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Student Resource Pack

A step-by-step guide to making a short film, including template and sample scripts, storyboards and schedules, guides to camera shots, angles and movements, and helpful links and advice.





Student Resource Pack

Guide to Making a Short Film

For more detailed filmmaking information, see [Making Movies](#)

Development

- Decide on an idea
- Develop the storyline
- Write the script (you can use the [sample script format on Page 22](#))
- Sketch the storyboard (you can use the [storyboard template on Page 24](#))
- Create a timeline/schedule for shooting and editing (you can use the [schedule template on Page 25](#))

Pre Production

- Assign jobs/roles to the people in your cast and crew
- Make sure your cast and crew understand what is required of them and all have a copy of the script
- Decide on your locations and get permission to film there
- Collect props and costumes
- Let all cast and crew know where to be and when
- Check everything is ready to go including equipment and people

Production

Shoot the film

Post Production

- Edit the images
- Compose, record or select the music
- Make sure you have the rights to any music or 3rd-party images or footage you use in the film
- Add the front and end titles

Movie Release

Arrange a premiere screening - cast and crew, supporters, friends. Popcorn!

Congratulations – great work!

The Vocabulary of Filmmaking

Shot

A continuous block of footage from a single point-of-view.

Types of Shots (illustrated examples on the following pages):

- Wide shot (also called establishing shot or extreme long shot)
- Long shot
- Full shot
- Mid shot (or medium close-up)
- Close-up
- Extreme Close-up

Angle

Refers to the angle at which the subject is shot.

Types of Angles (illustrated examples on the following pages):

- Overshot
- High angle
- Eye level
- Low angle
- Undershot
- Static shot - motionless
- Dolly shot – mounted on a mobile platform
- Pan – the camera turns horizontally
- Tilt – the camera tilts up and down, vertically
- Zoom – the magnification of the subject by the camera is increased (zoom in) or decreased (zoom out) Hint: Don't overuse zooms!
- Tracking shot – the camera moves with the subject
- Point-of-view – a shot of what the character is looking at

Transitions and Editing Terms

How the film moves from one shot to the next.

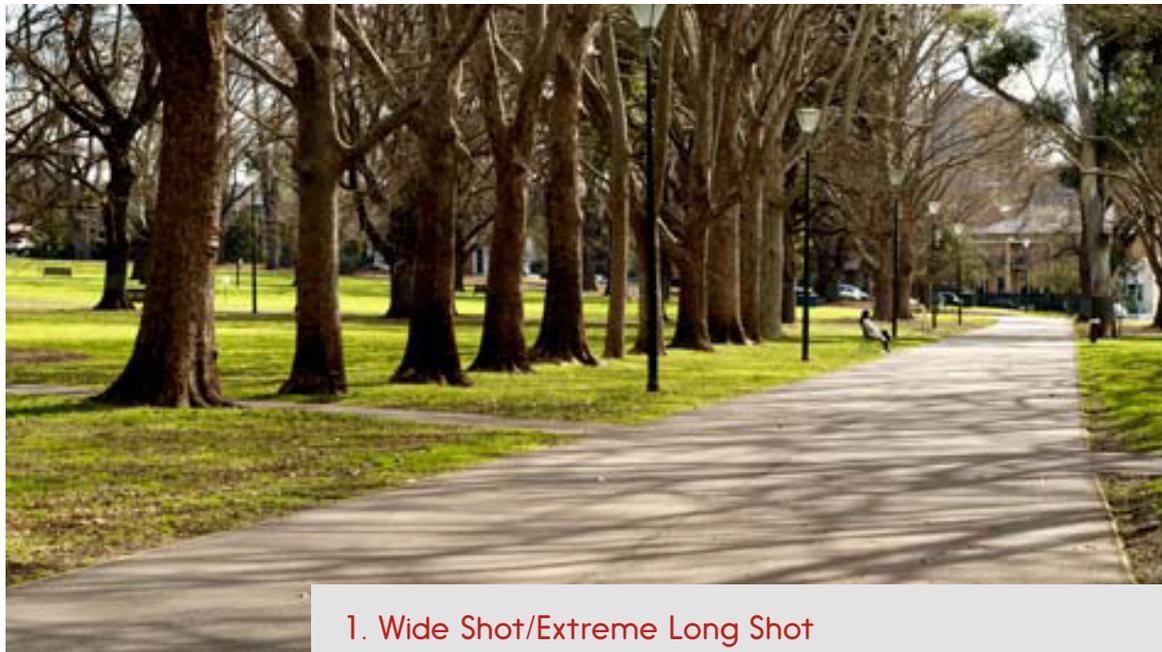
- Cut - a change between shots in either camera angle or placement
- Dissolve - a gradual change of image from one shot to the next
- Wipe - one image moves across the screen to replace another
- Fade - a gradual transition from a normal image to black (fade out), or vice versa (fade in)
- Rough cut - the first assembly of shots prior to editing
- Title - the name of the film shown as text on the screen
- Credits - the list of actors, crew and acknowledgements shown on the finished film

Equipment

- Camera - a device for recording images
- Lens - the optical device used to focus an image onto the film stock or sensor
- Viewfinder - the eyepiece that sees what the camera will record
- Tripod - the three-legged device that supports the camera
- Pan handle - the handle that moves the camera from side to side, or up and down

