Unit 6: Film Making Process

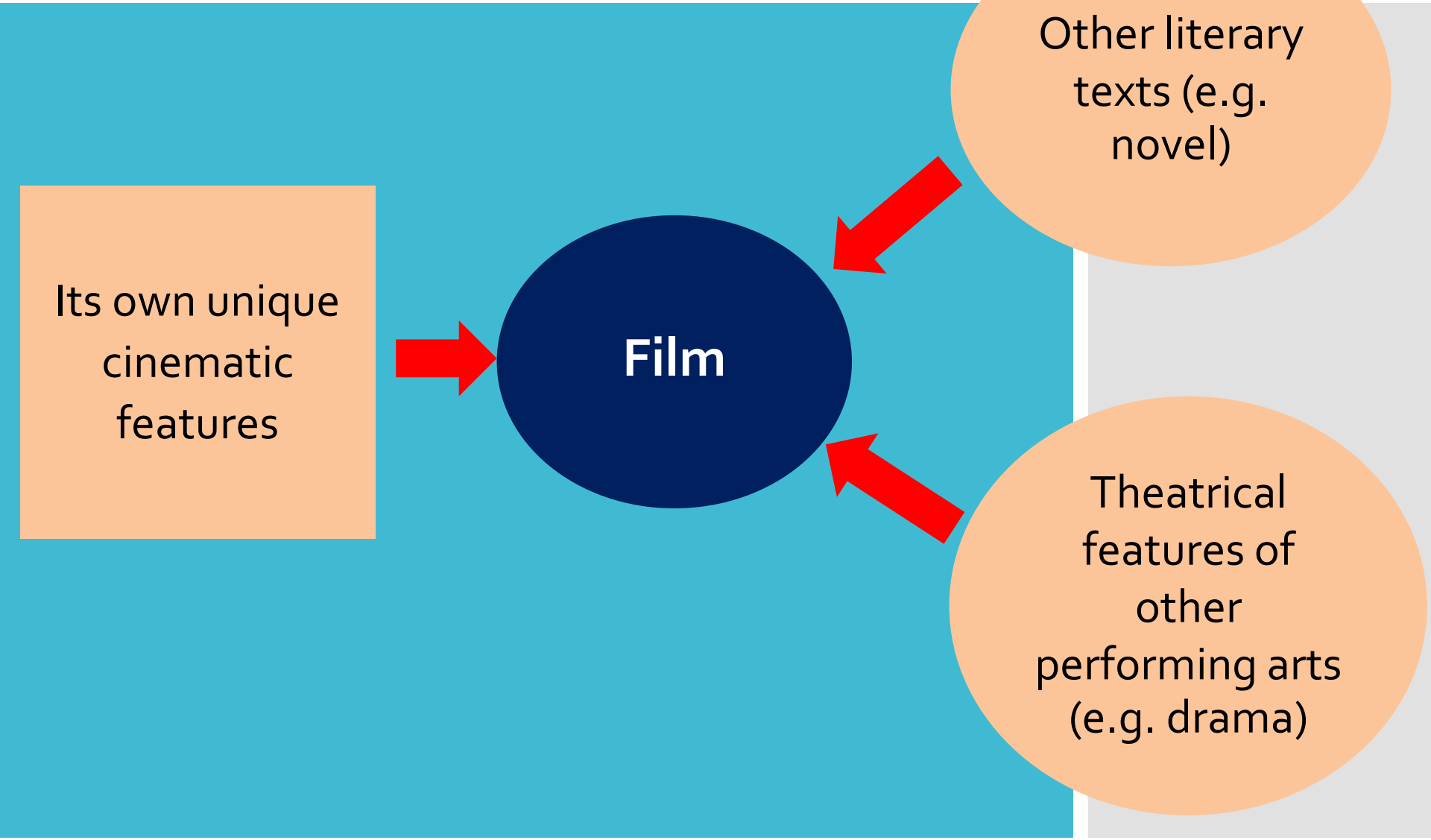
Topic

- What is film making?
- Film making process: pre-production, production, post-production
- Screenwriting
- Specific terms related to film themes

Objectives

- Be able to explain each step of film making.
- Be able to recall some important aspects in each step of film making.
- Be able to give expression on terms relating to themes and genres.
- Be able to make a short film with an application of devices learned.

What is film making?



