

Lights, Camera, Action: Making Movies

5th
Grade



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Meet the Crew



Nothing gets done on set without a film crew, whether that's one guy with a handheld camera or dozens of people on a blockbuster film set. Many more people work behind the scenes after shooting is complete to bring the final movie together.

Y	A	Q	B	F	B	Y	F	O	K	N	X	Q	Y	A	H	A	M	J	C
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X	Y	A	R	K	U	F	R	T	P	E	A	P	E	H	E	I	N	S	P
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F	P	S	P	F	F	T	S	U	D	Q	S	B	S	S	O	E	U	G	A
Y	Y	T	E	D	I	C	C	Q	I	D	E	S	J	I	O	E	S	O	U
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F	G	D	H	I	X	D	O	H	V	G	A	F	F	E	R	M	X	J	F

★ Refer to the next page for the **WORD BANK**.

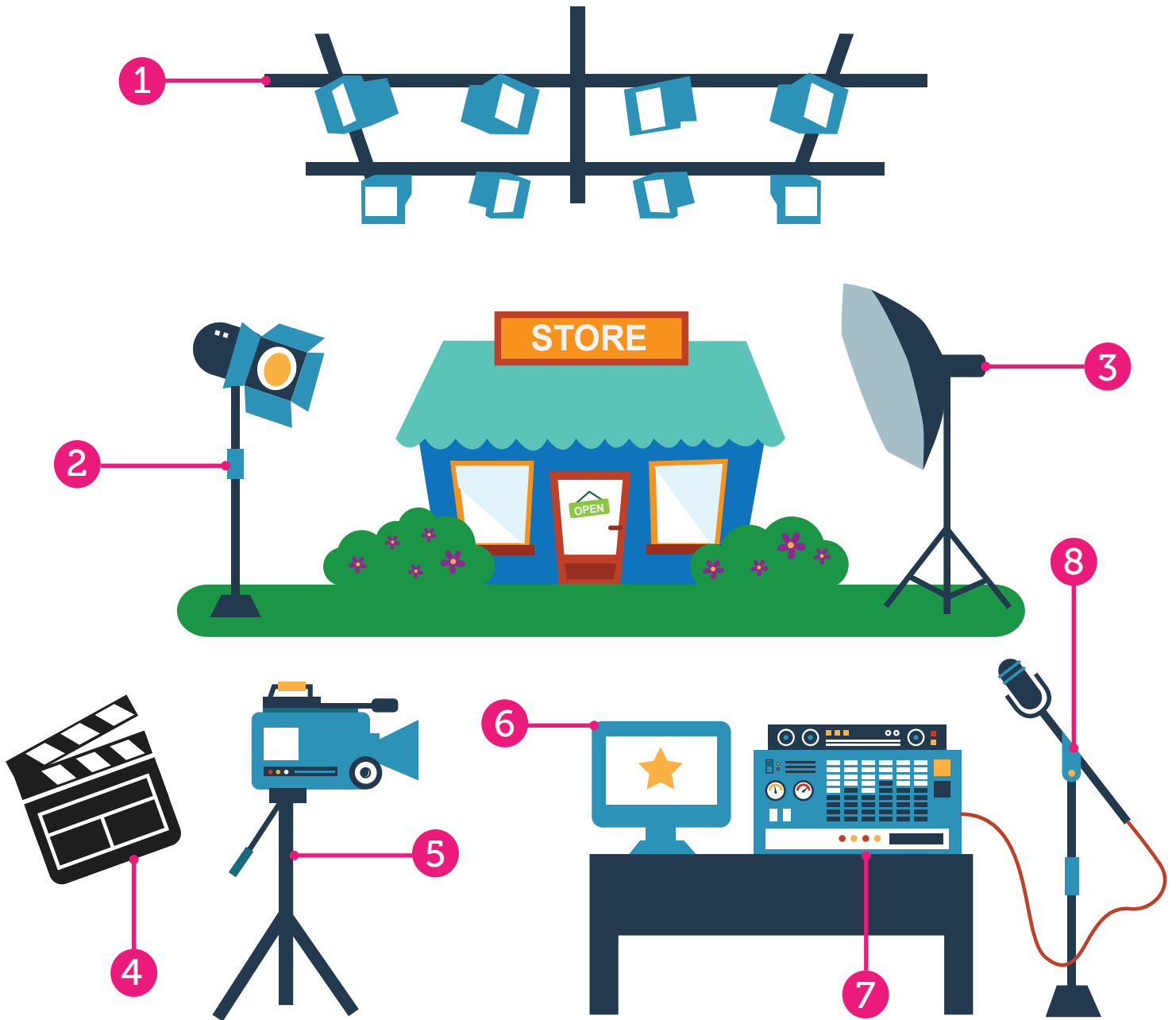
Word Bank

★ **TIP:** ← ↑ → ↓ ↙ ↘ ↖ ↗

- ▶ **Boom operator** – Works the boom microphone, a special microphone on a long pole that's held over the actors' heads so it won't get in the way of the shot.
- ▶ **Cinematographer** – Reviews the film and decides which shots to use.
- ▶ **Costume designer** – Designs and plans the costumes and clothes that the actors wear.
- ▶ **Director** – Oversees the entire creative process.
- ▶ **Director of photography (DP)** – In charge of the camera, including setting up all the shots and controlling the camera movements.
- ▶ **Editor** – Cuts up the film and pieces it together to make a final product.
- ▶ **Gaffer** – The set electrician, who's also in charge of lighting on set.
- ▶ **Key grip** – Supervises the lighting crew.
- ▶ **Producer** – In charge of making the movie happen, including overseeing legal issues, hiring the creative team, and funding or raising money for the movie.
- ▶ **Production assistant** – With many responsibilities, they help the production team and crew with everything from organizing scripts to arranging for meals for the staff.
- ▶ **Screenwriter** – Writes the script for the movie.
- ▶ **Script supervisor** – In charge of the script, including any changes made to the script.
- ▶ **Set designer** – Designs the sets for a movie.
- ▶ **Sound designer** – Creates the film's audio, including music and sound effects.



On the Set



1. Lightning grid
2. Spotlight
3. Diffuser
4. Clapperboard

5. Camera
6. Monitor
7. Sound recording equipment
8. Boom mic

.....

