

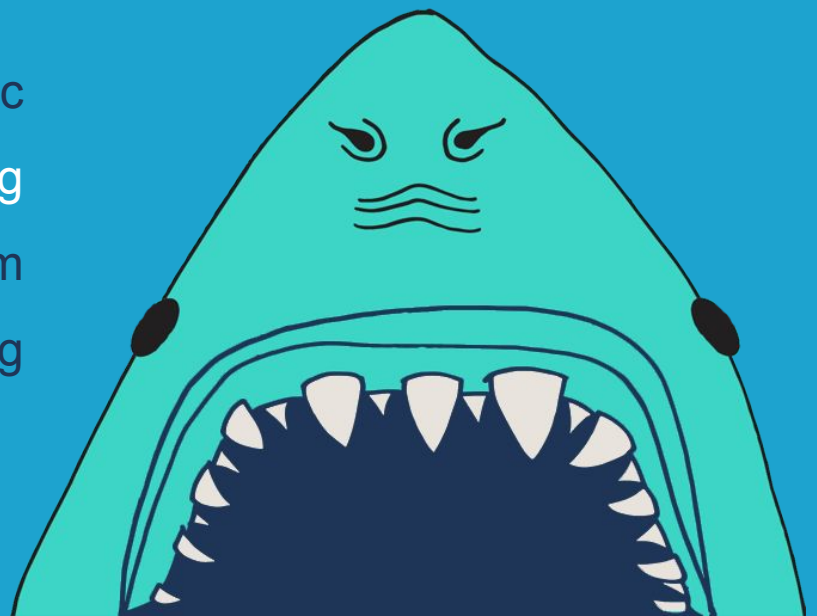
**YOUTH  
MAKING  
RIPPLES**



# 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



# Storyboard & Script Writing

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.

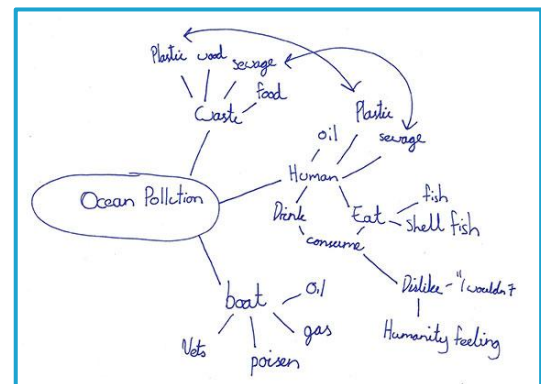
## Introduction

One of the best planning techniques for creating a short film is to create a storyboard before filming begins. A storyboard is essentially a small “comic strip” that outlines and organizes the main points of the film. Once you establish your main points in the storyboard you will then have a focused message and be able to convert your storyboard into your film. The storyboard is a helpful tool to make your outline visual to you and your filmmaker colleagues. We recommend starting with some quick brainstorming exercises to help formulate your story.

## Storyboard Brainstorming Exercises

### Mind map! (10 min)

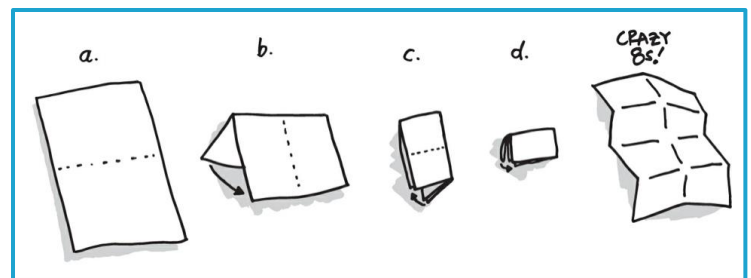
Each person takes 5 minutes and writes down all of their ideas on the topic or potential movie. This should be complete free-writing and will mostly look like an outline or list. Afterwards, meet as groups and discuss each person's thoughts.



## Crazy Eights! (10 min)

Each person will take a piece of paper, fold it in half, then fold it in half a 2nd time, then fold it in half a 3rd and final time, yielding eight panels when unfolded. Then, each person will take 5 minutes to sketch out the movie. You do not have to be the best artist for this exercise (you can use stick figures if you'd like). This technique helps to break down each segment of the film into roughly 20-30 seconds per panel. It's quick, but is a good exercise to focus your message while still encouraging your creative side to take over. Treat this as a game with a timer if you'd like! At the end of this exercise, the group reconvenes and discusses each storyboard draft.

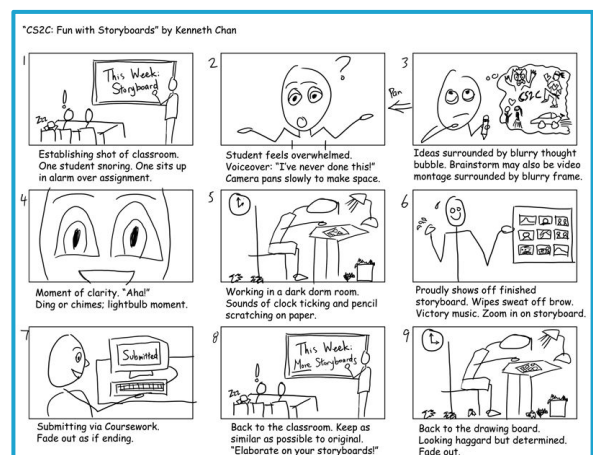
- At this stage, it's important to note what can realistically be made and shot within the given time limit. You will need to start reigning in ideas to fit the time limit you set for your film.
- Make sure the film is relatively focused on with some cohesive ideas from beginning to end. It should feel like a complete thought. Remember - all great stories have a clear beginning, middle, and end!