Literary Aspects (as in novel/ short story)

- **Plot** → The story line, development of events, narrative sequences, and techniques e.g. foreshadowing, flashback)
- **Characters** → Protagonists, antagonists, villains and heroes, round and flat characters
- **Point of view** → Narrative voice and perspective
- **Setting** → Time and place where the story happens
- **Theme** → The subject and ideas explored
- **Genre/Sub-genre** → Comedy, tragedy, science fiction, horror, suspense, romance, dystopia, utopia,...

Dramatic / theatrical aspects (as in a play/ drama)

- **Visualization of action** → Movement of characters, stage,) setting (stage design)
- **Acting** → Actor's facial expression, actions and speeches)
- **Costumes** → Cloting of the characters
- **Make-up and hairdo**

Cinematic aspects

- **Farming/ mise-en-scences**
- **Camera angles** → High angle, straight-on, eye-level angle, or low angle shot
- **Camera position and distance** → Close-up, medium and long shots
- **Camera movements** → panning, tilt, rolling
- **Editing** → Continuity, editing, montage editing, cuts, fades

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Lighting, Visual Effects, Use of sound effects and music

Source: https://www.edb.gov.hk/

Film making process

Where does the inspiration come from and what you may think first to make your idea more concrete?

What kind of story?

Characters- how you set the characters and what characteristics of the characters)

Think of conflicts, so you have goal to reach and resolve

Plot- in which way the story will go?/ Main events

Any message you want to convey to audience (e.g. themes/ what you want the audience to learn from the film)

Pre- Production

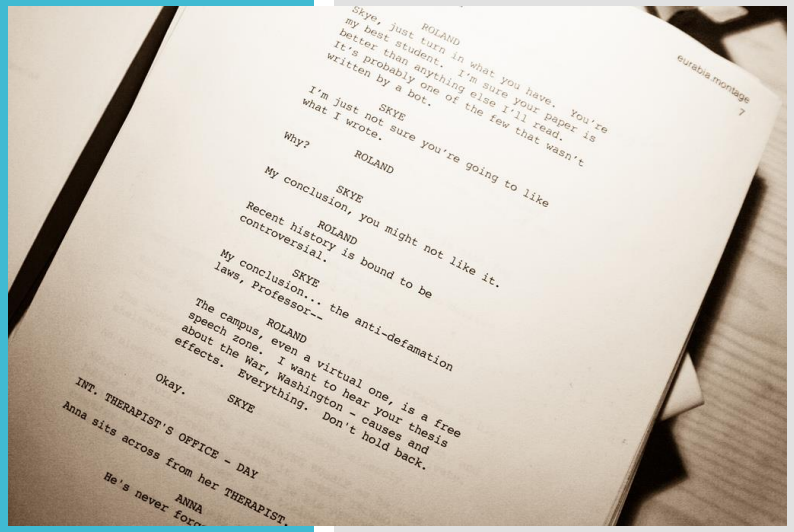
Step 1 Inspiration/ Ideas

- ✓ Short story
- ✓ Novel
- ✓ Poems
- ✓ Events in real world and history
- ✓ Imagination/ even your dream!
- ✓ True story of someone's life

Pre- Production

Step 2 The Script

The script is where you will put down the story, setting, and dialogue in linear form.



The importance of the script

It helps the rest of the film making team know what is going to happen in the film

- leading the actors who play the film to improvise, rehearse and play on the set
- helping the cinematic design team to design the cinematic effects

Screenwriting

Screenwriting can be called scriptwriting. It is the art and craft of writing scripts for mass media such as feature films, television productions or video games.

Based on a True Story.

Screenwriter

Screenwriter write and develop screenplay for films.

Where the inspiration come from?

Based on a True Story.

A Script

A script is a document that outlines every aural, visual, behavioral, and lingual element required to tell a story.