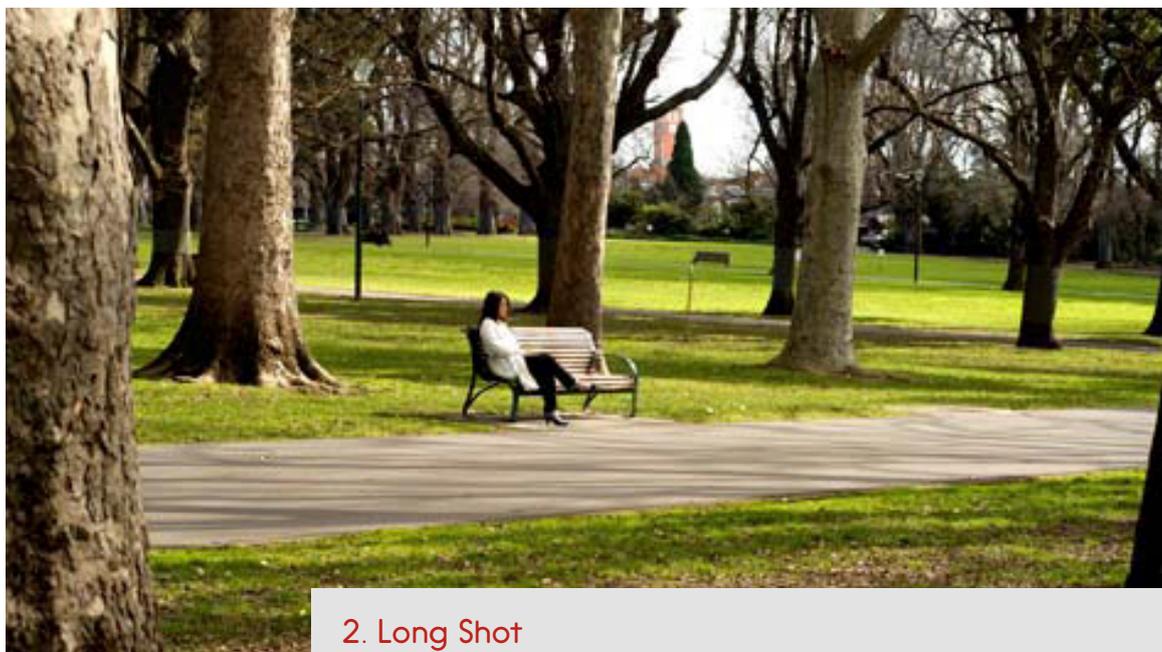
Types of Shots

Shot size refers to how close the camera is to the subject.
There are six basic shot sizes:



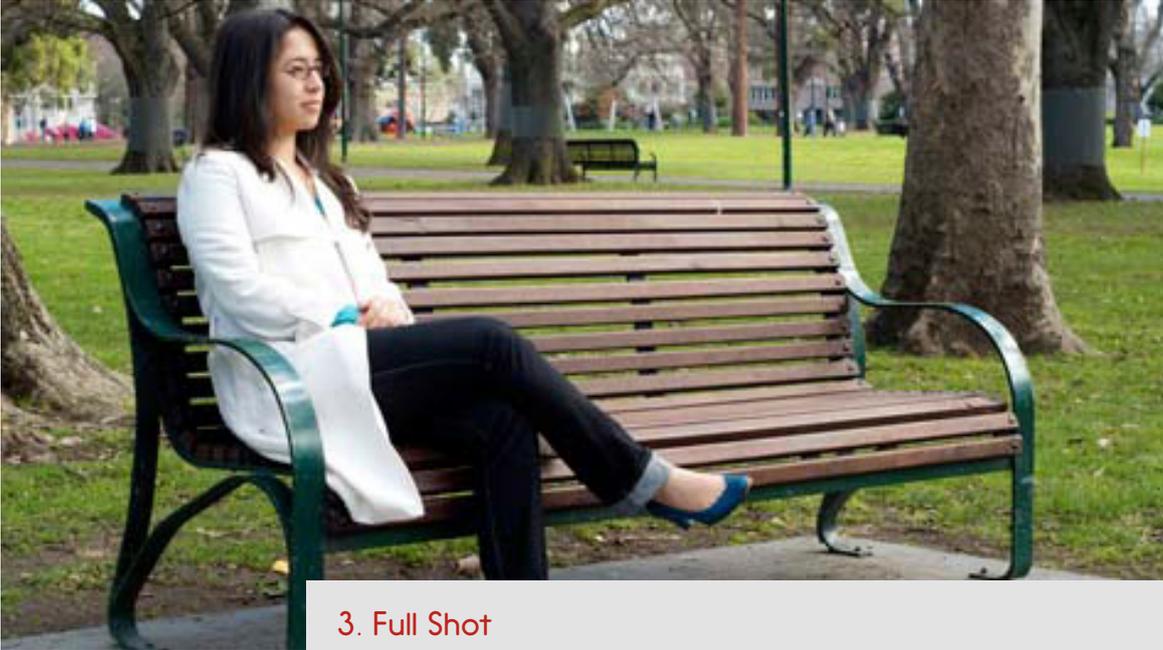
1. Wide Shot/Extreme Long Shot

Often used at the beginning of a scene to show where the scene will take place. For this reason, this type of shot is often called an **establishing shot**.



