by evaluating challenges faced during production and post-production, articulating lessons learned, and identifying specific areas for future creative and technical development.

Further Guidance: From level One

Storyboards

The Storyboard is a crucial part of every learner's 'pre-production' stage of their project.

- What it is: A Storyboard is a visual tool that enables us to plan certain shots and helps the director to plan the composition and flow of a scene.
- What "Key Sequences" means: The learner does not need to create a storyboard for their entire film. They should choose the most important, complex, or visual parts of their film and create a storyboard for just those "key sequences." Some films will have more than others.
- How to Create It: The learner has three practical options:
 - Hand-drawn: Storyboards don't require perfect illustrations; simple sketches are sufficient. As long as the learner and examiner clearly understand what's happening in each frame, even stick figures will work perfectly well.
 - The Photographic Storyboard: Taking still photos with a phone or camera to plan out the real shots in the real location.
 - The AI-Generated Storyboard: Using an AI image generator to create pictures based on their detailed descriptions of each shot. Please note, learners are prohibited from using generative AI within the film itself.

Conclusion for the Teacher:

A storyboard visually answers the question "how will these shots look?" It helps learners clearly picture their film in advance, enabling a smoother, more organised filming process, and ultimately leading to a more successful shooting day.

One Shots

A one-shot film is created by filming an entire scene or short story in one continuous, uninterrupted take, meaning the camera records from start to finish without cutting or editing. Imagine the camera as the audience's eyes, smoothly following the action in real-time, never blinking or looking away. Creating a successful one-shot is like a carefully choreographed dance between the actors and the camera operator: both must move in sync, hitting precise positions at specific times to capture the action seamlessly.

Unlike typical film or television productions, which often have limited rehearsal time (frequently relying on quick table reads rather than extensive rehearsals), a one-shot film demands thorough rehearsal. Because the action is continuous and takes place in a single location, or in multiple locations that the actors can realistically move between and the camera can follow, it must be rehearsed much like a live theatre production. Actors practice their movements and dialogue repeatedly, ensuring they're in exactly the right spot at precisely the right moment. Similarly, the camera operator rehearses their own movements, following the actors' choreography closely.

Think of this approach as theatre with a camera directly on stage; the camera moves freely, capturing all of the action dynamically and fluidly. This extensive rehearsal process helps ensure the final performance is polished, engaging, and visually compelling.

For visual reference, teachers are encouraged to explore examples on YouTube. Try searching the following terms to view high-quality one-shot filmmaking examples:

- "One-shot short film examples"
- "One-shot film scene examples"
- "Continuous take filmmaking"
- "One take short film student projects"

These examples will clarify the concept, demonstrate effective techniques, and inspire creative ideas for students' own one-shot films.

Understanding the "Coverage-Based" Method

A traditional multi-camera film involves capturing scenes from multiple camera angles, allowing for flexibility and creativity during editing. Unlike the Grade 1 "one-shot" approach, where filming occurs in one continuous take without cuts or edits, a multi-camera shoot allows filmmakers to film the action several times, using different camera positions and perspectives each time. This method creates variety in visuals, pacing, and storytelling.

Shooting with multiple camera angles can be thought of like assembling a visual puzzle, with each camera capturing a different piece of the overall story. Actors perform the same scene multiple times, while cameras capture wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, and other angles separately. Later, in the editing stage, these angles are combined to create a dynamic and engaging sequence.

While multi-camera shoots typically have limited rehearsal time, learners can certainly rehearse extensively if they have access to the actual filming location. This practice can greatly benefit the final performance. If the actual location isn't available, learners can create a similar setting using props to simulate the environment and rehearse effectively.

Rehearsals for multi-camera filming differ significantly from the extensive rehearsals required for the Grade 1 one-shot film. Generally, actors in multi-camera productions have brief rehearsals, often just a quick "table read," before cameras roll. This allows for more spontaneous performances, with filmmakers relying on multiple takes and angles to capture the best moments.