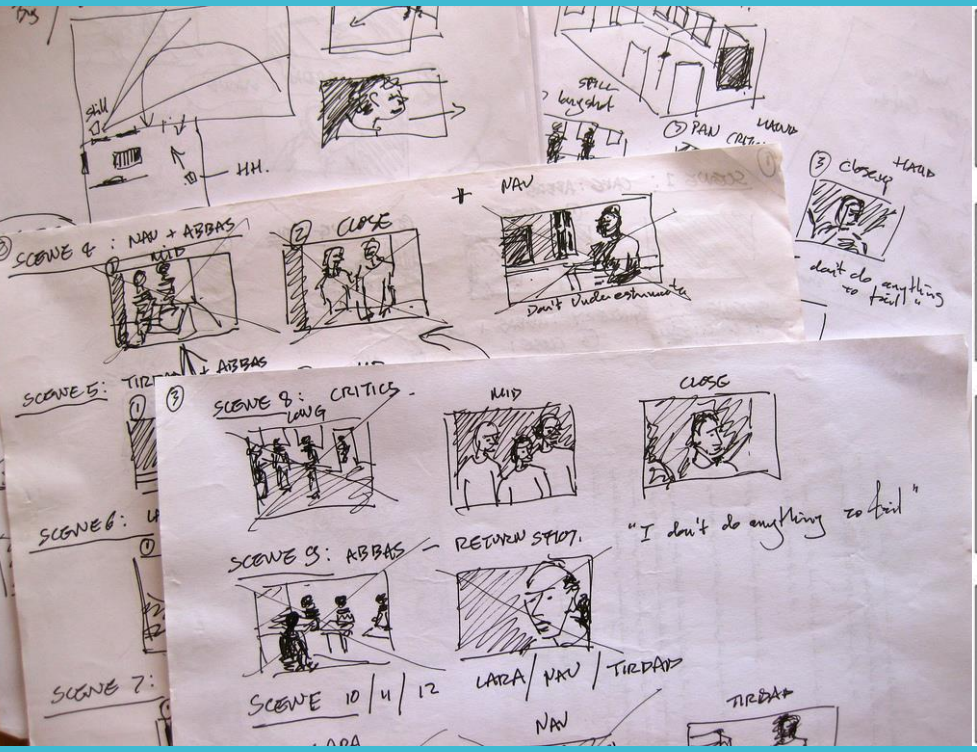
Film script is very essential “outline” because the film is a highly collaborative medium and the director, cast, editor, and production crew will, based on the “outline”, and interpret the story their way when it is filmed.

Film is a visual medium. Film makers do not TELL the audience the story but SHOW the story. So, screenwriters must learn to write a screenplay VISUALLY. Screenwriters must write that can make involved people SEE and HEAR.

Screenwriters might love their characters and know what they are thinking. The discipline of screenplay writing is how to show it on a screen. When it happens, it may be just done with a look, often improvised on the movie set. So screenplay writers (or screenwriters) write the pictures, sounds, and speeches, and so that filmmakers can do the rest.

Pre- Production

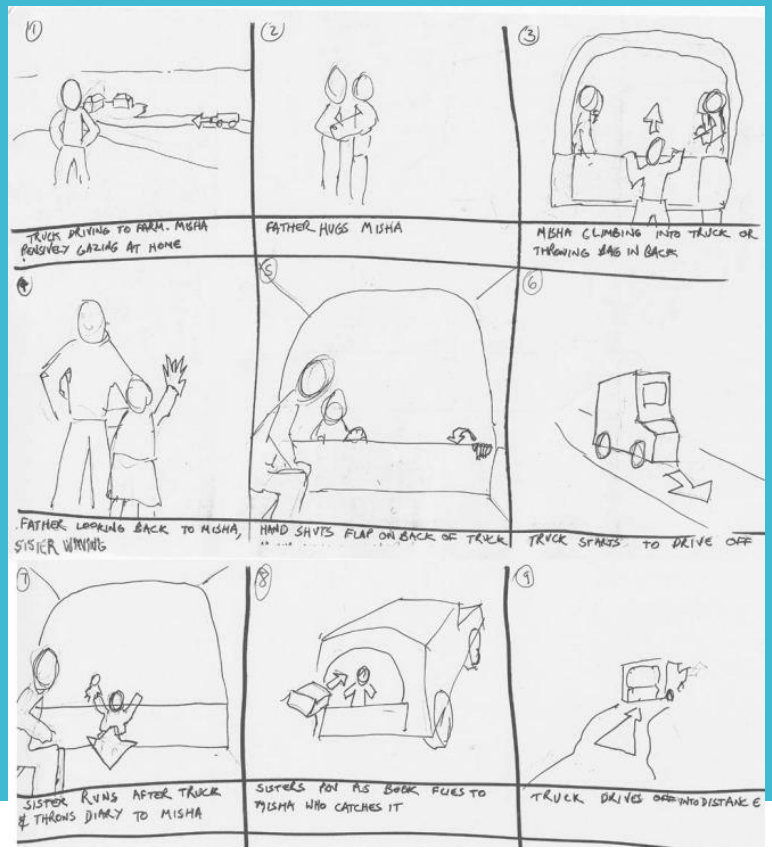
Step 3 The Storyboards



What is story board?