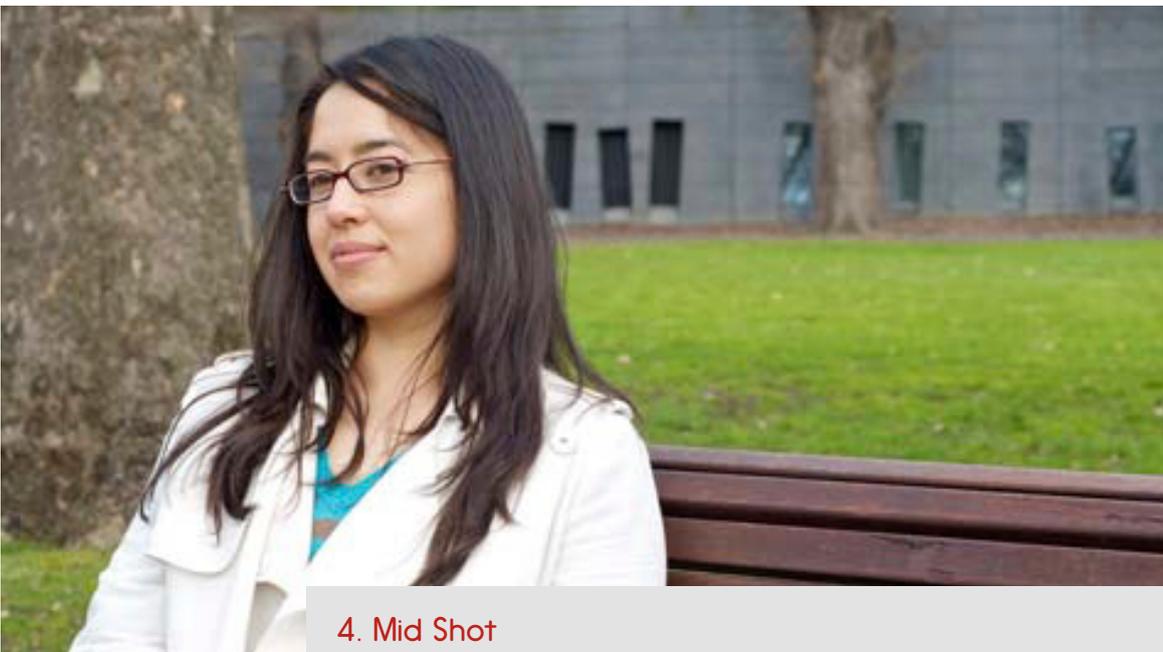
2. Long Shot

In a **long shot**, it is usually possible to discern individuals but there is also a great deal of background.



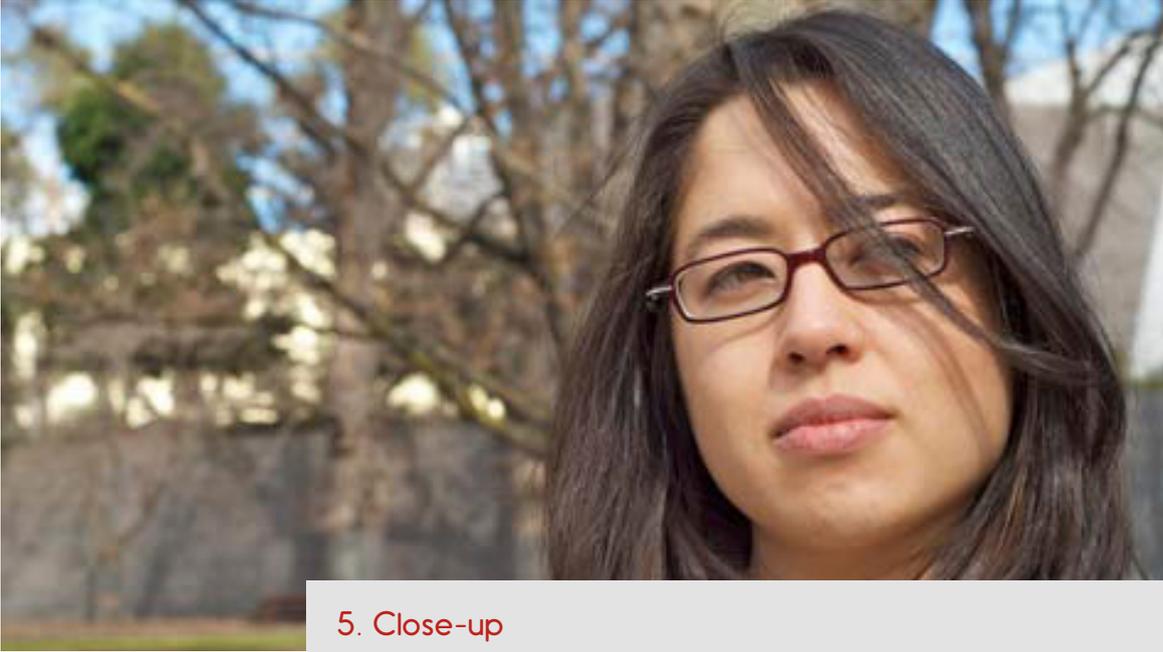
3. Full Shot

A **full shot** shows a character from head to toe. This type of shot is often used as a 'master shot' for the scene, showing all the action that occurs.



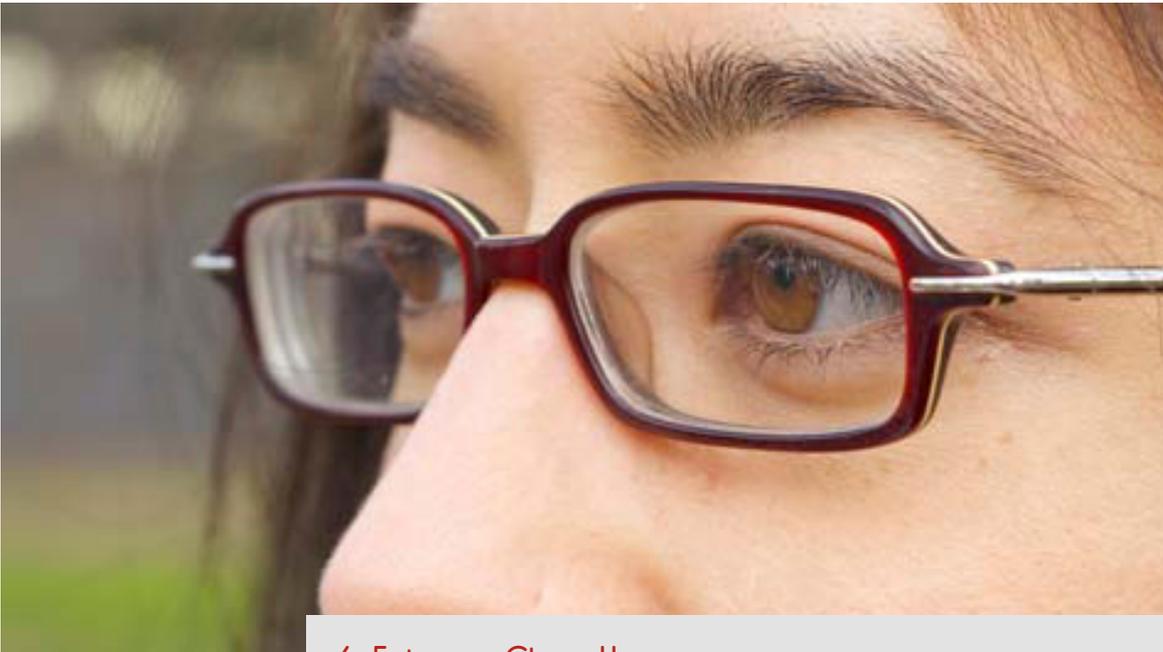
4. Mid Shot

A **mid shot**, or medium close-up, is often used when filming conversations. It is one of the most frequently used shots in film and television.