With the words labeled on the set, complete the crossword puzzle and learn more about a movie set from each of the clues.



Across



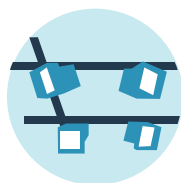
2. Device that is used to designate what is about to be filmed. A slate has written information about the take, and a clapstick is used to make sure the sound and picture are aligned for that take. After the arm, or clapstick, snaps down, the director yells, "Action!" and filming begins.



3. Location where the movie is filmed. It could be an actual location or built from scratch to serve as an artificial environment for some or all of the movie scenes to take place.



4. Screen that the film crew uses to see what's being filmed.



7. Specially constructed grouping of lights used to illuminate the set. It is usually suspended from the ceiling of the set and can be adjusted to create the right lighting for a scene.

Down



1. The collection of different tools and gadgets used to capture all of the different sounds that need to be recorded as part of the movie.



5. Very bright light that is used to highlight the focus of the scene.



6. Tool that enables the movie to be recorded.



8. A special microphone on a long pole that's held over the actors' heads so it won't get in the way of the shot.

Improvisation Game



A must for any aspiring actor, improv games are great fun for anyone who wants to exercise their reflexes and think on their feet. This improv activity is used to help actors learn how to recover if another actor forgets their lines or goes off script, but it's also an exciting game that requires zero prep and gets the creative juices flowing.

What You Need:

6 or more players

What You Do:

Gather your actors and select two players to start. Have the other participants come up with a setting or scenario for the two players.

The two selected players then act out the scene as they wish, but may only address each other in questions. If a player answers in a statement or takes longer than five seconds to respond, the scene restarts with a new player in his place. This continues until everyone has had a turn.

Here are some examples of themes and dialogue to get you started:

Theme: Waiting at a Bus Stop

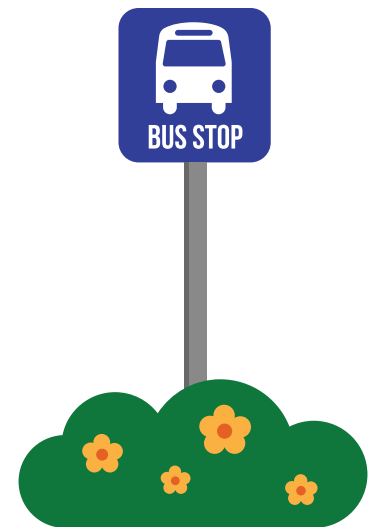
Player 1: Is the bus always this late?

Player 2: Does it look like I know?

Player 1: Are you mad?

Player 2: Can't you tell?

and so on.



Theme: Blind Date

Player 1: Am I early?

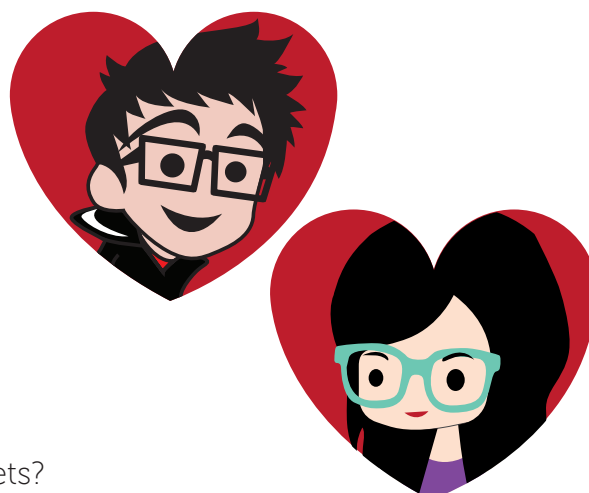
Player 2: Can you give me ten more minutes?

Player 1: Do we have that much time?

Player 2: Well, when does the show start?

Player 1: Aren't you the one who bought the tickets?

and so on.



Theme: Stuck in an Elevator

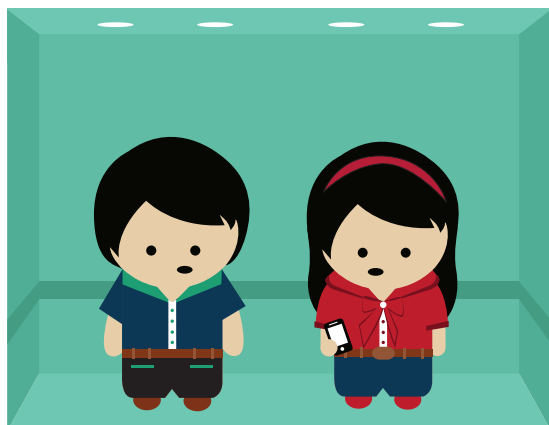
Player 1: Do you have a cell phone I could borrow?

Player 2: Are you calling the police or the fire department?

Player 1: Do you know the number of the pizza place down the street?

Player 2: Are you crazy?

Player 1: Do you think security will let the delivery guy into the building?



Other Theme Ideas: Late for School, Surfing, Walking the Dog, At the Dentist's, On the Moon, Trying to Get a Piece of Cake

Remember that in improvisation, there aren't any winners or losers. There are no right and wrong answers, and there is no penalty for "messing up." So go wild!

Get Behind the Lens!



When the camerawork in a movie is done well, you probably don't even notice most of it. But in fact, the way shots are framed—or how the camera is positioned—helps to tell the story, make it understandable, and convey a mood. Let's go over the different kinds of camera angles filmmakers use most often—then you can try it out yourself!

1

Extreme long shot

A faraway view, usually of scenery. This is often used as the establishing shot of a scene, which tells the audience where it's taking place.

2

Long shot

The entire body of a person can be seen

3

Medium shot

The person's body from the torso up can be seen

4

Close-up

A zoom in on a person's face

5

Extreme close-up

A very tight zoom in, such as just on someone's eye

6

Bird's-eye view

A view from very high above, as from a flying bird's perspective

7

High angle

A view from overhead

8

Eye level

An ordinary perspective, as if you were there on the scene, observing in person

9

Low angle

Below eye level, looking up

10

Canted

A tilted view of the scene that suggests imbalance and instability. It may be a visual cue that there's something amiss in the scene, as in a horror flick.