Film Planning

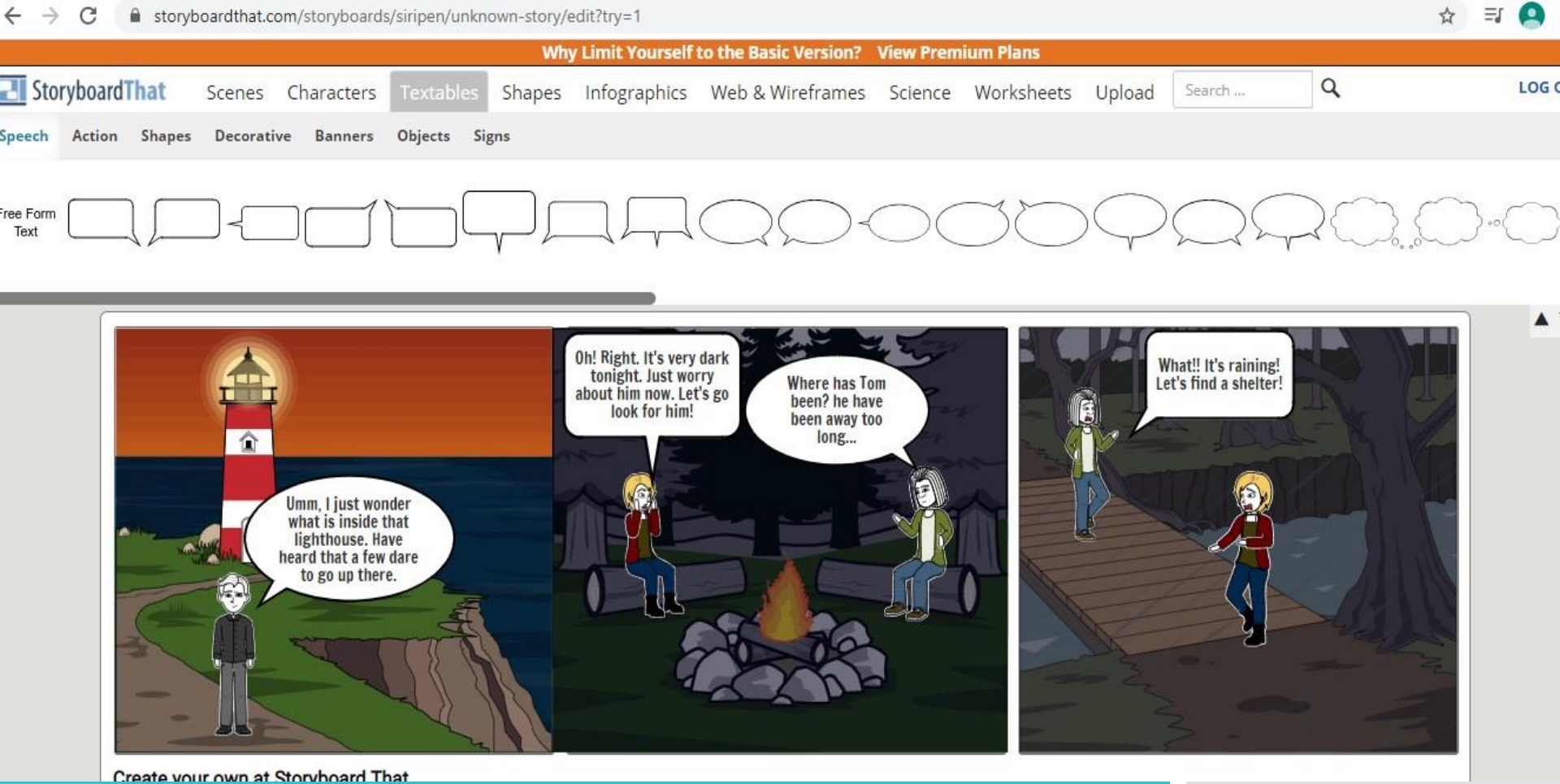
A sequence of drawings that represent the shots you plan to film.



- ✓ Storyboards represent sequence of shots that you plan to have in the film
- ✓ Storyboards help you visualize each scene
- ✓ Storyboards help you decide on camera angles, shot size, etc. Storyboards help you communicate with actors on the set

Examples of simple storyboard

Narration: …and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Title Slide: NONE Music: None Motion: Zoom in to "all men are created equal."	
Narration: Now we are engaged in a great civil war… Motion: Top to bottom Music: None Title Slide: NONE	
Narration: …testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. Motion: Pan from right to left Music: None Title Slide: NONE	



https://www.canva.com/create/storyboards/

https://www.storyboardthat.com/

Pre- Production

Step 4 The Cast and Crew

This is about selecting your actors and casting.