5. Close-up

A **close-up** usually shows a character's face. Often used when shooting conversations, this is also one of the most frequently used shot sizes in film and television.



6. Extreme Close-Up

Used to show small details, such as a character's eyes.

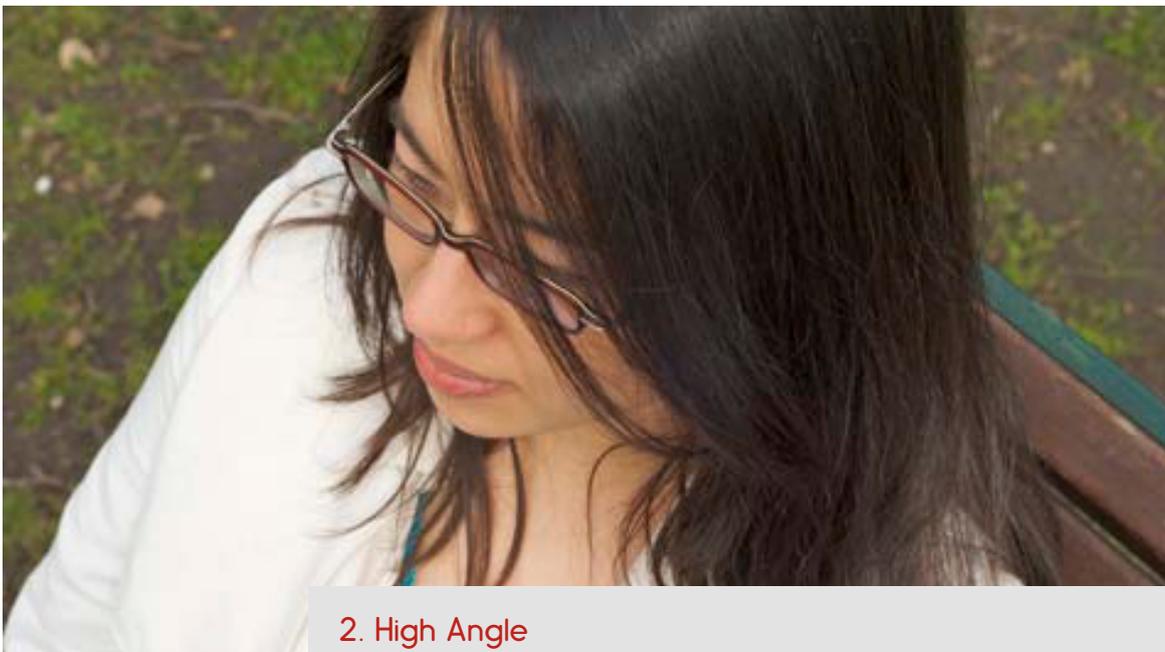
Types of Angles

Camera angle refers to the angle at which the subject is shot and makes an important contribution to cinematic storytelling.



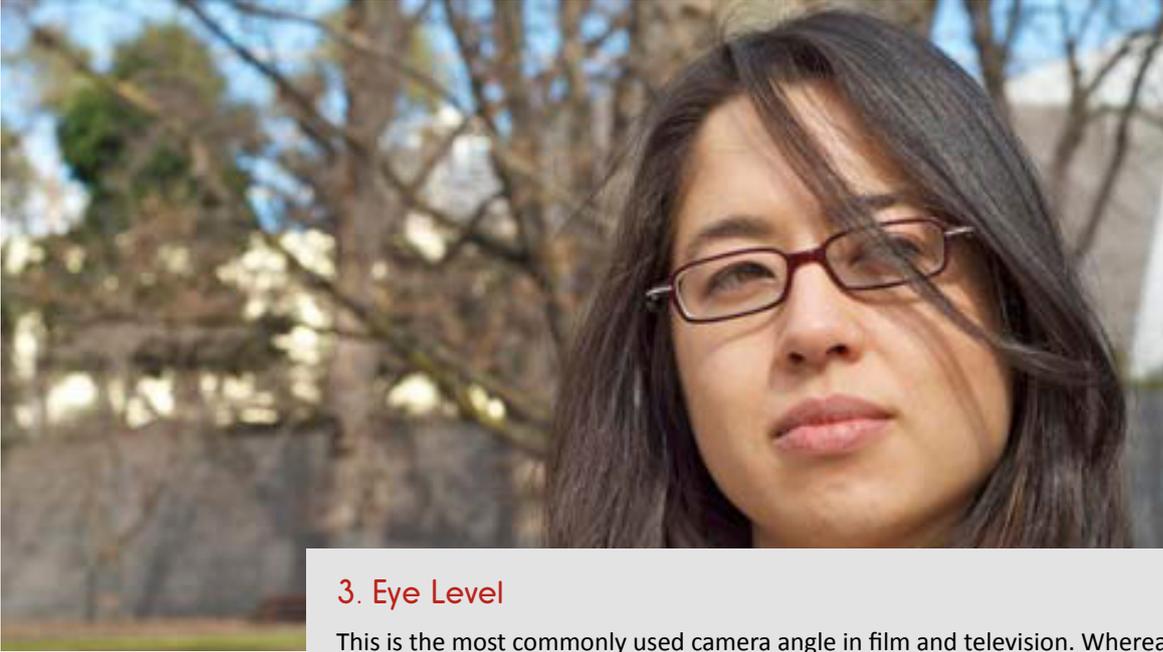
1. Overshot

The camera is positioned directly above the subject. This is often used in **Wide/Establishing** shots, where the camera flies over city streets.