Camera Angle Match-Up

For each picture, write the number for the matching camera angle.





















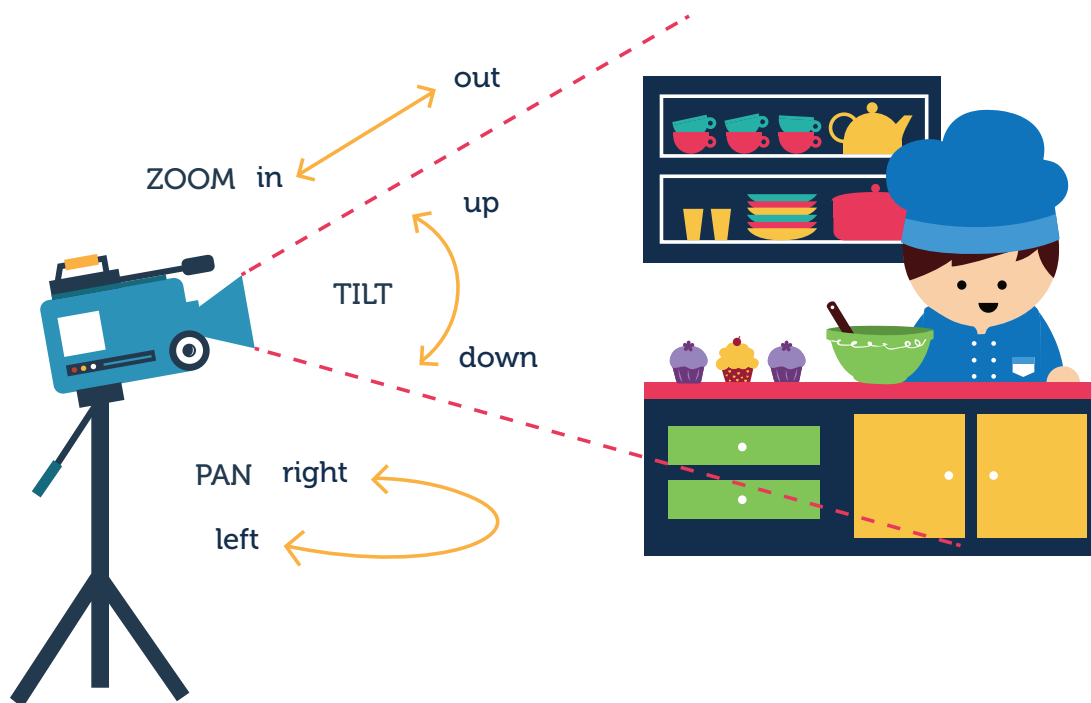
- 1 Canted
- 2 Low angle
- 3 Long shot
- 4 Extreme close-up
- 5 Eye level
- 6 Bird's-eye view
- 7 Medium shot
- 8 Extreme long shot
- 9 Close-up
- 10 High angle

Now that you know all about camera frames and angles, are you up for the challenge of doing it yourself? Grab your smartphone or ask a grown-up to borrow a smartphone or video camera. Get a shot from each of the perspectives above.

Do You See What I See?

Just like camera frames and angles, camera movements play a part in storytelling. There are many ways a camera can move. Here are the main ones:

- a. **Pan** – The camera moves horizontally, sometimes to keep a moving object in the picture.
- b. **Tilt** – The camera moves vertically, like you're scanning someone from head to toe.
- c. **Tracking** – Also called a dolly shot, the camera follows a moving figure. If the camera needs to cover a big distance, a track is built and the camera runs along it—hence the name tracking shot. The camera may also be mounted to something moving, like a car.
- d. **Handheld** – Exactly what it sounds like, this shot requires that the camera be held in the hand. As you can imagine, the camerawork might be a little unsteady with some shaking, but the effect is that the scene feels very real and immediate.
- e. **Steadicam** – A fairly new innovation, a Steadicam is a camera held in a harness worn by the camera operator. This device lets the camera operator move around more freely, capturing shots much more easily without any of the shaking you see from handheld shots.
- f. **Crane shot** – The camera is attached to a crane to allow for free range of motion: it can move in any direction, swoop in on action, or move diagonally out of it.
- g. **Aerial** – Usually taken from a helicopter, aerial shots enjoy great flexibility: it can go anywhere, keep up with anything, move in and out of a scene, and give a feeling of exhilaration and action.



h. Zoom – As the camera zooms in, you get closer to a subject. As it zooms out, you get farther away. This is accomplished with zoom lenses, which can take you closer even as you stay in place.

i. The Hitchcock Zoom – Also known as the Dolly Zoom, the famous horror movie director, Alfred Hitchcock, invented this neat trick to use in his film, *Vertigo*. As the camera moves toward the subject, it is simultaneously zooming out, keeping the subject in place while distorting the background. See if you can catch it in the movies *Jaws*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Ghostbusters*, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Equipped with this cool bag of camera tricks, you're ready to tell your own story. Write a short story that incorporates **four** of the camera techniques described above. For example, you might write, "Our story begins in Los Angeles as we sweep over the iconic hilltop Hollywood sign from the air." In this case, the reader can see herself flying over the sign in an *aerial shot*!



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Anatomy of a Screenplay

The screenplay, or script, is where a movie is born. It contains almost everything the actors and film crew need to bring the movie to life. What the actors say, what they do, how the camera moves, what the setting looks like—all this is in the screenplay.

If you've ever read a play, a screenplay will look familiar. Take a peek at an excerpt from the screenplay of *His Girl Friday*, written by Charles Lederer.



FADE IN: INT. ANTEROOM CLOSE SHOT SWITCHBOARD

Two telephone operators sit at switchboard busy plugging in and out answering calls.

1ST OPERATOR

Character

This is the Morning Post... The City Room? Just a moment, I'll connect you.
(plugs in call)

Dialogue

2ND OPERATOR

Character

Morning Post... Sports Department?
Just a moment --
(plugs in call)

Camera operating instructions

CAMERA PULLS BACK to disclose the rest of the anteroom. To Camera left are the elevators -- at back wall directly behind switchboard are chairs and a table for visitors.

Setting description

At a table sits an office boy, about fifteen, doing a crossword puzzle. The big clock on the back wall shows that it is nearly one o'clock.