## Storyboard (15-20 min)

This is the final storyboard stage, and is based on the exercises above. It will consist of more detailed drawings and accompanying text. We find it very effective to do the two brainstorming exercises before committing to drawing out a storyboard. The focus/direction of the group and project will benefit greatly.

Now that the group has brainstormed and organized, you can start to stitch together your storyboard. We will use 8 new pieces of paper, sub-divided into quarters. Each piece of paper will correspond to a slide the group liked in Crazy Eights. The two left quadrants will be for two visual ideas, and the two squares on the right will be for any lines, thoughts, words, descriptors, etc. that are necessary to jot down. The 8-cell comic from Crazy Eights will now become roughly 16 cells with more detail. If more or less cells are needed, adjust as necessary. This task can be split so that each group member is primarily responsible for a few of the pages.



## Additional References & Storyboard Examples:

- [How To Make A Storyboard Video](#)
- [Storyboard Examples for Students](#)
- [Storyboard Templates](#)

## Turning Your Storyboard Into A Film

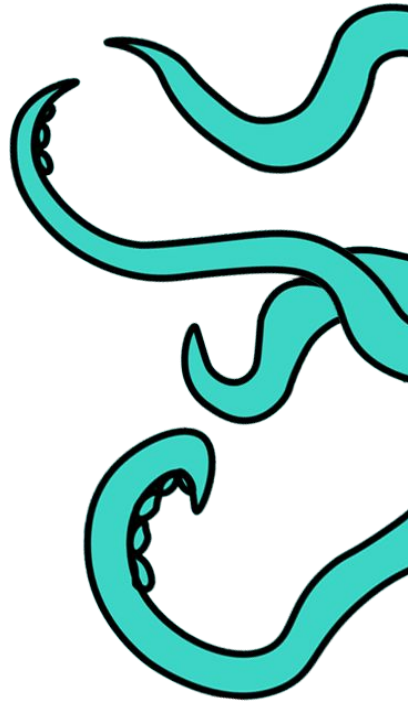
After storyboarding, each group should have an idea of what type of shots they will need to create their film. There are a lot of things to consider when transitioning from a storyboard to begin recording.

### Focus On The Details:

- Composition (lighting, foreground/background, color palette, etc.)
- Angle from which the camera is shooting (high or low, left or right)
- The type of shot (wide shots, close-ups, over-the-shoulder shots, tracking shots, etc.)
- Props (objects in the frame. What's next to or behind the character? Can they be underwater?!?)
- Actors (people, animals, cartoon talking seaweed, etc.)
- Costumes (how will any characters be dressed?)
- Movement (will the characters move? Do they have enough space? Will the camera be moving?)
- Shot length (you should have a rough idea of whether this shot is 5 seconds or 50 seconds)

We will cover each of these in the remaining units. Before you can begin to film, consider some of these creative suggestions for filming those storyboard shots:

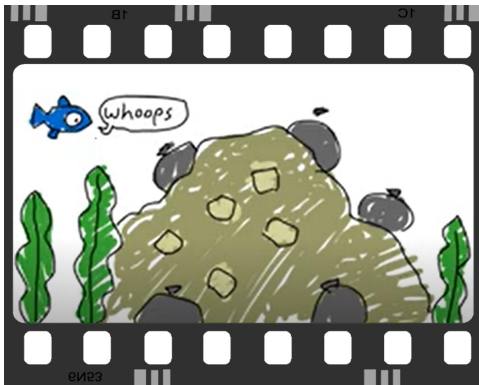
- Props, costume, and backdrops: Make any props, such as hats, paper cutouts of sea animals/environments, etc. Or grab a posterboard and make a background to change the environment for where your character will be.
- Familiarize yourself with the equipment: We'll be shooting on phones, so make sure you know how to use them. Start looking over the shooting guide. If you want a stable shooting platform, but don't have access to a tripod, see if you can stack some textbooks to get the same result.
- Wrap up the storyboard: Make sure at least a rough version of what you want to shoot is in place, from the beginning to end of your movie.



## Choose a film style

Finally, before you start filming, decide what style film you want to create. Youth Making Ripples has received some incredibly creative film submissions over the years that illustrate the wide variety of filmmaking techniques that can be used. One of the most important things to remember is that you don't have to have access to the ocean to make a great ocean-themed film. Some of the most effective and engaging films we've received were made entirely in people's homes. Here are some examples of the variety of techniques and approaches the talented student filmmakers who have participated in Youth Making Ripples have used:

### Animation



### Stop-Motion Animation



### Single Shot



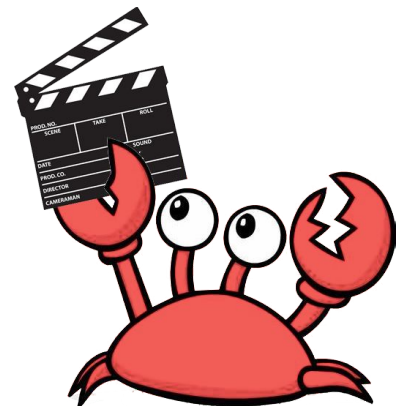
### Song Parodies



### Interview an Expert



### Documenting Class Projects





# 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)