For teachers new to this approach or seeking visual references, exploring examples on YouTube is highly beneficial. Suggested search terms include:

- "Multi-camera film production examples"
- "Multi-angle filming techniques"
- "Film editing multiple camera angles"
- "Basic multi-camera setup for filmmaking"

These examples will clarify how multi-camera filming works, illustrate effective techniques, and help inspire creative ideas for students' filmmaking projects.

Combining One-Shots with Multi-Camera Techniques

For Grade 3, learners will create a short film that blends both one-shot and multi-camera filming techniques within the same project. They have the flexibility to choose which method dominates the film, but both techniques must clearly feature in the finished product.

Teachers should encourage learners to consider storytelling carefully when choosing how and where to apply each technique. For example, using a one-shot sequence can effectively build tension or create intimacy, while multi-camera sequences offer dynamic pacing and flexibility in visual storytelling. The key is to plan carefully how each filming method enhances specific moments or scenes within the narrative.

Learners should clearly indicate in their storyboard or shooting plan where each filming method will be employed, ensuring clarity during filming and editing.

Further Guidance: From level Two

Project Overview

Objective:

Submit a 1–2 paragraph synopsis of your entire feature film idea. Then, in a separate paragraph, explain where the KEY scene(s) you've focused on fit within the larger narrative of your film.

What to Include:

Film Synopsis (1–2 paragraphs):

- Provide a concise overview of your film's plot.
- Highlight the main characters and their arcs.
- Outline the central conflict and its resolution.

Scene(s) Context:

- Identify the specific KEY scene(s) you've chosen.
- The scene(s) you choose must be key moments—turning points that significantly impact the story or character development.
- Explain the KEY scene(s) significance within the overall story.

Note on Number of Scenes:

- For example, Grade 4 asks for one KEY scene, while Grade 5 asks for two KEY scenes.
- Regardless of the number, it's essential the learners scenes are pivotal moments that drive the narrative forward or mark significant changes in the characters or story.

Example using Disney's The Lion King (Learners should come up with an original story).

Project Overview	
Film Synopsis	<p>My film tells the story of Simba, a young lion who is meant to become the king of his homeland. His life changes completely when his jealous uncle Scar tricks him and his father into a dangerous stampede. Simba escapes, but his father is killed, and Simba believes it's his fault. Feeling guilty, he runs away and grows up far from home.</p> <p>As he gets older, Simba meets new friends who help him find the courage to return and face his past. He goes back to challenge Scar and take back his kingdom, bringing peace to his land.</p>
KEY Scene:	<p>Later in my film, there is a scene where Simba talks with his old friend Nala, who reminds him of his responsibilities and encourages him to return home. This conversation becomes the turning point where Simba confronts his fears and guilt and decides to leave his life in exile to reclaim his kingdom. This is the scene I have filmed, it's important because it marks the moment Simba shifts from running away from his past to actively facing it, setting the course for the rest of the story.</p>

Shot List

A film's shotlist is a detailed plan that lists every camera shot needed to film a scene or the whole movie. It tells the crew what kind of shot to capture (like close-up or wide shot), the order of shots, and sometimes extra details like camera angles or movements. Think of it like a checklist that helps the filmmakers stay organised and make sure they get all the footage they need.

Shotlist's will be uploaded at the point of examination.

The Shot List (The "To-Do List")

- **What it is:** A Shot List is a detailed, written checklist of every single shot the learner plans to film for their project. It's organised scene by scene.
- **How it works:** The learner goes through their script and writes down each new camera setup they will need. This forces them to think about how they will visually construct each scene.

Example:

Scene No.	Shot No.	Shot Type	Shot Description (What happens in the shot?)	Notes (Optional)
1	1	WIDE SHOT	The character walks into their dark bedroom and looks around nervously.	<i>Make the room look messy and shadowy.</i>
1	2	CLOSE-UP	A close-up of their hand as they flick the light switch, but nothing happens.	<i>This shot needs to be very steady.</i>
1	3	POV SHOT	From the character's perspective, we see a mysterious box sitting on the bed.	<i>Use a shaky handheld effect here.</i>

Master Shots

A Master Shot is a continuous camera take that covers the entirety of a single scene, from beginning to end, usually from a wide or medium-wide angle.

