

Short Film Toolkit: Narrative

First step is to **develop a strong idea/narrative that will engage your audience.**

- It's worthwhile looking at other short films to see how different subjects are explored. [Short of the Week](#) has a large catalogue of films, including documentaries, that demonstrate a wide range of approaches.
- Your film could be documentary or fiction, live action or animation, or even comedy or science-fiction.
- Writing a short synopsis (otherwise known as a **treatment**) is a helpful means of planning your film. A treatment is a short document that describes the film in chronological order. This is not only the plot, but an account of what the film looks and sounds like.
- Once you are happy with the treatment, try drawing a **storyboard**. Storyboards encourage you to think visually and, more specifically, how a sequence of shots connect to one another to create meaning. You don't need to be able to draw to successfully storyboard. What matters is that you can sketch out the visual elements of each shot, as well as organising the shots into the best order. Try these [basic storyboarding templates](#).

Short Film Toolkit: Equipment

You don't need a degree in film, just a phone with a camera and some free editing software. In recent years many Hollywood filmmakers have rejected large scale production cameras in favour of iPhones; in 2015, Sean Baker directed *Tangerine* on an iPhone 5. Here are some **entry level equipment and tips**:

- **Camera:** A standard smart phone is more than sufficient for recording. It's worth looking at the recording features of the phone. For example, it's possible to lock the exposure on most devices so the camera doesn't automatically brighten or darken the image. These are some [helpful pointers](#).
- The quality of the image largely depends on the **location**. Try to find spaces that are well lit but be wary of shooting into light sources as this can be problematic.
- **Composition** is key. These [guidelines](#) show some of the best ways to produce visually engaging images.
- **Sound:** Bad sound recording is distracting and annoying. When conducting interviews, it is important to keep the microphone as close to the interviewee as possible (within a metre or so). Try to record in settings that have minimal extraneous noise and/or echo. A cheap and effective tip for recording voice over is to create a make-shift sound booth under a duvet.
- **Editing:** Most iPhones and iPads have iMovie, which is excellent entry-level editing software. For Android users there is Adobe Premiere Clip, which is also free. For those wishing to edit on a PC, Windows Movie Maker is an easy-to-use editing option.

Short Film Toolkit: Examples & Checklist

Examples

- This [video essay about video essays](#).
- [Island of Flowers](#) is a good example film that is about social inequalities (albeit longer than 3 minutes).
- Check out Shey Forbes-Taylor and Brian Walker's winning entry film [The Legacy of Sir Arthur Lewis](#)

Ready? Check the following before submitting!

- Minimum resolution 300dpi
- PDF file
- Do not include any logos, eg the LSE logo.
- Fill out the [submission form](#) and email to idea.showcase@lse.ac.uk.