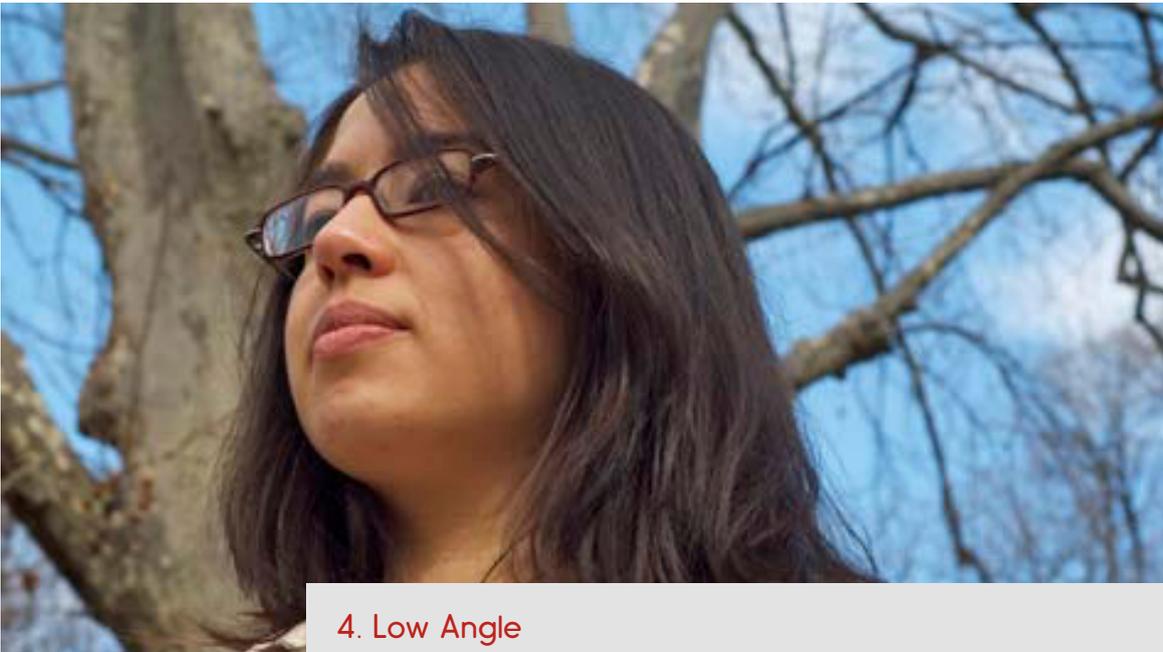
2. High Angle

The camera is positioned above the subject, looking down at an angle. This angle makes the subject appear smaller, powerless and more vulnerable.



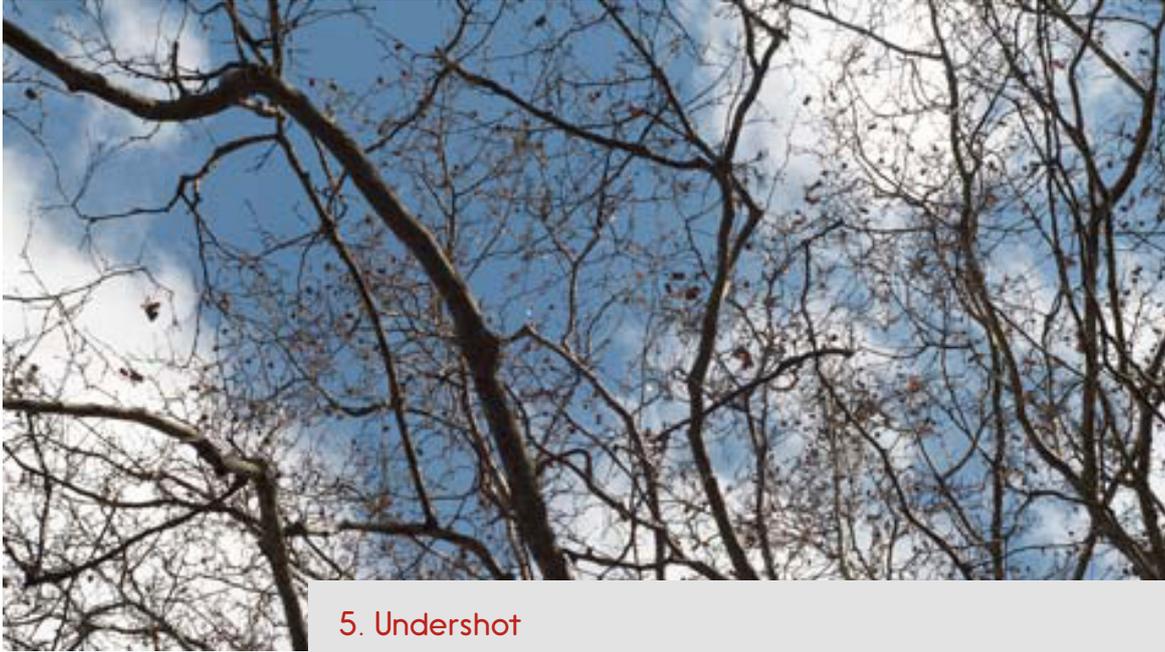
3. Eye Level

This is the most commonly used camera angle in film and television. Whereas most other camera angles are highly stylised, an **Eye Level** shot creates a sense of realism because this is how we see the world.



4. Low Angle

The camera is positioned below eye level, looking up, to imply a sense of power and dominance.



5. Undershot

The camera is positioned directly beneath the subject, looking up, often coupled with **Point-of-View** shots when the character is looking up at something.

Camera Movements

Static

A static shot is a shot that is motionless, usually filmed on a tripod for stability.

Dolly

A dolly is any sort of moving platform that a camera is mounted on. Professional camera crews often lay down tracks, which the camera can be moved along. Sometimes, the camera is mounted in the back of a car. Skateboards, office chairs and supermarket trolleys are the dollies of choice for low budget camera crews. A 'dolly in' is when the camera moves closer to a subject; a 'dolly out' is when it moves further away.

Pan

The camera turns horizontally when mounted on a tripod.

Tilt

The camera tilts up/down when mounted on a tripod.

Crane

The camera is mounted on a crane, helping filmmakers to achieve dynamic overhead shots.