Camera operating
instruction

CLOSE SHOT OFFICE BOY



as he bends over paper. We catch a glimpse of the squares of a crossword puzzle.

MED. SHOT

as a reporter comes out of the City Room, clanging the gate behind him. The office boy looks up.

Actor's
instruction

OFFICE BOY

What's a seven-letter word for --?

REPORTER

Don't ask me! If I knew any seven-letter words, I'd be something better than a reporter!

He catches a glimpse of the far elevator going down.

REPORTER

Hey! Down! Down!

MED. SHOT ELEVATORS

as reporter runs into the closed elevator door and pounds on it. It comes back, the door opens, and he gets in. The door closes. The near elevator comes up and discharges Hildy Johnson and Bruce Baldwin. Bruce carries an umbrella and wears a raincoat.



MED. CLOSE SHOT TABLE

office boy looking over his puzzle as
Hildy and Bruce come into the scene.

HILDY

(with a smile)

Hello, Skinny. Remember me?

OFFICE BOY

(looks up; then a
glowing smile)

Hildy Johnson!

CLOSE SHOT SWITCHBOARD

Hildy approaches the switchboard.

HILDY

(to operator)

Hello, Maisie.

The first operator looks up.

MAISIE

Hello -- Hildy! You coming back?

HILDY

No, just visiting.

Tell me, is the lord
of the universe in today?



MAISIE

He is -- and in a very bad humor. I think somebody stole one of his crown jewels. Shall I announce you?

HILDY

No, never mind -- I'll blow my own trumpet.

THREE SHOT BRUCE, HILDY AND OPERATOR

Hildy turns to Bruce.

HILDY

I won't be more than ten minutes, I promise you.

BRUCE

Even ten minutes is a long time to be away from you.



Want to see this script in action?
Just go to https://archive.org/details/his_girl_friday.



Think you've got a screenplay in you? Conjure up your own tale, use an event from your life or the life of someone you know, or even borrow a section from your favorite book. Once you have an idea for a story, you can write your very own screenplay! Make sure to include these elements: character names, dialogue, setting description, actor instructions, and camera operating instructions.

A large rectangular area with a dotted teal border, containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



You now have a screenplay on your hands that you want to turn into a movie. But where to start? Run a search online or at a library to see how screenwriters go about getting their words made into a movie. Write about the next steps you'd need to take on the back of this sheet.

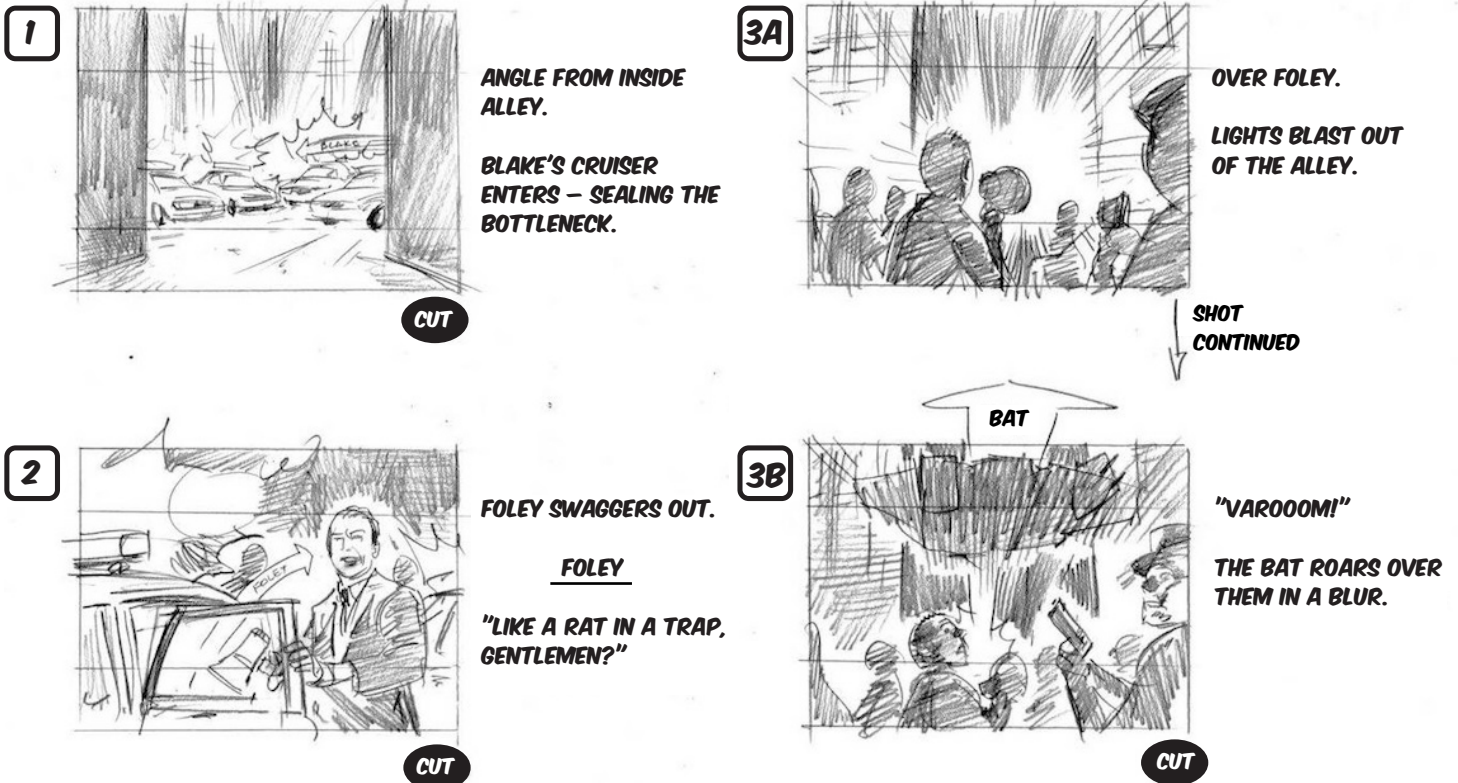
Storyboard It!

Once you've got your screenplay, you can start to visualize it with a storyboard. Think of it as a comic strip, with each panel of a storyboard moving the action along. Check out the awesome storyboard below from the movie *The Dark Knight Rises*. Look for mentions of the camera angle, dialogue, and explanations for how the action should unfold.

