

**YOUTH  
MAKING  
RIPPLES**



# Marine Science Filmmaking Guide

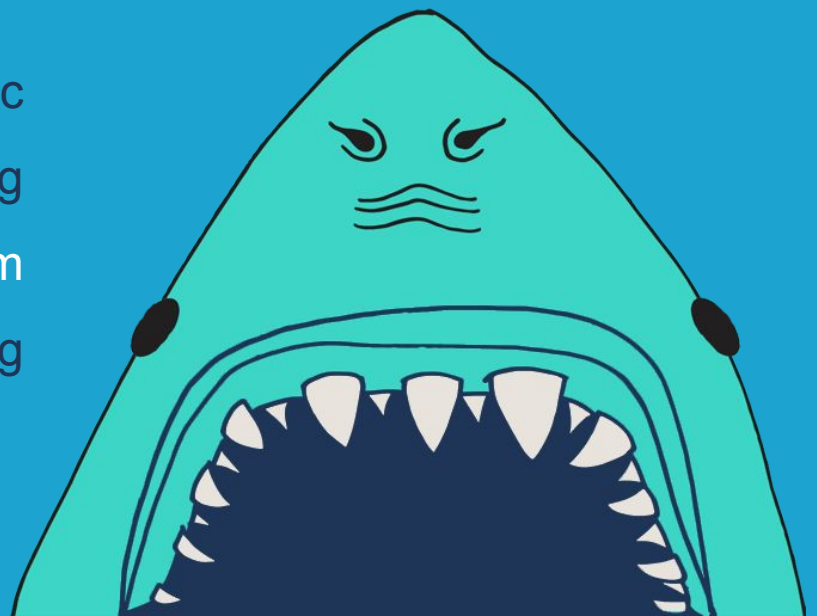
Tips for educators, parents and students interested  
in creating short marine science documentaries

Choosing Your Film Topic

Storyboard & Script Writing

Shooting Your Film

Audio Recording



# Shooting Your Film

The activities and filmmaking tips outlined in these units will provide a tutorial for educators, parents, and students interested in creating their own short marine science documentaries. These documentaries are meant to be less than 5 minutes in length. The tutorials we provide are geared toward content shot and edited using smart phones. You can pick and choose certain units to guide you along your way for a comprehensive package on filmmaking. If you are working independently outside of a formal classroom setting can also use these units to prepare your film. These units are designed for any age (elementary - high school) and for a variety of educational settings including formal classroom, camps, afterschool programs, homeschooling groups, etc.

## Introduction

Cinematography is the art of visual storytelling. Anyone can set a camera, point it towards something and hit the record button, but the art of cinematography is what controls what is seen by the viewer and what is being presented to the audience. This is also called “shooting” as in “shooting the scene”. Shooting your scene will be a large part of the “artistic and creative” side of your film. Here we provide some basics about the composition (the way the shot is set up) of the shot to help you learn how different shots work together. These tips will help you form a clear narrative for your story.

## Types of Shots

Try setting up shots in different ways to see what you like the most. Cinematographers spend a great deal of time making the shot the way they envision it. This is how the film is “seen” by the viewers so it is important to pay attention to the shots you are capturing.



## Wide Shot



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This is typically used to show the scenery. This can also be used to show scale. For example, if a person is next to the ocean, this shot can be used to emphasize how large the ocean is if the wide shot is used with the narrator or character in the shot as well. If there is very little ocean showing, it may not have the same effect.

## Long shot



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A shot taken from a farther distance from the focal point. This makes the viewers a casual bystander, somewhat aloof to what's happening around them.

## Medium Shot



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This shot falls between the long and close up shots, it can be more informative to the viewer.

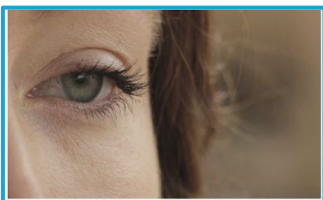
## Close Up or Tight



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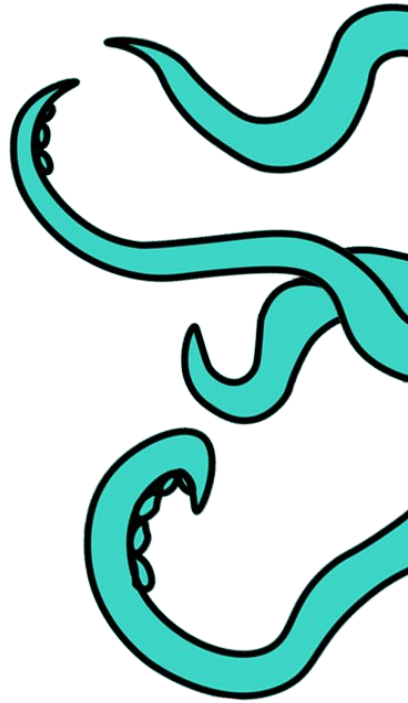
This is more intimate than the long or medium shot. Expressions and emotions of the actor are more sellable. This type of shot is meant to engage the character in a direct or personal manner. You do lose visual information about the characters surroundings, but the actor's actions are more impactful.

## Extreme Close Up



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This shot is used to amplify emotional intensity. This puts the camera right in the actor's face, making even their smallest emotional cue have a huge impact. This technique could also be used to intensify the problem/scene behind them.



# Types of Movement

## Panning

This is simply moving the camera from left to right or right to left to capture the scene/shot. Try to move the camera or the tripod as smoothly as possible. Practice a few times before recording. The smoother you can pan across the shot, the more professional it will look.