- **Purpose:** Its primary purpose is to be a "safety net" or a "blueprint" for the editor. It ensures that the entire scene's action and dialogue are captured in at least one continuous take.
- **Final Use:** A master shot is almost always intended to be cut up and intercut with other "coverage" shots (like close-ups, mid-shots, over-the-shoulders, etc.) of that same scene. You might see only short pieces of the master shot in the final film, or it might be used as the main shot but frequently interrupted by closer views.
- **Camera & Actor Dynamics:** In a master shot, the scene's dynamism comes primarily from the actors' movements, which are choreographed to stay within the camera's consistent frame. While the camera can execute subtle pans or tilts to follow the action, its role is mostly to capture, not move too much or lead.

Think of it like this: You film the whole play once from the back of the theatre (that's your master shot). Filmmakers then work their way in, using mid-shots and close-ups. In the edit, you combine all these pieces.

For Grade 4, the primary purpose of the master shot is for the examiner to clearly see your entire scene unfold. It should typically be a static wide or wide-mid shot that captures the continuous action and dialogue of your scene from a single, fixed camera position within your chosen location. While the master shot is intended to show the scene in its entirety, learners who wish to add subtle camera movement (like a gentle pan or tilt) to follow action may do so, provided it does not detract from the overall clarity of the scene for the examiner.

Master Shots Vs One Shots

One-Shot (Film/Scene)

A One-Shot (often called a "long take" when it's a significant portion of a film, or "one-shot film" when it's the entire movie) is a single, continuous, uninterrupted take that is meant to be presented as such in the final product.

- **Purpose:** Its primary purpose is an artistic statement to immerse the audience, build tension, create a sense of real-time, or showcase complex choreography of both actors and camera. The lack of cuts is fundamental to its aesthetic.
- **Final Use:** The one-shot is the final product (or a significant, uninterrupted segment of it). There are no cuts within that take. If there are edits, they are usually "hidden" (like a character walking past the lens to mask a cut), but the illusion of one continuous take is maintained.
- **Camera Movement:** A one-shot almost always involves both the actor and the camera moving continuously and in highly choreographed ways (complex pans, tilts, tracking, etc.) to reveal information, follow action, and maintain dynamism across the long duration without cuts.

Think of it like this: You film the entire play from beginning to end with a single, moving camera on stage with the actors, and that single recording is what the audience sees. If you make a mistake, you start over.

The Key Distinction Summary:

- **Master Shot:** A single, continuous take of a scene meant to be intercut with other shots. Its camera is typically more static, while actors move.
- **One-Shot:** A single, continuous, unbroken take that is the final film or a distinct segment of it, designed not to be cut. Both the camera and actors typically move continuously.

So, while a master shot is a single continuous take, it's the intent for its use in editing that fundamentally differentiates it from a one-shot film.

Dialogue Driven Narrative

The Goal: Learners must craft their scene so that dialogue is the main event. Their ABT should clearly outline how the scene's narrative unfolds and turns. The accompanying script must then predominantly use spoken dialogue to convey the plot, character development, and emotions, demonstrating to the examiner that the scene achieves its intended ABT through dialogue.

Visual Storytelling

The scenes' plot, character development, and key emotions must be clearly conveyed predominantly through visual means (actions, expressions, camera choices, imagery, and symbolism), demonstrating the learner's ability to tell a story with minimal dialogue.

Original Scene Scripts

Learners must write and submit original scripts for two interconnected scenes they will film. These scripts must be predominantly visual storytelling, with narrative and character development primarily advanced through actions, imagery, and non-verbal cues, containing minimal dialogue.