Chemistry of actors with the director
Chemistry of actors with the cast
Chemistry between actors

Putting the right roles to the right actors

Also, you can consider anyone such as your friends and family members to be you crew members in your film project

Round and Flat Characters

Round character

A round character in film (or novel, play or story) is a complex personality or has many layers of personality. They have depth in feelings and passions like real people.

It is the character who the audiences can sympathize, associate with, or relate to, because they might see this character in real live.

Characteristics of a round character

- Round characters are major characters in a story, who encounter contradictory situations, and undergo transformation during this phase. So, these characters do not remain the same throughout the story, so it is difficult to identify their traits from beginning until the end.

- These characters are more realistic, their personalities somewhat inconsistent.
- They are fully developed and show complex traits, like real people.

- Round characters are also known as "main characters," or "major characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.

- Major characters must be round characters to be believable.

Flat character

- A flat character is a type of character that does not change too much from the start of the story to its end. Flat characters are often said not to have any emotional depth or has little complexity to his/her personality.
- It is a simple character and does not undergo significant growth or changes.
- The audience does not know much about these characters, because the writer does not provide detailed information about them.

Characteristics of a flat character

- The role of flat characters is to support the main character.
- They do not go through a substantial growth or transformation in the course of the narrative/story.
- They have recognizable characteristics that make them appear stereotypical (or predictable)
- They are often referred to as one- or two-dimensional characters, usually having one perspective or point of view about life, things, or events.

Pre- Production

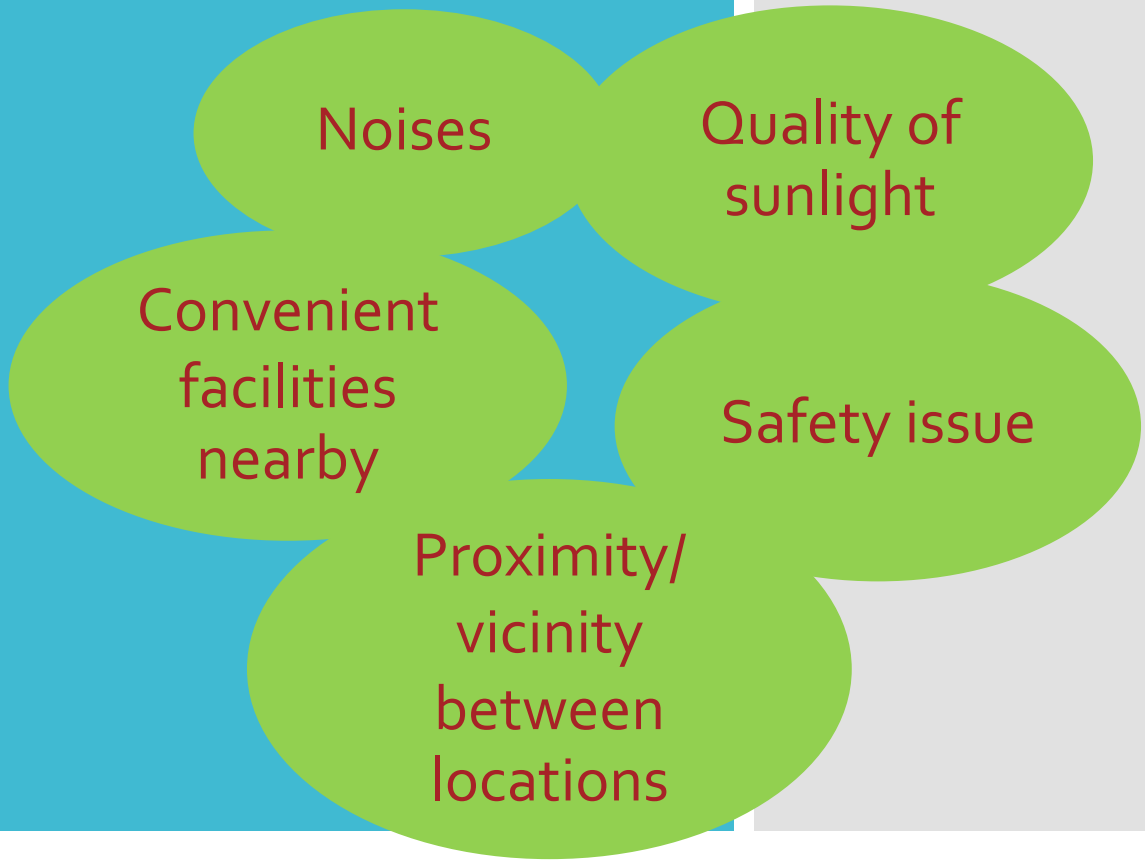
Step 5 The Locations

What to consider in selecting film locations

Interior locations (Indoor)

Exterior locations (Outdoor)

Authenticity



Production

Step 6 The Filming

The schedule must be organized for what will be filmed and when.