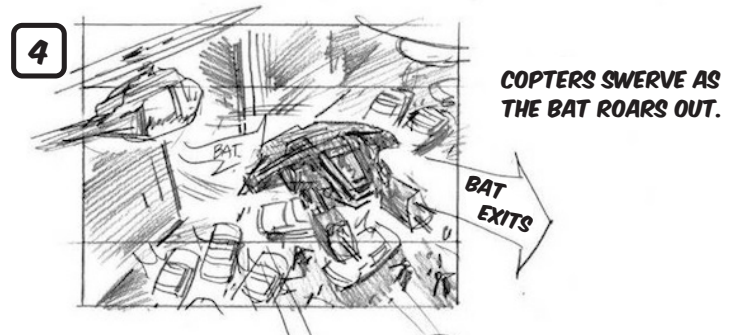
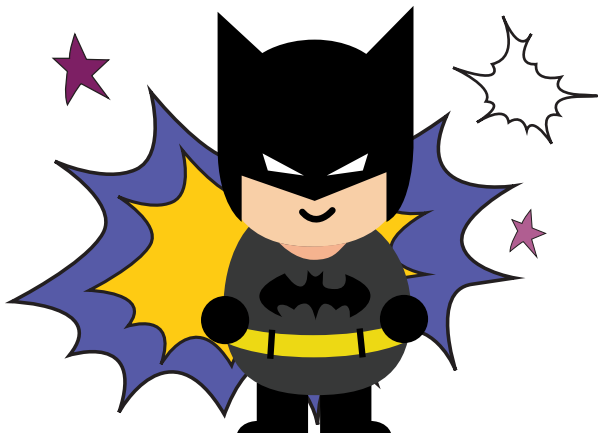
Director: Christopher Nolan

Storyboard Artist: Gabriel Hardman

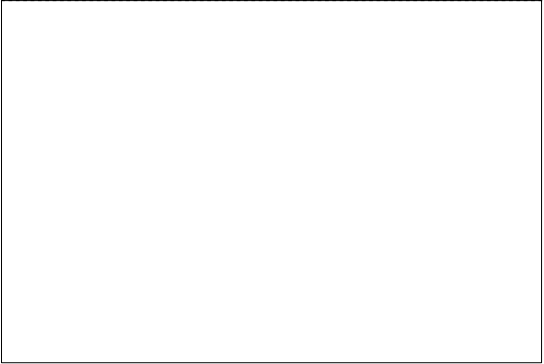
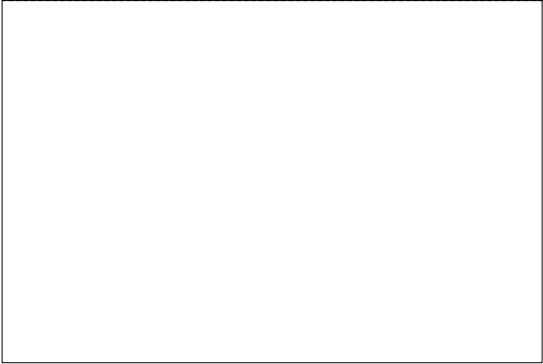
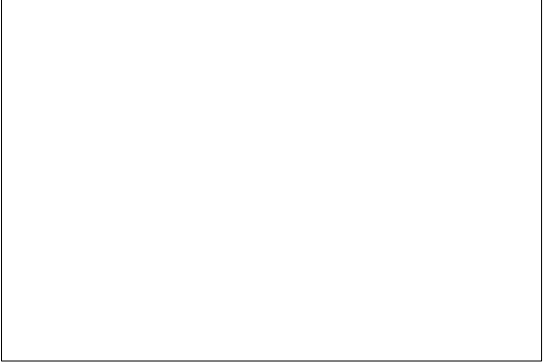
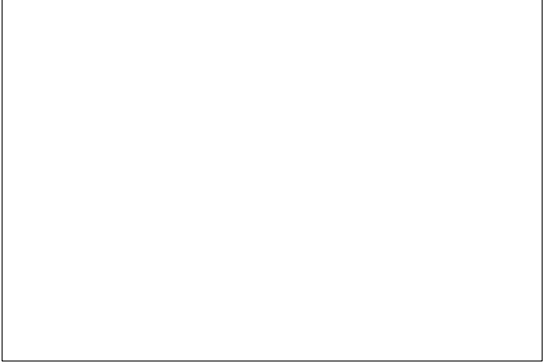
59



60



Now it's your turn to take over the action! Give a portion of the screenplay you've written some visuals with this blank storyboard template. Make each frame show a change in action and write any dialogue or descriptions below.