Further Guidance: From level Three

Project Declaration Pack

Objective: To give the examiner the context they need to understand what they are watching/grading.

In the following two examples we will use Disney's The Lion King, learners should come up with their own original story.

Short Film PDP Example:

PDP Example	
Short film or KEY Scenes:	SHORT FILM.
TITLE:	The Lion King
Genre:	Coming of age.
Feature Film Synopsis	<p>My film tells the story of Simba, a young lion who is meant to become the king of his homeland. His life changes completely when his jealous uncle Scar tricks him and his father into a dangerous stampede. Simba escapes, but his father is killed, and Simba believes it's his fault. Feeling guilty, he runs away and grows up far from home.</p> <p>As he gets older, Simba meets new friends who help him find the courage to return and face his past. He goes back to challenge Scar and take back his kingdom, bringing peace to his land.</p>

Key Scenes PDP Example:

PDP Example	
Short film or KEY Scenes:	KEY SCENES.
TITLE:	The Lion King
Genre:	Coming of age.
Feature Film Synopsis	<p>My film tells the story of Simba, a young lion who is meant to become the king of his homeland. His life changes completely when his jealous uncle Scar tricks him and his father into a dangerous stampede. Simba escapes, but his father is killed, and Simba believes it's his fault. Feeling guilty, he runs away and grows up far from home.</p> <p>As he gets older, Simba meets new friends who help him find the courage to return and face his past. He goes back to challenge Scar and take back his kingdom, bringing peace to his land.</p>
KEY Scene(s):	<p>Scene 1: Later in my film, there is a scene where Simba talks with his old friend Nala, who reminds him of his responsibilities and encourages him to return home. This conversation becomes the turning point where Simba confronts his fears and guilt and decides to leave his life in exile to reclaim his kingdom. This is the scene I have filmed, it's important because it marks the moment Simba shifts from running away from his past to actively facing it, setting the course for the rest of the story</p> <p>Scene 2: (Goes here).</p> <p>Scene 3: (Goes here).</p>

Production Plan

Why Do We Need a Production Plan?

For a teacher, the best way to think of a Production Plan is like a recipe for a meal or a game plan for a sports match. You would never start cooking a complex dish without a recipe, and a coach would never start a big match without a plan. It's the same for filmmaking.

A Production Plan is not just "paperwork"; it is the director's essential blueprint. It helps the learner:

- Think through every detail before the pressure of the filming day.
- Make sure they don't forget to film any important shots.
- Communicate their vision clearly to their actors and any friends helping them.

For Grade 6, the Production Plan consists of two key documents: a Shot List and a Storyboard. This means the learner will need both, these will be uploaded at the point of examination.

The Shot List (The "To-Do List")

- **What it is:** A Shot List is a detailed, written checklist of every single shot the learner plans to film for their project. It's organised scene by scene.
- **How it works:** The learner goes through their script and writes down each new camera setup they will need. This forces them to think about how they will visually construct each scene.

The Storyboard (The "Comic Book" Version)

- **What it is:** A Storyboard is a visual version of the plan. It's a series of pictures that show what each shot will look like, helping the director to plan the composition and flow of a scene.
- **What "for Key Sequences" means:** For this grade, the learner does not need to create a storyboard for their entire 5-10 minute film. They should choose the most important, complex, or visual parts of their film and create a storyboard for just those "key sequences."
 - Practical Examples: This might be a fast-paced action sequence, a silent scene of visual storytelling, or the film's dramatic opening.
- **How to Create It:** As in previous grades, the learner has two practical options:
 - The Photographic Storyboard: Taking still photos with a phone or camera to plan out the real shots in the real location.
 - The AI-Generated Storyboard: Using an AI image generator to create pictures based on their detailed descriptions of each shot.

Conclusion for the Teacher:

The Shot List is the detailed "what" (what shots will I film?), while the Storyboard is the visual "how" (how will those shots look?). Together, they form a production plan that is the key to a smooth, organised, and successful shoot ... and it forces learners to not wing it on the day of their shoot!