Shoot different scenes with many shots, and so you can choose for changes and editing later, and this helps in case of any problems that may occur.

Consider new angles for the same scenes (if time allows), and you will have more footage to work with.

Step 7 The Post-Production

Post- production is the stage where you edit all your footage to create a rough cut of the film.

Add effects to the cuts such as sound effects, music, visual effects, color correction, the process which requires editing software

Polish the cuts and let people watch for comments and revision to get the final version.

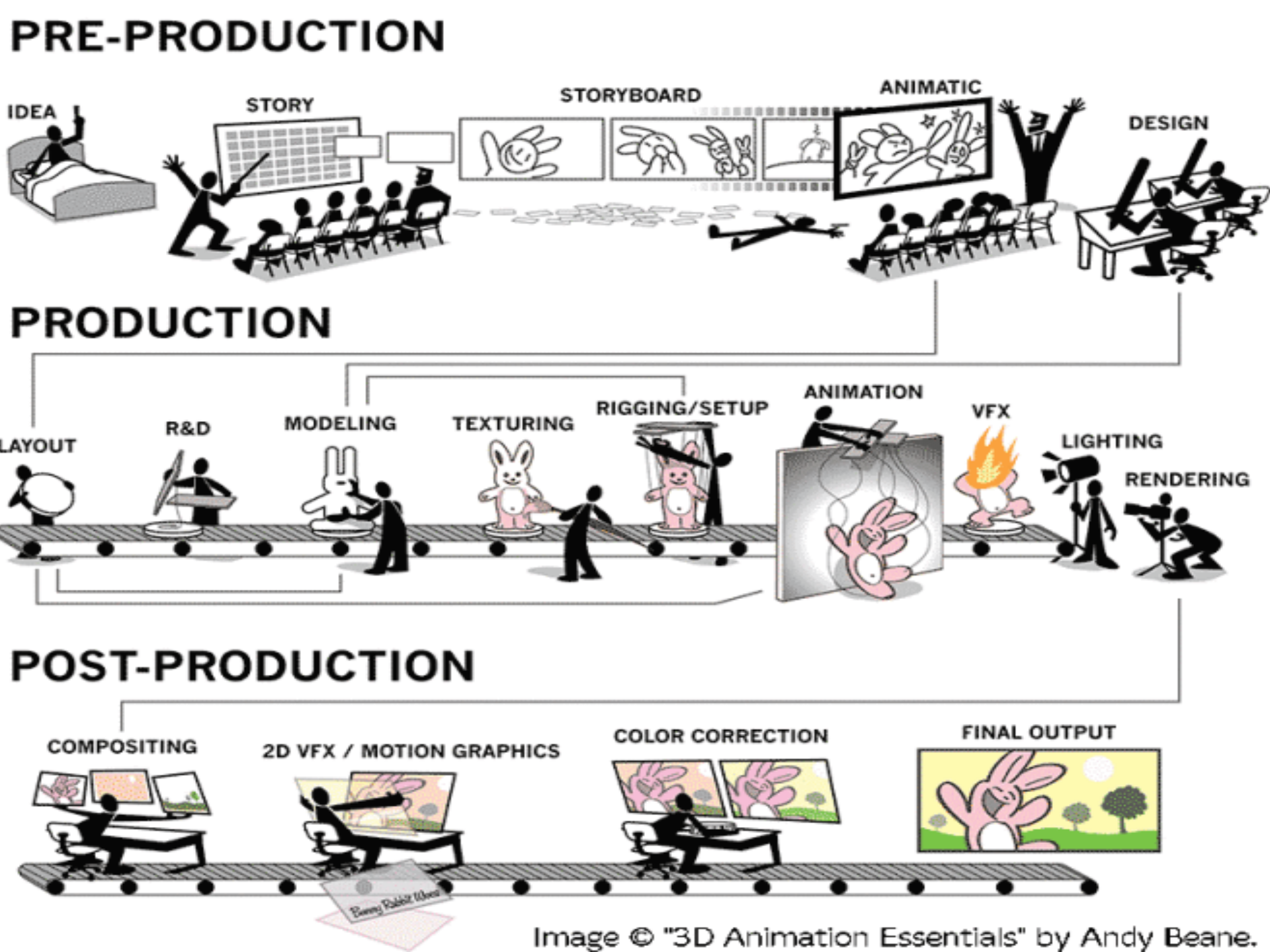


Image © "3D Animation Essentials" by Andy Beane.