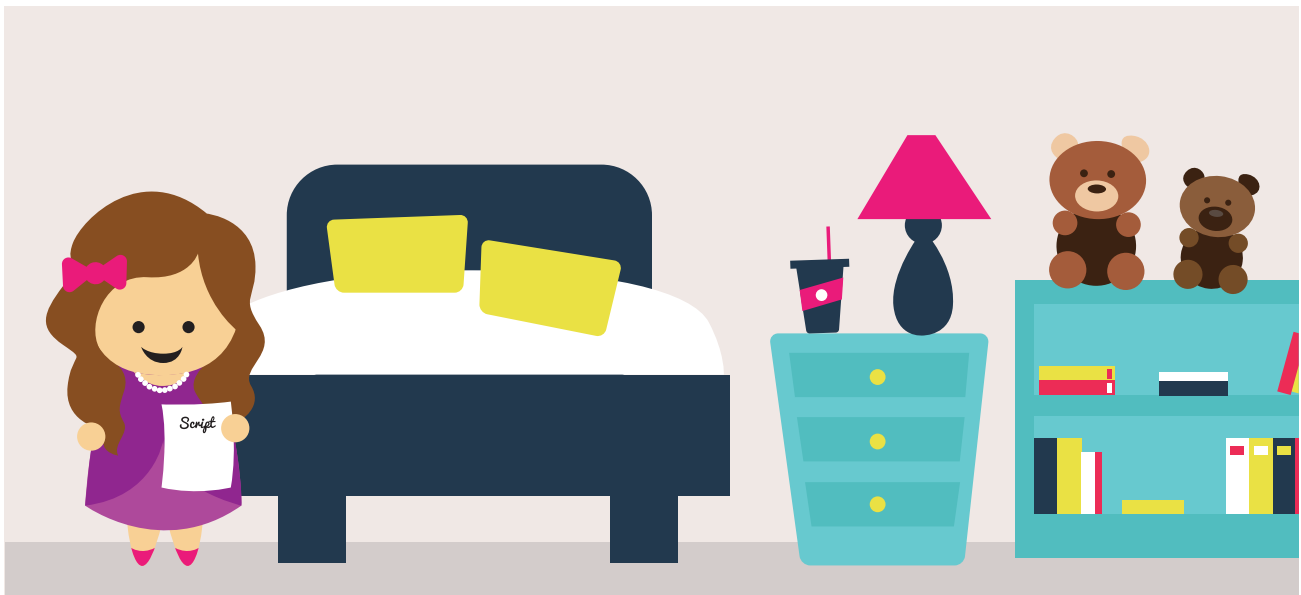
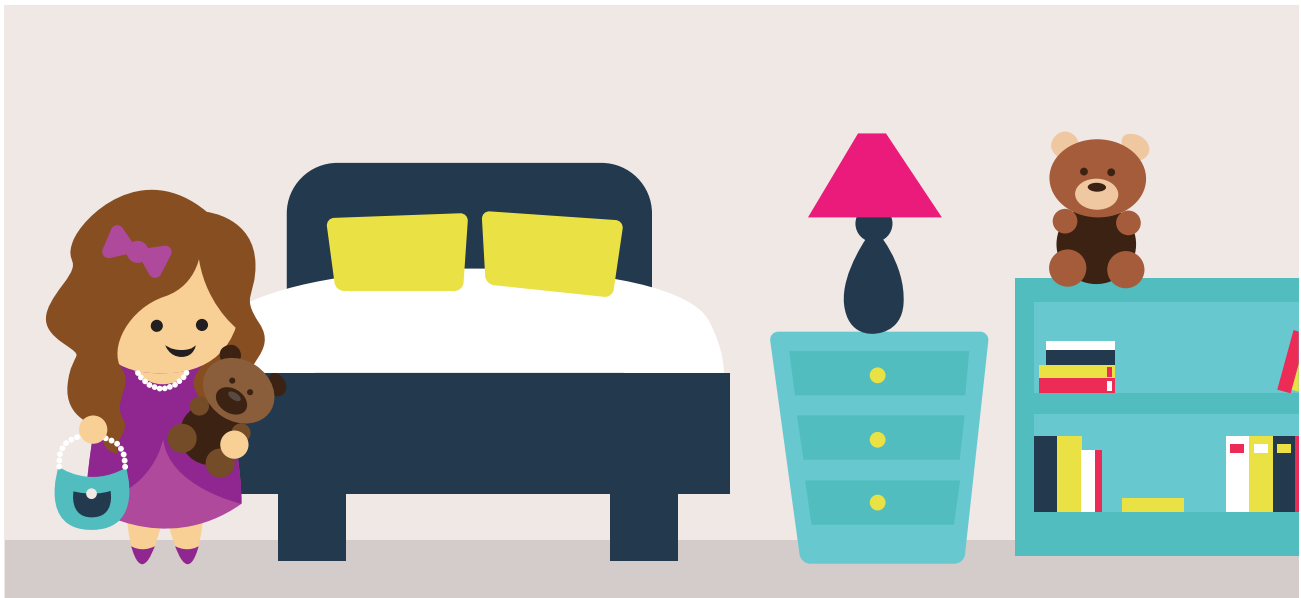
	
	
	

Spot the Goofs!



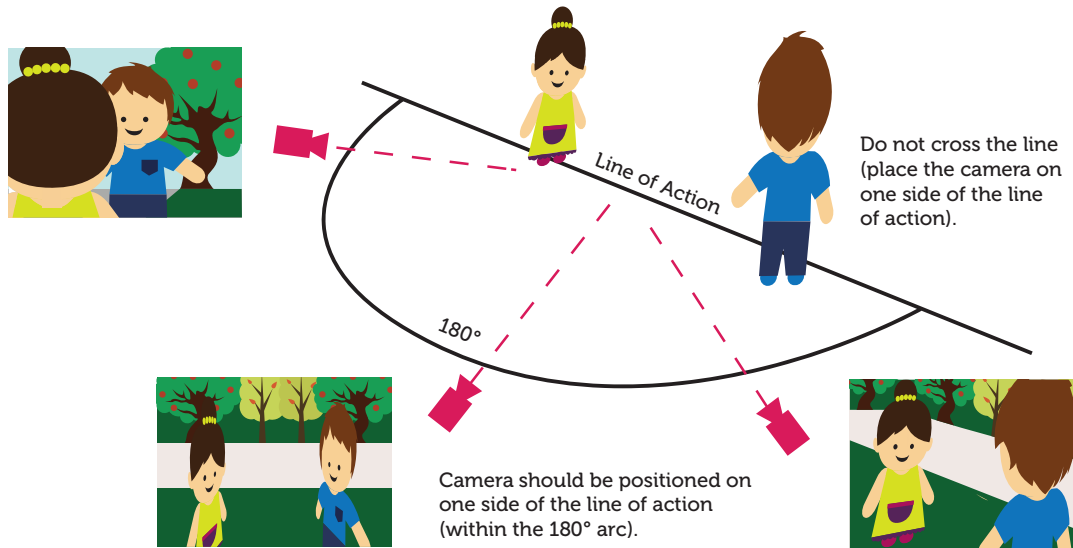
If you're a sharp-eyed movie watcher, you've probably noticed little errors like a character drinking from a half-empty glass one moment and the next moment ... the glass is full! Commonly called goofs, these tiny mistakes are officially named continuity errors and happen in between takes. It's the job of the script supervisor to make sure that when the camera pauses between takes, things on the set are put back in a way that makes sense, including everything from props (like water glasses) and lighting to actors' hair, makeup, and costumes.

Now, see if you've got what it takes to be a script supervisor. The image on top is from the first take, and now the director wants to do a second take. Things have gotten shifted around, and it's your job to spot the differences. Circle all the ones you can find!