Casting

For casting, ensure learners cast actors age-appropriately (a 12-year-old plays a young teen, not a parent). This "playing age" casting creates naturalism and leads to stronger, more believable performances.

Communicating Genre with a low budget

The requirement to use 'Advanced' shots and movements is designed to encourage creativity, not expensive equipment. Learners should be reminded that they are assessed on the creativity and effectiveness of the shot, not on the gear used to achieve it.

- For a complete list of practical, zero-budget techniques, please refer to the "A Guide to Advanced Cinematography with Zero Budget" document.
- The key is that the learner's choices must be motivated by their genre. For example, for a Thriller, they could use a Dutch Angle to create unease. For a Comedy, they might use the "Wheelchair Dolly" technique to smoothly track a character who is comically sneaking around.

The Director's Analytical Commentary

This isn't a memory test; it's a test of intent. It's the learner's chance to prove they made deliberate, conscious choices.

- **How to Prepare:** Encourage your learner to keep notes during their production process. Before recording, they should prepare bullet-point answers for each of the five prompts. This will allow them to present a clear, confident, and well-structured analysis of their own work. The learner can read from their own notes when providing their Directors Analytical Commentary.

Intentional Lighting

Theatre Lighting:

- Designed to light the whole stage so the audience can see the actors clearly from a distance.
- Lights are often fixed, with general washes and spotlights to create mood across the space.
- Lighting states change to indicate time of day, mood, or location in broad strokes.
- The audience sees everything at once, so lighting is often consistent across the whole stage picture.

Film Lighting:

- Designed to light only what the camera sees, not the entire space.
- You can move lights closer to the actor or subject since the audience never sees outside the frame.
- Small light sources (lamps, torches) can create dramatic effects, shaping mood with shadows and highlights.
- Lighting can be adjusted shot by shot, allowing precise control over the mood and storytelling in each frame.

How to Think About It

Focus on the Frame, Not the Room: Instead of lighting an entire space, think about what the camera sees and light only that area.

Mood and Story First: Ask, What mood am I creating? How should the audience feel when watching this shot?

Use Shadows and Directional Light: Instead of flattening the actor with even light, experiment with side lighting, backlighting, or shadows for a cinematic look.

How to Execute It (Using Theatre Knowledge)

Use practicals like lamps and torches to mimic warm or cool stage lighting, but focus them within the camera's frame.

Think about angles: a torch held below the face creates a horror effect (like a stage gobo creating mood), while a soft light from the side can add depth.

Use bouncing and blocking: similar to how you might gel lights or use barn doors in theatre, bounce torchlight off white paper for softness or block parts of light with folders to shape shadows.

Use colour intentionally: theatre gels translate to film as sweet wrappers or coloured plastic, but now you only need to light your subject, not the whole stage.

Key Takeaway

In theatre, you light for the audience in a room. In film, you light for the camera in a frame. Use your understanding of mood and storytelling from theatre lighting, but apply it specifically to what the camera sees.

Separate Sound Recording (for voice/dialogue)

Clear dialogue provides a clean canvas upon which the learner can creatively build their 'Layered Sound Design'. We can think of achieving good dialogue as a "Good", and "Best".

- **Good (The Baseline):** A great zero-budget trick is for the learner to use a smartphone as a microphone. Options include:
 - Placing a phone in each of actor's top pockets (or as close to their mouth as possible) when recording.
 - Hide a phone(s) on set (only if the actors are stationary in the scene).
 - Secure the phone to a boom-pole-like object, such as a broomstick handle, making sure the microphone points away from the boom operator. Then, have your makeshift boom operator capture each person's dialogue as they speak. (Search YouTube using terms like "how to use a boom pole for beginners" for visual guidance).
- **Best (Using External Mics):** If your school, business, or the learner has access to any kind of external microphone (e.g., a lapel mic or a shotgun mic), we strongly encourage its use.
- **Best (The Professional Workflow):** Once learners have captured their dialogue, suggest they try polishing it using free AI Speech Enhancement tools (like Adobe Podcast). This will help achieve a studio-quality professional standard.