Specific terms related to film themes/ genres

- Dystopia
- Utopia
- Existentialism
- Absurdity
- Humanist and Suburban Ensemble Dramedy

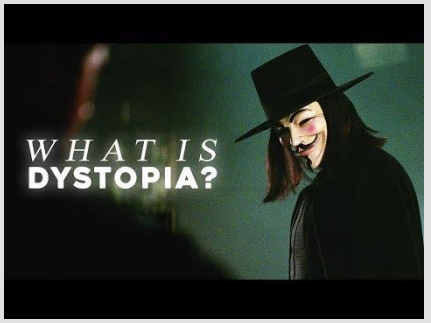
Dystopia vs. Utopia

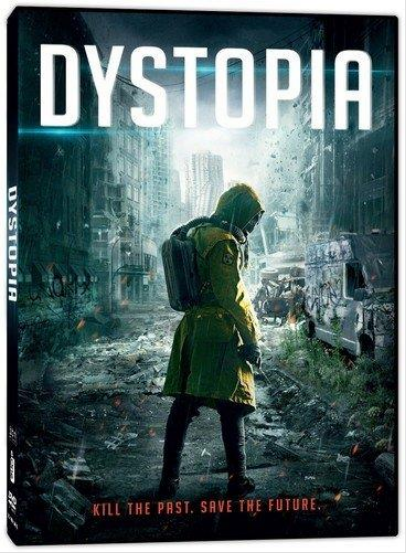
Dystopia:

Dystopia is a genre in literature that depicts a frightening society or community.
Reasons for the frightening society involve the following problems:

(1) A corrupt / governmental totality
(2) Dehumanization due to technological advances
(3) Environmental disasters
(4) Eradication of the family, cultish religions, or marginal people
(5) Limited resources
(6) Violence.

- Dystopias causes human misery
- In some cases people do not realize they are miserable due to propaganda that make us feel "this is an OK life!" or that make us feel this is a "Utopia" or this is a perfect place to live, a life situation that is alright. This feeling can ironically lead to such horrifying conditions or effects later.





Utopia:

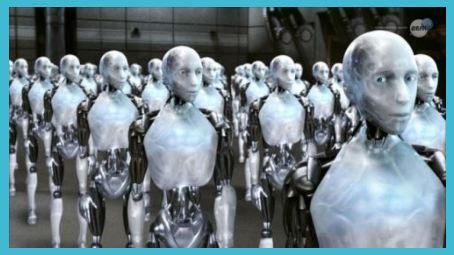
A utopia is an imagined community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its citizens

A utopia focuses on equality in these categories:

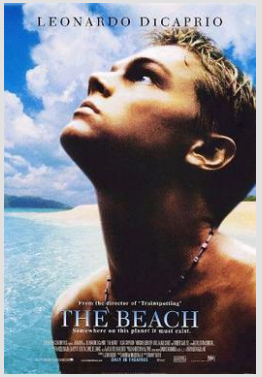
(1) Economic
(2) Government
(3) Justice
(4) Ecological utopian society: new ways in which society should relate to nature

Example films with dystopia and utopia theme or genre

Planet of the Ape
District 9
Mad Max
Cloud Atlas
Mortal Engines
The Purge
The Hunger Games
I- Robot
The Lobster
The Maze Runner
Resident Evil
Snow Piercer
Star Wars
Surrogates
Avatar
The Joker



Zootopia
The Beach
Tomorrow Land
Avatar
Cloud Atlas
Garden of Eden
Gattaca
Pleasantville



Existentialism

- Existentialism points out that the most important consideration for individuals (a human being) is that they are individuals—independently acting and responsible, conscious beings ("existence")—rather than what labels, roles, stereotypes, definitions, or other preconceived categories the individuals fit.

- "True essence" of an individual life is significant in stead of being defined by others. Human beings create their own values through their own consciousness, and determine a meaning to their life.

Absurdity

Absurdism refers to the contradictory nature of human existence. This arises from the conflict between the human desire to find meaning in life, and the inability for humans to do so.

