South Metro Showtime Video Competition

How to make a Short Film

Why make a short film?

There are really two different answers to this question, depending on what your role in this exercise is.

As a leader, you are no doubt looking for new ideas for programming that will keep your Troop members interested and involved. Filmmaking is something that your Scouts will find interesting and exciting. They may have played with filming their friends on a digital camera, phone or tablet, but to create a whole film, with them as the stars, will be something new, exciting and interesting for them. The process also caters for all the members in your Troop, whether they are the extroverted in front of camera type, or the more shy, technically minded ones. With a little bit of organization, you will find this an enjoyable and satisfying activity with an end result that can be shared by members and families for years to come.

For a Scout, new things, particularly technological ones, are generally interesting and exciting. It is a chance to feel a part of a completed project, and have it recorded for future pride and/or amusement. Without realizing it, the Scouts will need to use all of the skills they learn through their Scout training to pull all of this together. Teamwork, leadership, problem solving, learning new skills, all will be required along the way. By accident, there may be even a proficiency badge to earn such as the Art, Craft, Entertainer, Music, Performing Arts, Trade or Technology depending on what role the Scout has in making the film.

Upon completion of the film, you have the opportunity to possibly see the film shown as part of the production of South Metro Showtime, but if that doesn't work out, you at least have a great record of an activity that could be used for future AGM's, activity nights, recruitment activities or, at worst, for members to look back on with fondness in the future.

There are four steps to creating a movie. Each of these steps is described below. Steps One and Two can be performed within the one night at Scouts, while steps Three and Four, will require a night on their own, and sometimes, depending on how complex you wish you go, can include some weekend time as well. Use these steps to help create your program for the upcoming terms and give the Scouts something different, but still helping to achieve their proficiency badges.

Step One – The script

The script can be drawn from any idea that is suggested. Start with a brainstorm session, using a whiteboard, chalkboard, or some large sheets of paper. The Scouts can all throw ideas out, which are recorded for everyone to see. Make it clear that there are no bad ideas. Have a few of your own in mind to start the ball rolling and kick it along if ideas start to dry up. You will be surprised how one idea can lead to another. As time can be an issue with Scouts getting carried away, try to work out a theme that most of the Scouts seem to jump on early and run with it so that you have a target as quickly as possible.

If you're stuck for ideas, why not present the story of something funny that happened on your last camp, an old Scout yarn or tell us a story about going on a journey.

Step Two - Characters and Staging

Once you have your script organized, create a basic time line of what is to happen and work out who will be required, and what scenes you may need to create.

Example:

- Scout arrives at camp
- Scout meets characters A, B, C, D
- Scout goes to river with characters
- Scout gets lost
- Scout meets characters E, F, G
- Scout finds way back home
- Scout meets everyone at the end and everyone is happy.

Plotting out how the story is to progress then allows you to work out what the Scouts will be doing in the different scenes, and you can begin to think about what costumes, props and staging you may need to create the different environments. Ask the Scouts what skills they may have which will help the production, as not everyone is likely to be keen to jump in front of a camera. If you know some of your Scouts like building things or coming up with costumes, task them to source a costume or build a prop in the weeks between planning and filming to get them involved.

Step Three - Filming

Now the fun begins! Before you even turn the camera on, go through what is required with the Scouts and check that everyone has been able to source what they require. Nothing can cause filming to grind to a halt like missing props, sets or costumes. Ideally to minimize or attempt to remove time editing the footage, start filming the scene and film shots as you go. Depending on how your script functions this may not be possible or practical to film shot by shot, especially if the scenes jump around but if you are limited for time this could be a good option.

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PO Box 62, Dingley 3172
marketing@southmetroshowtime.org
www.southmetroshowtime.org

Have a leader or person not directly in charge of the video camera to check and make sure that everything and everyone is ready to go so you can roll straight into the next scene. Depending on if you have available leaders and space, try to get the Scouts involved in the next scene to be able to rehearse what they need to be doing so that you can put them straight in front of the camera when it's ready to go.

Step Four - Editing and Submitting

Editing can be a long process, but is greatly rewarding as you watch the story take shape. Windows users have access to Windows Movie Maker and Apple users have access to iMovie as part of the iLife suite as default software, but you or the Scouts may have access to other software at home or at school. Starting out, Movie Maker and iMovie are designed to be basic and easy to use for those of you who may not have worked no this sort of thing before. Some smartphone apps have video editing software as well that you may be able to explore if you have filmed on your phone.

Remember, this is designed to be a fun activity and we are not expecting overly complicated academy award winning editing, just do what you can and if you have a few tricks up your sleeve all the better!

Be sure to include the film title, your group name at the start of the video and put some credits at the end with everyone involved in the production.

Good luck, we can't wait to see what you can come up with!