## Tilting

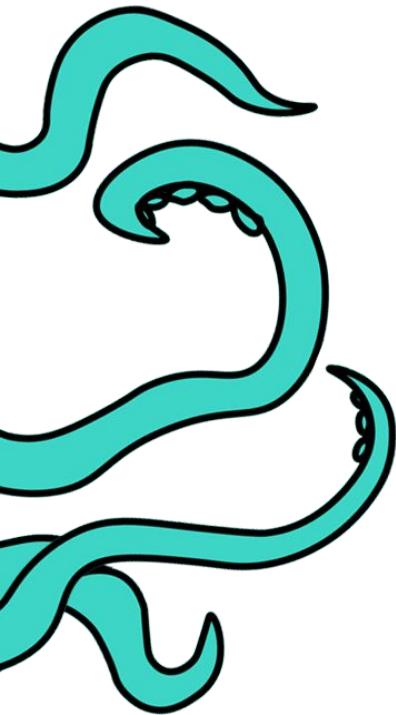
This is simply moving the camera from a higher angle to a lower angle or a low angle to a high angle. If you wanted to tilt from an actor's head to toes, you would be tilting the camera downwards. We recommend using a tripod for a smoother camera movement if using a tilt shot. Again, practice a few times before recording the shot to ensure you get the best "tilt" you can.

## Zooming

The zoom function can be used for different effects, but use extreme caution while using zoom: zooming causes shakiness. If you zoom while in the middle of a shot, the shaking of the internal lens is hard to avoid. We recommend zooming before the shot if needed, and use a tripod if you want to use this function. If you can move the camera closer to the object, the shot will be clearer and less shaky.

## Dolly

This is used when you want to move with your actors or the action on screen. A dolly can also be used to pan through a scene. This is achieved by putting the camera on the dolly (e.g., a chair with wheels, a skateboard) and is panned or moves with the action. Hit record, and gently (as smoothly as possible) move the skateboard with the camera on top of it along with the action. This will have a similar effect as a professional dolly.



## The Rule of Thirds

The Rule of Thirds is a technique of dividing the frame up into a 3x3 grid, splitting the frame into nine boxes. Sometimes people want to put the subject in the dead center of the shot, but this may not be the most artistic framing option. Play with where the main subject should be, is it in the middle, or maybe it is in the first third of the frame, or the last third of the frame. Varying your shots will keep your audience interested, giving them something different to look at throughout the film. The way you “frame” a shot will be an important aspect to the composition of the scene.



## Shot Angles

The camera shot angle is used to specify the location where the camera is placed to take a shot. The position of the camera in relation to what you are filming can affect the way the viewer perceives the scene.

### Dutch angle

(tilting the camera) can give a clue that something about the scene is unstable or just a little bit off kilter.

### Bird's Eye Shot

Similar to the extreme long shot, this is an opportunity to see the landscape from above. This can be captured with drone footage if you have access to a drone.

### Other angles to consider

Try shooting from below an object to see what effect that has on your focal point. You can also try shooting from behind the focal point for a different effect. These different angles can help get different messages across, and have an artistic spin on things.

# Film Recording Equipment

## Camera

Most submissions that Youth Making Ripples receives are filmed using a smartphone or tablet, but any camera will do the trick. If using a phone or tablet we strongly recommend filming in “Landscape” mode instead of “Portrait” mode. This will give your film a greater viewing area.

You can also use a DSLR camera if you have access to one. A DSLR camera can be very versatile and allow for recording both high-quality video and photographs

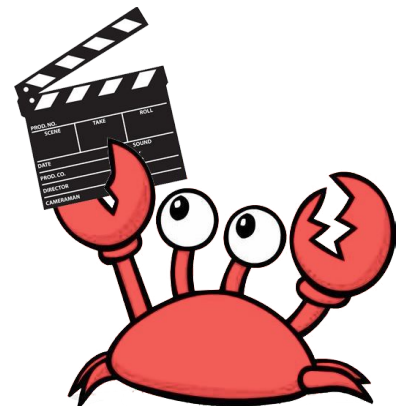


## Selfie Stick / Tripod

Sometimes a Selfie Stick or Table Tripod or Tripod Stand can help provide stable video recording. Setting up the camera on a tripod before recording gives you smoother non-shaky video which is generally more visually stimulating for the audience. This will also give your film a more professional look. Someone holding the camera has very little chance of being as “stable” as a tripod. You can also prop the iPhone or camera up on something to give it more stability as well. Just be cautious of angles, making sure the camera is pointing at your focal point.

## Microphone

We also recommend using a microphone for narration and interviews. The smartphone microphones are not good and often result in a lot of background noise. This is the number one reason why a film submission to Youth Making Ripples will not make it to a finalist.





# YOUTH MAKING RIPPLES



## About Us

Youth Making Ripples is a non-profit focused on marine science outreach and education since 2014. Our annual film competition is an opportunity for K-12 students (< 18 years of age) to use their creative talents and serve as a voice for our oceans. We encourage elementary, middle and high school students to create their own marine related film on a topic of their interest. All submission must be less than 5 minutes. The message of your film can focus on an interesting marine topic, a specific marine related problem or issue, or a call to action for conservation.

## Our Mission

Youth Making Ripples is a global platform for ocean conservation, education, and discovery. Our mission is to raise awareness of critical marine issues and promote the protection of our oceans. Our organization creates and hosts powerful and inspirational educational events around the world designed to engage the public in ocean conservation.

## Help Us Build A Better Future

Whether you are a teacher, parent, student or marine science enthusiast, there are a number of ways you can get involved. Sign up for our mailing list and visit our website for more details at [www.YouthMakingRipples.org](http://www.YouthMakingRipples.org)