You've Crossed the Line!

The best camerawork is the kind that tells the story clearly and lets you feel like you're right in the middle of the action. That's why filmmakers usually stick to the 180-degree rule, which states that the cameras should not cross the line of action.

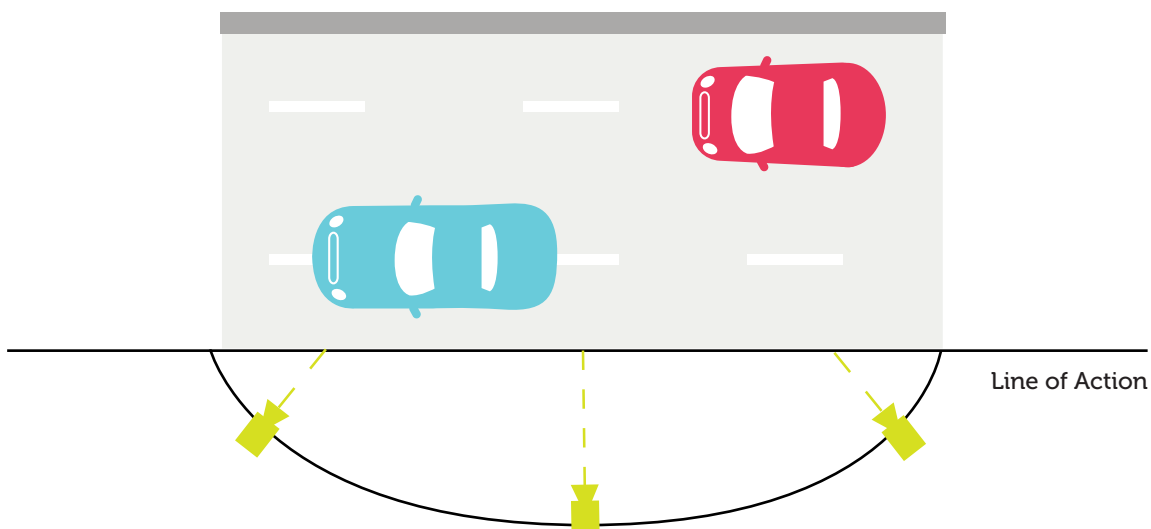


Line of action: An invisible line connecting two actors onscreen. It's a 180-degree angle, which, as you may recall from math, is just a straight line.

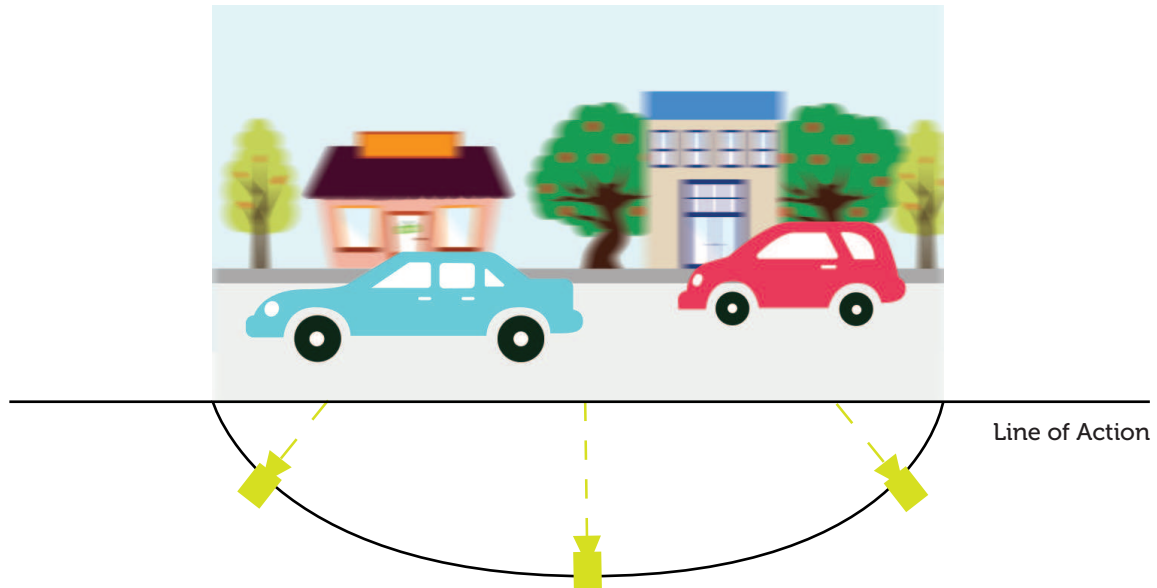
Notice how these two characters are always on the same side of the screen, even when filmed from three different angles. The boy in blue is always on the right side of the screen.

What the 180-degree rule does:

Here's an example. Imagine a car chase scene in a movie. Two cars are moving at high speed, one chasing the other. Once the director has established the shot, she can use the 180-degree rule to help the audience follow what's happening.



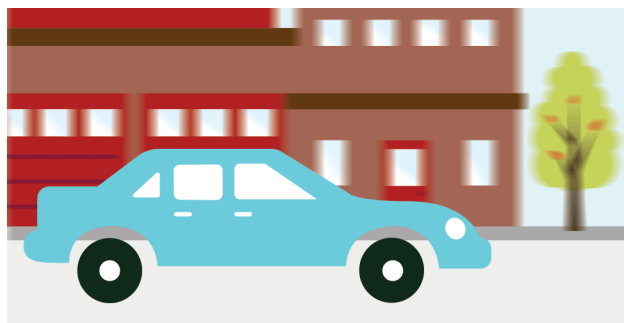
From the side, you'd see something like this:



Imagine if the director started filming on one side of the line of action...



And then jumped to the other side of the line.



It looks like the two cars are about to drive into each other! To show that the cars are driving in the same direction, one chasing the other, the camera must never cross the line of action.

Try It!

With your smartphone or video camera, film two people talking for a minute or two. Then, turn off the camera, cross the line of action, and start filming again.

When you watch what you've filmed, what do you notice about the action? Now that you've tried it, why do you think filmmakers stick to the 180-degree rule?

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Can you think of a case where you might want to break that rule?