Handheld

Handheld camera movement is often used to achieve a sense of realism. Films like *Super 8*, *The Blair Witch Project* and *The Bourne Supremacy* use handheld camera movement extensively. Handheld camera movement achieves a sense of realism partly because audiences associate this sort of camera movement with documentary film. Poor use of handheld camera movement is one of the shortcomings of many amateur films.

Steadicam®

A device that allows camera operators to achieve smooth, fluid camera movement.

Zoom

The lens of a camera is used to magnify an image.

Tracking Shot

A tracking shot is when the camera follows a subject - on a dolly, steadicam or handheld.

Focus

When composing a shot, filmmakers also consider what will be in focus. Depth of field is a term which describes how far the camera can see into the distance. Narrow depth of field is when only part of the image is in focus and much of the background or foreground is out of focus. Deep focus is when everything, even distant objects, is perfectly in focus. Orson Welles' film *Citizen Kane* was one of the early films to use this technique. A pull focus is when filmmakers shift the focus from one object to another.

Point-of-View Shot

A point-of-view shot shows what a character is looking at. To achieve a point-of-view shot, you need a shot of your character looking at something. This is usually a close-up or mid shot. You then cut to a shot of what they're looking at.



Sample Script Format

'Can I Walk The Dog?'

1. EXTERIOR BUS STOP DAY

The bus pulls up at the stop, and Liv and Mrs Poulos get off. Liv carries her school bag, Mrs Poulos has a bag of shopping, but she has a moon boot on her foot and is using a walking stick.

LIV

Hi, Mrs Poulos, gosh, what's happened?

MRS POULOS

Hello Liv, I went skiing and hurt my ankle.

LIV

Can I help you carry your shopping home?

Gratefully, Mrs Poulos hands over the shopping bag to Liv.

2. EXTERIOR MRS POULOS' HOUSE DAY

When they reach the front gate, Mrs Poulos' dog, Candy, rushes out to meet them.

MRS POULOS

Thanks Liv, that was a huge help.

LIV

My pleasure. Hi Candy - who's taking you for walks?

MRS POULOS

Yes, that's a real problem. She's really missing her walks.

LIV

Maybe I could take her to the park? Right now?
As soon as I change out of my uniform?

MRS POULOS

She'd love that, but you need your mother's OK.

LIV

I'll run home and ask!

3. INTERIOR MRS POULOS' KITCHEN DAY

Mrs Poulos is having an afternoon snack. Liv rushes in, very happy.

LIV

Mum said that's fine, can you ring her and confirm?

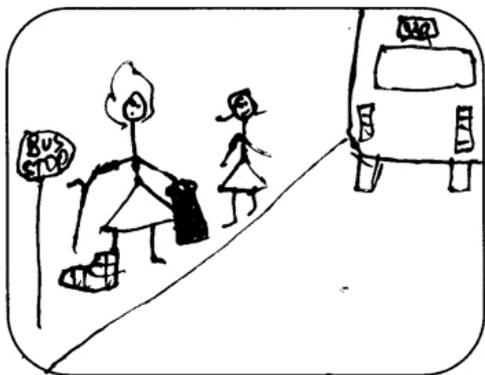
MRS POULOS

Wonderful! Here's Candy's lead. Andthank you.

Liv and a very happy Candy head out the door and down the front path.

Sample Storyboard

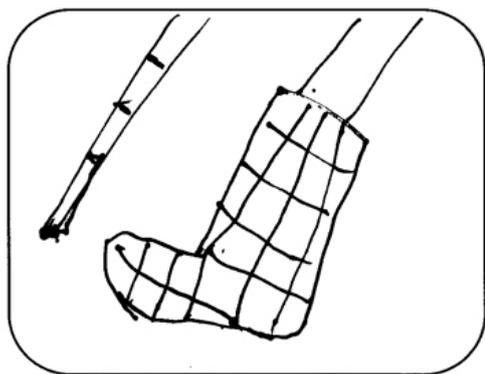
"CAN I WALK THE DOG?"



WIFE: "What happened?"



GfU: " Hurt my ankle!"



POV: The Moonboot



GfU: "Can I help?"

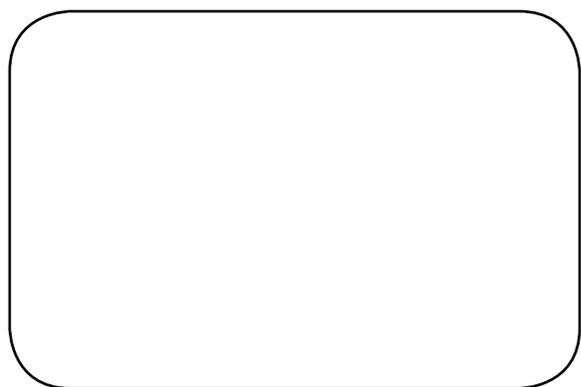


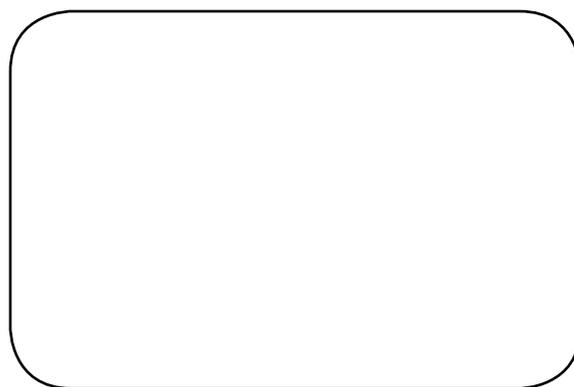
MEDIUM: Walk home

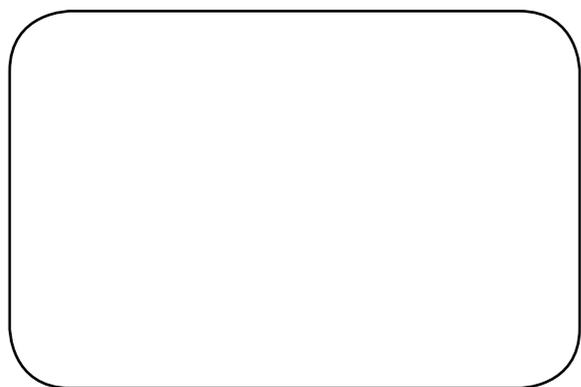


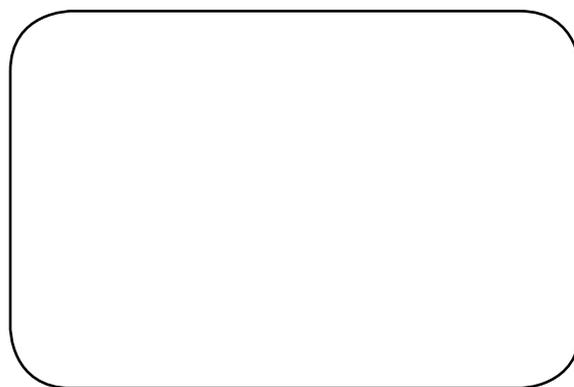
MEDIUM: "Hi Candy!"