Once dialogue has been captured separately, you can sync it up in the edit later.

Things to consider

Background noise: It's important to understand that the location you choose will affect how clean your dialogue recording is. Some learners will be filming in locations where it's difficult to ensure complete quiet - MN will be forgive background noise for this reason. However, learners should still do their best to minimise unnecessary noise where possible. Once dialogue has been captured separately, background sounds can be managed or reduced during editing, especially with the use of AI.

How to Sync Separate Audio

When learners record sound on a separate device (like a phone, lapel mic or boom mic), they face a new challenge: how to match the sound perfectly with the picture on their camera. The easiest way to do this is by creating a "sync point" at the start of every take.

- **The Simple Method: The Hand Clap**
 - i. Have them start recording on their camera and their separate audio device (e.g., smartphone, lapel mic).
 - ii. Have an actor (or the director) stand in front of the camera where they can be clearly seen and heard.
 - iii. Have them say the scene and take number (e.g., "Scene 1, Take 1").
 - iv. Then, have them perform one single, sharp, loud clap with their hands.
- **The Magic in the Edit:** Later, in the editing software, learners will have their video track and a separate audio track. On the video, they can scroll through frame-by-frame to find the exact moment the hands connect. On the audio track, they will see a large, sharp spike in the sound waveform from the loud clap. They can simply line up the visual "clap" with the audio "spike," and the entire clip will now be perfectly in sync.
- **Professional Terminology:** This technique is a simplified version of what professionals do with a **clapperboard** or **slate**. For a great visual guide, we recommend teachers or learners search on YouTube for terms like **"how to sync audio with a clap"** or **"using a clapperboard."**

Layered Sound Design

For a teacher new to filmmaking, sound can seem technical, but it's one of the most powerful tools for telling a story. We teach this through 'Layered Sound Design', which is a creative task done in post-production (after filming is complete). It simply means building the audio world of your film by blending at least three types of sound: specific sound effects, background ambient sound, and a musical score.

The Three Layers of Sound Design:

Layer 1: Diegetic Sound Effects (The "Action" Sounds)

- What they are: These are sounds caused by an action that the characters in the film can hear. They make the world feel real and interactive.
- Examples: A door creaking open, a phone ringing, footsteps on gravel.

Layer 2: Ambient Sound (The "Atmosphere")

- What it is: This is the background "atmosphere" or "room tone" of a location that tells the audience where they are.
- Examples: Distant traffic for a city apartment; birdsong and wind for a park; the quiet, electronic hum of a starship.

Layer 3: The Musical Score (The "Emotion")

- What it is: This is the non-diegetic music that only the audience can hear. Its job is to control the audience's emotions.

Practical Advice for Sourcing Sounds

This task is a zero-budget activity. There are many excellent websites that provide royalty-free music and sound effects for free. Encourage your learners to search online for "free sound effects" or "royalty-free music" to find resources like Pixabay, Freesound, or the YouTube Audio Library.

Putting It All Together: Two Examples

Example 1: A Tense Horror Scene

- Dialogue: "Hello? Is anyone there?"
- Layer 1 (Sound Effect): A sudden, sharp sound of a twig snapping off-screen.
- Layer 2 (Ambience): The quiet, eerie sound of wind blowing through trees.
- Layer 3 (Music): A low, unsettling musical drone begins to build suspense.

Example 2: A Sci-Fi Discovery Scene

- Dialogue: "What is it?"
- Layer 1 (Sound Effect): The soft, electronic bleep of the artefact as the astronaut touches it.
- Layer 2 (Ambience): The low, constant hum of the starship's life support systems.
- Layer 3 (Music): A sense of wonder is created by a slow, awe-inspiring orchestral score.