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Freeze Theater



Now that you know about all the different roles on set, are you up for a game that lets you be the director, actor, and impromptu screenwriter all at once? Then grab a few of your friends or family members and play a round of freeze theater!

What You Need:

- ☐ 3 or more teammates
- ☐ Ample floor space
- ☐ Props such as pillows, chairs, books—anything close at hand!



What You Need:

1. To start, put on your creative hat: since freeze theater is a form of improvisation, or improv, all the action and dialogue is spontaneous!
2. Select a volunteer and give him a task to act out. You can make it simple—like washing the car, brushing your teeth, or playing a sport—or complex, like running through the sprinklers or pushing a shopping cart with a bad wheel around a grocery store. He'll have to come up with the dialogue to make the audience understand the scene.
3. Everyone watches the performance for a minute, then whoever wants to can shout, "Freeze!" The actor freezes, and the person who froze him rearranges him into a new position for a new activity. The scene then picks up again with both people acting.
4. The two actors continue until someone else yells, "Freeze!" and taps one of the frozen actors on the shoulder. The actor leaves the scene as the person who froze the action joins it, assuming the same position. The new actor must provide a line or a new direction for the scene.
5. Continue until everyone has had a turn, then create a grand finale by having everyone join the scene one by one. You could be the director or select another player to direct this final scene. Make it the wackiest one yet, like a disco dance contest or clowns piling into a clown car!

You Be the Judge!



Armed with all this knowledge about cinema, you're ready to take on the coveted—not to mention fun—role of a movie critic. Choose any movie you like, preferably one you haven't seen before, and score each element of the film. Make sure to take notes while watching so you can refer to them later. Then, average your scores to get a final rating and you're on your way to becoming the next Roger Ebert!

Film Title:

Year:

Director:

Screenwriter:

Producer:

Composer:

Cinematographer:

Set Designer:

Costume Designer:

Main Actors:



Two Thumbs Up!

- Roger Ebert is likely the most famous American movie critic ever.
- With his TV show co-host, Gene Siskel, Ebert trademarked the term "Two Thumbs Up," bestowed upon a movie that they both like.
- He had a staggering 46-year career, from 1967 to his passing in 2013. Some estimate he has reviewed more than ten-thousand movies!
- Not only was he the first film critic to win the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, but he also has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



Tip: Find the above info in the credits at the end of the movie or on IMDb.com!

Background music
and sound

Notes:

Score

/5

Camera angles and zoom

Notes:

Score


/5

Color, shadows, and lighting	Notes:	Score /5
Scenery, setting, and costumes	Notes:	Score /5
Screenplay: dialogue and word choice	Notes:	Score /5
Acting: actors' facial expressions, movement, etc.	Notes:	Score /5

To get your rating for the overall film, add up your scores for each component and divide it by seven. Then color in the stars!

Final Score _____ /5





Great job!

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Answer Sheets

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Meet the Crew



Y	A	Q	B	F	B	Y	F	O	K	N	X	Q	Y	A	H	A	M	J	C
Q	C	D	C	U	Q	H	S	E	T	D	E	S	I	G	N	E	R	Q	I
Q	S	E	X	D	N	P	R	O	T	A	R	E	P	O	M	O	O	B	N
J	R	C	P	U	D	A	A	Q	C	B	A	O	M	E	T	E	Q	D	E
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T	W	L	H	I	J	G	R	V	G	X	U	K	D	P	X	T	R	N	A
H	F	F	L	T	P	O	B	E	E	K	T	E	P	Y	B	I	V	T	T
P	R	O	D	U	C	T	I	O	N	A	S	S	I	S	T	A	N	T	O
G	Z	L	C	L	B	O	S	R	C	G	L	O	M	W	J	R	M	V	G
S	K	E	C	A	B	H	U	U	O	M	I	M	C	S	X	E	X	Y	R
Y	E	Y	Q	A	F	P	W	X	P	T	V	S	H	S	T	T	P	H	A
X	Y	A	R	K	U	F	R	T	P	E	A	P	E	H	E	I	N	S	P
Q	G	R	E	S	W	O	J	O	Z	Y	R	R	R	D	J	R	O	K	H
W	R	T	H	T	N	R	C	H	T	O	M	V	E	M	D	W	S	A	E
D	I	I	G	J	M	O	U	I	D	Z	F	H	I	P	E	N	Y	I	R
F	P	S	P	F	F	T	S	U	D	Q	S	B	S	S	O	E	U	G	A
Y	Y	T	E	D	I	C	C	Q	I	D	E	S	J	I	O	E	S	O	U
R	E	N	G	I	S	E	D	E	M	U	T	S	O	C	H	R	J	K	S
Q	K	Q	E	U	R	R	K	O	V	W	L	B	W	G	V	C	M	U	X
R	O	T	C	E	R	I	D	S	K	Q	C	M	L	X	K	S	I	R	Y
F	G	D	H	I	X	D	O	H	V	G	A	F	F	E	R	M	X	J	F

Answer Sheet

On the Set Crossword

With the words labeled on the set, complete the crossword puzzle and learn more about a movie set from each of the clues.



Answer Sheet

Camera Angle Match-Up

For each picture, write the number for the matching camera angle.



3



6



7



4



2



1



5



8



10



9

1 Canted

2 Low angle

3 Long shot

4 Extreme close-up

5 Eye level

6 Bird's-eye view

7 Medium shot

8 Extreme long shot

9 Close-up

10 High angle

Now that you know all about camera frames and angles, are you up for the challenge of doing it yourself? Grab your smartphone or ask a grown-up to borrow a smartphone or video camera. Get a shot from each of the perspectives above.

Answer Sheet

Spot the Goofs!



If you're a sharp-eyed movie watcher, you've probably noticed little errors like a character drinking from a half-empty glass one moment and the next moment ... the glass is full! Commonly called goofs, these tiny mistakes are officially named continuity errors and happen in between takes. It's the job of the script supervisor to make sure that when the camera pauses between takes, things on the set are put back in a way that makes sense, including everything from props (like water glasses) and lighting to actors' hair, makeup, and costumes.

Now, see if you've got what it takes to be a script supervisor. The image on top is from the first take, and now the director wants to do a second take. Things have gotten shifted around, and it's your job to spot the differences. Circle all the ones you can find!