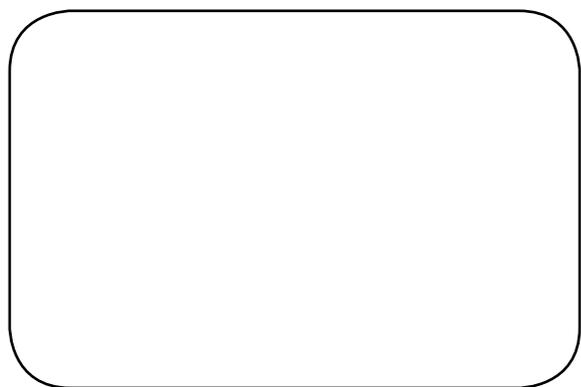
Storyboard Template

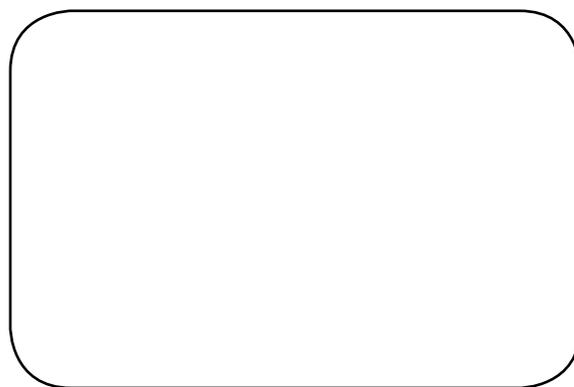














Schedule Template

SHORT FILM

	Scene Number	Shot Description	When	Where	Who	What	Crew
		e.g. Opening Shot of Mrs Poulos and Liv getting off the bus	When is this scene being filmed?	At what location is this scene being filmed?	Who is in the scene (on camera)?	(Props, Costumes etc)	Which crew members are required?
Day 1							
Day 2							

[Click here to download template](#)

Cutting Remarks – Editing Your Film

For your film to have its greatest impact on the audience, you will want to control the way your material is presented. You will choose the shots you use, the order in which the shots appear, and the length of time each shot appears on screen – in other words, you will edit your footage. The first stage is to assemble a rough cut, with your shots in order but not necessarily at their final length.

At rough-cut stage you may decide that you need a couple of extra shots – pick-ups. These are often close-ups to make an action clearer, or to show a reaction on a character’s face. You may also decide that you don’t need some shots, and they’ll end up “on the cutting room floor”.

In the editing stage, you will need to make creative and technical decisions, and there is plenty of advice available to help you with both. The Wikihow site is great: www.wikihow.com/Edit-Movies, and offers a link to download some free editing software.

Edit in Camera

There are good, simple editing systems available for both Macs and PCs, but if you can’t access a computer, don’t worry – you can edit in camera. That means you need to shoot your film in sequence (shoot the scenes in the same order as the action takes place), and plan ahead how long each shot will be and how it will connect to the one before and the one after. Plan carefully and you can create a fine film. There are more tips on in-camera editing on this site: generator.acmi.net.au/sites/default/files/ProductionResources7_Editing.pdf

Editing Systems

Video editing doesn’t require an expensive computer, especially if you’re a beginner. You’ll need a decent monitor and video card, which come installed on most new computers. If you have an older computer, check it against your video editing software specifications to make sure it will work for video editing. This site gives helpful advice on both hardware and software: desktopvideo.about.com/od/desktopediting/bb/bybeginediting.htm

Creative Skills and Choices

There is no “right” way to cut your film, but there are lots of resources online that can help you understand the effect and power of your choices. There are many websites that show examples of editing techniques - here’s one: www.lavideofilmaker.com/filmmaking/film-editing-tips.html

The main things to remember are:

- Think about what you want your audience to see and feel
- Have a really good reason to make the cut
- Cut on action where possible
- Begin and conclude a scene with action
- Avoid jump cuts

For many other helpful tips, have another look at ACMI’s information about editing: generator.acmi.net.au/sites/default/files/ProductionResources7_Editing.pdf



Sound Editing

Good sound always makes a film more engaging. Imagine your favourite film without sound effects. But bad sound can have the opposite effect...

Dialogue

Try to be sure that the dialogue recorded during the shoot is clear and isn't muffled by the sound of passing planes, trains or cars. If there is a problem, shoot another 'take' (filmed scene). You might want an actor to record some lines during the editing. You might need to replace some of the dialogue recorded during the shoot, to fix a problem. You might want to include some additional off-camera lines for one of your characters, to emphasise a point. You might want to record some "voice-over" or narration to help tell your story. You can often use a mobile phone to do the recording, and transfer it onto your editing system.

Sound Effects (or FX)

Good sound effects can add power to your film, as long as they don't overwhelm the dialogue. You can record sound effects during the shoot, either on camera or on a mobile phone, or you can record them during editing to add extra emphasis to some part of your film. Remember that you don't always need to record the actual sound as it occurs – you can collect a barking dog any time, and a couple of coconut halves can give a very good impression of galloping horses.

Australian primary and secondary students can also download free sound effects from ABC's RAWR website, but you will need to fill in a sound licence – details here: <http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/rawr/tips.html?id=3779359>

Music can be very important to a film.
Let's look at the next section....