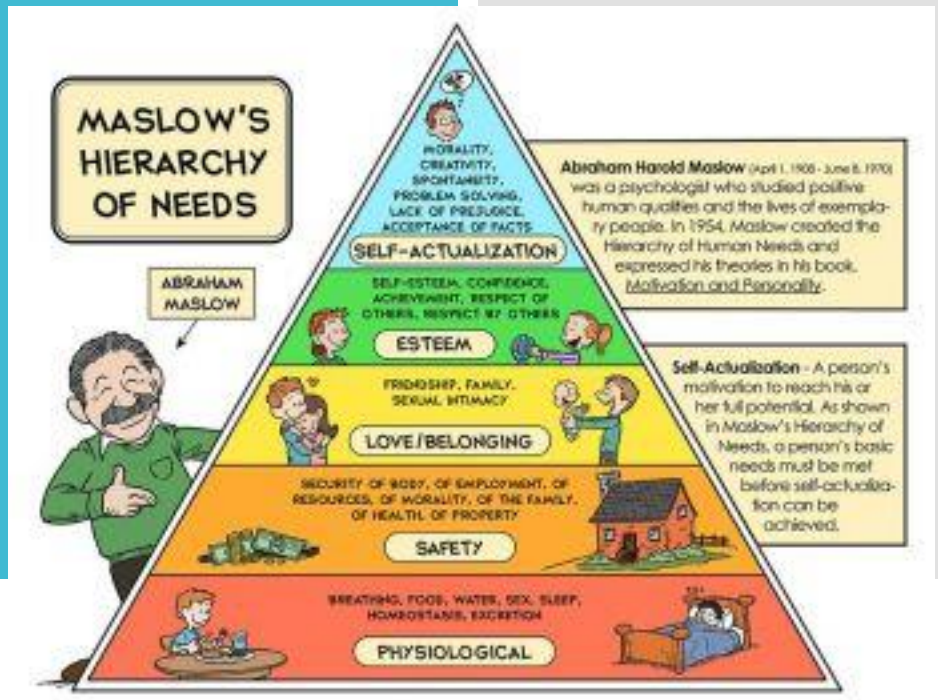
Absurdism is commonly used in a novel, play, or poem, and also in film. Absurdist film focuses on the experiences of characters in situations where they cannot find any inherent purpose in life, most often represented by ultimately meaningless actions and events that call into question the certainty of existential concepts such as truth or value.

Common elements in absurdist film (as well in fiction) include satire, dark humor, incongruity, and the abasement of reason (humiliation or degradation)

Humanist Approach

Abraham Maslow and his Theory of Hierarchy of Needs.

- ✓ Physical Needs
- ✓ Psychological Needs
  - Safety Needs
  - Social Needs
  - Self- Esteem Need
  - Self Actualization Need



Humanist and Suburban Ensemble Dramedy (drama + comedy)

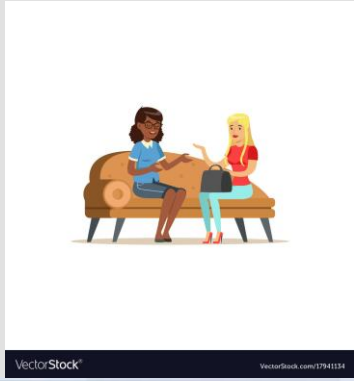
Characteristics of humanist films

- Provoke emotional response
- Documentary styled
- Mise-en-scene and steady shots

Hyperbolic images of material conformity, absurdity in the media fantasy of the suburban façade

Example films (mostly during the 20th century)

- Pleasantville
- Truman Show
- American Beauty
- Little Miss Sunshine
- The Stepford Wives
- Revolutionary Road



Self- Esteem

- Self-esteem is your opinion of yourself.
- People with healthy or high self-esteem like themselves and value their achievements.
- People who lacks confidence occasionally or people with low self-esteem feel unhappy or unsatisfied with themselves most of the time. But this can be remedied (but takes attention and daily practice) to boost self-esteem

Example films

- Frida
- The Theory of Everything
- Dead Poet Society
- Living Is Easy With Eyes Closed
- Thelma & Louise
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
- Yes Man
- Ratatouille
- Finding Nemo
- Wall-E

Self- Actualization/ Soul- Searching/ Discovering Oneself

Self-actualization is a fundamental concept in humanistic psychology. Humanist theorists believe people are inherently driven to reach beyond the scope of their basic needs in hope of realizing their full potentials.

Example films

- Eat, Play, Love
- Into the Wild. ...
- Thelma & Louise. ...
- The Secret Life of Walter Mitty
- Amélie
- The Darjeeling Limited
- The Matrix

Semester Project
(See Assignment Sheet)