

## Filmmaking exercise

In this scene, a character is walking along when they notice that their shoe lace is untied. They give a sigh of frustration, kneel down, tie their shoe and then continue walking. This exercise demonstrates important filmmaking concepts, including:

- o **Establishing shots.** Establishing shots are used at the beginning of a scene to let the audience know where the action is about to occur. They are an important way of letting the audience know that you've moved to a different time or place. They are the glue that holds a narrative together and they're not something that people who pick up a camera for the first time necessarily remember to shoot!
- o **Shot size.** Even a simple story like this requires the use of different shot sizes to clearly convey the story. First time filmmakers are often reluctant to get the camera close enough to the action.
- o **Action calls.** It's a good idea to call action when you start to shoot a scene. On a professional film, this process involves a number of people ensuring that the cast and crew are ready to shoot. On a low budget film, it will sound like this:

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**Director:** Quiet on the set!

**Sound operator:** Sound rolling...

**Camera operator:** Camera rolling...

**Director:** ACTION!

**Director:** CUT!

- o **Marks.** On a film shoot, it is usually the responsibility of the camera assistant to put down marks for the actors. This indicates where actors need to stand for particular shots. These marks are usually numbered, so if a director wants to reshoot part of a scene, they might choose to go from the third mark. When you're making a low budget film, it's very useful to mark out scenes, so actors know where to stand in various parts of scene. Just make sure that they're not visible in the shot!
- o **Coverage.** When you're shooting a scene like this, it's important to get plenty of coverage of the scene so that you have the maximum amount

of freedom when you're cutting it together. When you're shooting, make sure you let the camera record for a couple of seconds before calling, "ACTION!" It's also important to make sure that your actors don't break character or look at the camera until you call, "CUT!"

- o **Continuity editing.** This is the most important lesson to learn from this simple activity. Continuity editing, or matching on action, is one of the most important lessons you can learn as a filmmaker. When you film something from two shot sizes or angles, recreating the performance of the actor both times, you will be able to cut seamlessly from one shot to the other as the actor performs a particular action.
- o "Cutting on action" creates a seamless bridge between two shots that your audience won't notice. The motion will flow smoothly from one shot to the next. More importantly, this allows filmmakers to move between different shot sizes and camera angles without zooming or moving the camera unnecessarily. When shooting action from different angles, it's important to make sure that the actors recreate their performances precisely. If your actor is standing in the wrong place, or has a different expression on their face, cutting between two different shots will create jarring lapses in continuity.

## THE SHOE - STORYBOARD

### SHOT 1 | ELS OR WS



**Notes:** Capturing establishing shots is an important part of shooting a scene. Establishing shots are used at the beginning of a scene to let the audience know where the action is about to occur. They are an important way of letting the audience know that you've moved to a different time or place. They are the glue that holds a narrative together, so get into the habit of using them! **Shoot a five to ten second ELS or WS of a place** that gives your audience a sense of the location you're shooting in.

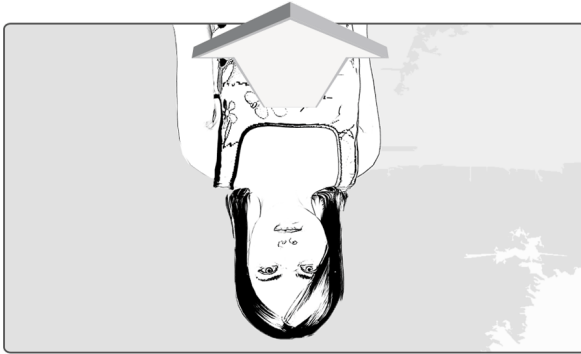
## SHOT 2 | WS



**Notes:** This is your master shot which features all of the action that occurs in the scene. When you set up other shots, such as a close up of your character, it's important that you direct the actors to match their performance from your master shot as closely as possible. This will allow you to cut the scene together seamlessly later on, cutting at the precise moment your actor performs a particular action. In this shot, the character walks into frame, looks down, notices that their shoelace is untied, gives a

sigh of frustration as they look at it, kneel down and tie up their shoe, stand and walk out of frame.

### SHOT 3 | CU



**Notes:** Here we're going in for a close up to show the frustration on our character's face. It's important when you're filming this to match the performance from the master shot precisely. In this shot, your character walks towards the camera, stops in a close up, looks down at their shoe for a second or two, gives a sigh of frustration, then kneels out of shot. When you're filming this, it is useful to put down a mark to indicate where your actor should stop walking, so you can precisely match the action from the previous take and your actor knows when they have reached the close up.

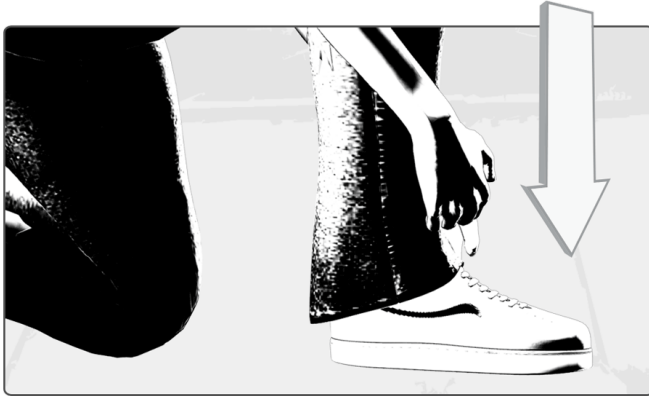
### SHOT 4 | FS



**Notes:** In this shot, we're going to film a POV shot showing the untied shoes. Rather than using the tripod for this shot, it's probably best to get your actor to simply hold the camera, pointing down at their untied shoes. If you film the shot from another angle,

the audience won't perceive this as a point of view shot. When you are filming this, ensure you keep the camera steady and film for at least five seconds, this should give you plenty of footage for a nice insert.

## SHOT 5 | MS



**Notes:** In this shot, the actor will start standing up and when you call action, they will kneel down and tie their untied shoe lace. When they're done, they will stand up again. To get this shot, you will need to get the camera low to the ground by collapsing your tripod all the way or removing the camera entirely and placing it on the ground. This is one of those moments where you want to show the action clearly for the audience.

## SHOT 6 | MS – FRONT ANGLE



**Notes:** In this shot, we're going to film another **take** of the shoe being tied from a different angle. The actor should start standing up and, after you call action, they kneel, tie up their untied shoe lace and stand again. When we cut this scene together, we'll

cut from Shot 5 to Shot 6 at the precise moment the character ties the first knot. Matching the action between shots like this creates a seamless bridge. Audiences are so used to this style of continuity editing that they don't even notice you've changed angle or shot size.

## SHOT 7 | CU



**Notes:** In this final pick up, we're going to get some coverage of the actor concentrating while they tie their shoe. Yeah, it's not exactly Saving Private Ryan...when you're making a film – even something as simple as this, it's important to create a connection between your character and the audience. This can be achieved using close-ups of the actor's expression. Once again, film the entire action. Your actor should start standing up, kneel to tie their shoe and stand up again. As the character is standing, we'll cut back to our original master shot.

## SHOT 2.1 | WS



**Notes:** The final shot in your sequence is the final part of your master shot. It begins as your character starts to stand, matching the action with the previous shot. The character walks out of frame. Hopefully you filmed for a few more seconds so we can fade to black!

**NOW – Import your footage and cut your sequence together. You may add music if you like. Save file naming with your Last NameFirst Initial SHOE. Upload the completed sequence as an .mp4**