Good sound always makes a film more engaging.

Music to Your Ears

Music on your film soundtrack is a powerful way to express the action and emotion of your film. Here are some ways to include music in your film without infringing the copyright of composers, musicians and performers.

Write it Yourself - Then You're The Rights Holder.

- There are computer and phone apps that help you write music
- Garage Band (Mac or iPad) has "loops" that make music-making as easy as working with collage
- Another one is Hyperscore - hyperscore.wordpress.com (Hint - Finding a friend who can play the piano will help)

Original Music – Share the creative fun!

- Find a friend with a guitar, and find a way to record them. Most computers and phones can record audio. Maybe even have them play their music while watching your film
- They can even play music that is out of copyright, like Bach or Beethoven. To be safe, basically if the composer died over 100 years ago, you can use their music (but you'll have to make your own recording - you can't use someone else's recording without permission)
- Find a local band or musician who could compose you a score. Your school band or music club?
- If you're really lucky – or very persuasive – a film composer might be able to help you

Use a Song - No, you can't use your favourite pop song - it's illegal.

- But you could ask permission from a friend, a local unsigned band or singer and use their song
- You might want to edit the song to fit your film, or make it shorter, or ask them to record it without the vocals
- You'll need a written agreement - called a synchronisation licence http://www.musicvictoria.com.au/assets/Documents/SyncLicenceFactSheet_web.pdf

Free Music – Kind of, sort of....

- Use one of the so-called "copyright free" music libraries. Google has one for use with YouTube clips <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/4523596?Rd=1>
- There are others you can find online, this site will help you: http://socialtimes.com/royalty-free-music_b37470
- You may need to apply for permission to use the music, but most don't cost

Do you need to record any music?

If so, be sure to record it ahead of time, and remember to bring something to play it on. Of course, you might decide to add music to your film after it is edited.

**** Be sure you have the right to use the music – for more help see the music links above and on [Page 30](#).*

Do you need to record any special sound effects during the shoot?

See the Sound Editing section on [Page 27](#).

Here is some further helpful advice for preparing your shoot:

generator.acmi.net.au/resources/planning-shoot

www.filmmakingstuff.com/how-to-break-down-and-schedule-your-no-budget-movie

Final Thoughts...

Good planning helps make a relaxed and happy shoot. You should schedule your shoot on the Schedule Template (Student Resource Pack), especially if it will take more than one day to shoot your film. You should make a list of all the people involved in your shoot, with their phone numbers and online contacts – it helps you keep them informed of what's happening. Make sure each person knows what to bring, whatever it is – camera, lights, props, costumes, makeup.

Shoot to Thrill

Remind yourself of the kinds of shots and movement you can use by reviewing:

lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/cinematography/

You might like to create a shot list to help your cast and crew understand the shoot day or days. Here's some help:

lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/shotlists/

Be sure that everyone involved knows who, where, when and what. And what's for lunch....

Then enjoy your shoot!



Enjoy your shoot!

Very Useful Stuff

Note: Some of the sites below are more suitable for experienced filmmakers. The sites are marked with a ▲

A Bird's Eye View: Info About Making Films

These sites will give you a great deal of useful general information about filmmaking. Some of the sections below will direct you to specific parts of these sites for information about particular areas and activities.

<http://generator.acmi.net.au/resources/getting-started>

<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/rawr/tips.html>

<http://lessonbucket.com/>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Movie>

<http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting-Started.aspx>

How to make a short film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rWcQdH7-wE

▲ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filmmaking>

▲ <http://www.wikihow.com/Category:Making-Movies>

Inspiration

<http://thecredits.org/>

<http://www.raindance.org/articles/>

<http://www.afters.edu.au/publications/the-knowledge>

Talking the Talk

See the “Vocabulary of Filmmaking” in the Student Resource Pack. These next sites will give you some more help, including examples of what various shots and camera movement are called, and what you can achieve with them:

<http://lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/cinematography>

http://generator.acmi.net.au/sites/default/files/ProductionResources6_TheShoot.pdf

▲ <http://www.imdb.com/glossary> - a very comprehensive and professional glossary.

Script and Storyboard

Here are some ideas about how to develop your story and write it down. There is a sample script layout in the Student Resource Pack, and you can get more ideas and inspirations here:

<http://lessonbucket.com/filmmaking/developing-your-story>

▲ <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/ffd1fc7d-1bc1-48a5-92e1-4b6db107fcde/SuggScriptLayout.pdf>

Storyboards

Will help you turn your story into pictures. You can use the Storyboard Template provided in the Student Resource Pack, and find more help on these sites:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/30683_storyboard.pdf

<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/rawr/tips.html?id=3827444>

http://generator.acmi.net.au/sites/default/files/ProductionResources_UnderstandingStoryboards.pdf

Editing Software

Start by investigating the editing software on your computer, and then get extra help from these sites:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Edit-Movies>

<http://desktopvideo.about.com/od/desktopediting/bb/bybeginediting.htm>

▲ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_editing - superb overview

<http://generator.acmi.net.au/resources/editing>

▲ <http://www.lavideofilmaker.com/filmmaking/film-editing-tips.html>

<http://www.kftv.com/guides/2014/04/02/top-ten-editing-apps>

Sound Editing

<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/rawr/tips.html?id=3779359>

Music

Be sure to read the section on MUSIC in the Student Resource Pack – it contains vital information about creating or finding music that is available to be used in your film. Here are some sites that will guide you to use music that is available to student filmmakers:

<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/rawr/tips.html?id=3779359>

<http://generator.acmi.net.au/library>

▲ Up, Up And Away

These sites will help you move to the next level of filmmaking. They have advice about courses, competitions, finance and festivals you can consider as your creative skills develop.

<http://generator.acmi.net.au/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/>

<http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting-Started.aspx>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/filmnetwork/filmmaking/guide/>

<http://www.raindance.org/>

<http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/>

<http://hopeforfilm.com/>

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www.stephyamey.com

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Types of Shots and Types of Angles – Photographs

Brett Lamb, Education Consultant

For ATOM

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▶ creativecommons.org.au

▶ nothingbeatstherealthing.info