



Erasmus+

Workshop No. 1 Talavera de la Reina, Spain

IES Ribera del Tajo
13th-17th January 2016

Workgroup 1: Film-making Tutorial on how to make a storyboard



First things first!

Before starting with the technical aspects of the storyboard, you must first answer three key questions:

1. Who is your audience?

The first key to a good video is knowing what your audience is likely to appreciate.

2. What is your message?

The second key to success making sure you have a clear story that you are telling.

3. What is the best way to communicate that message?

The third key to video-making is constructing it carefully so that the techniques improve the understanding of the message.

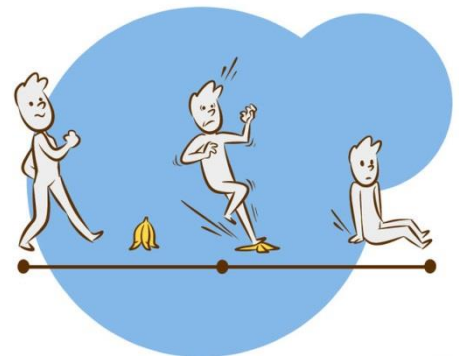
So what exactly is a Storyboard?

When you're planning a video, the first step in the process is to make a storyboard so you can bring your script to life and present it to other people. A storyboard is a series of **thumbnails** that show the breakdown of the video, illustrating the key scenes—how the setting will look, who will be present, and what actions will take place. It can be created by hand or using a digital medium. Read on to learn how to map your story, illustrate the key frames and fine-tune your storyboard.

Part 1: Story Work

1. Establish a timeline. Establishing the parameters for **when** and **where** your story takes place, and deciding in which **order** the events of the story happen chronologically, is the best way to organise your story so you can begin bringing it to life. If your story isn't completely linear (e.g. there are flashbacks, flash forwards, shifting perspectives, alternate outcomes, multiple timelines, time travel, and so on), you must create a **narrative timeline**.

- ✓ Make a list of the main events of the story in the order they will be told. This is how they will appear on screen.
- ✓ If you're storyboarding for a commercial, establish what scenes will occur and in what order.



2. Identify the key scenes in your story. A storyboard is meant to give its viewer the basic idea of how the story will translate to film. The point isn't to try to recreate the entire experience in a flip book, but to demonstrate key parts. Think your story through and **brainstorm a list of the key moments** that you want to illustrate on your storyboard.

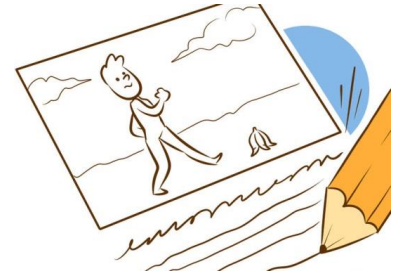
- ✓ Pick scenes that show the plot developing from start to finish.
- ✓ **Turning points** are important to show. Any time there's a plot twist or an important change, include it in the storyboard to move the story along.
- ✓ You may also want to depict **changes in setting**. If the story begins in one location and moves to another, make sure that will be clear in your illustrations.
- ✓ As a general guideline, keep in mind that for a typical 30-second commercial, a storyboard should have no more than 15 frames. Factor in two seconds per frame on average.



3. Decide how detailed to get. A storyboard can be incredibly detailed, with illustrations depicting every shot. If you're in the preliminary stages of a feature-length film, you have too much ground to cover to get this detailed just now. However, you might eventually want to break the film down into individual scenes, with a separate storyboard for each one. This allows you to create a very detailed representation of the progression of individual scenes and is helpful when it comes to staying organized during film-making.

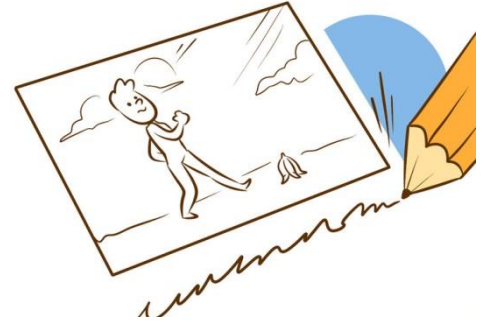


- ✓ If you're working on a film and breaking it down shot by shot, create what's called a **shot list**. For each shot on the list, you'll need to think about the shot's composition and other details involving how it will actually be filmed.
- ✓ Remember that the point of the storyboard is to provide **visual clarity**. It's not supposed to be a work of art! Take a practical view when it comes to the level of detail you choose for your storyboard.
- ✓ A good storyboard will be easily understood by anyone viewing it.



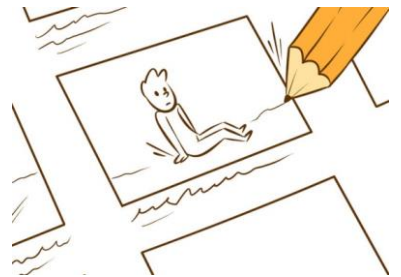
4. Write a description of what each cell will show. Now that you know what main scenes you want to show, think about how to depict the action in each illustration. Go down your list of scenes and write a description of the most important elements of each one. This will help you determine what exactly to draw for your storyboard.

- ✓ For example, you might want to have a cell that depicts a conversation between two characters. What needs to be conveyed in this image? Are they smiling or moving towards a destination? Some sort of **action** should take place in each drawing.
- ✓ Take the **setting** into account as well. Is it important to have a certain view in the background behind the characters?



Part 2: Design

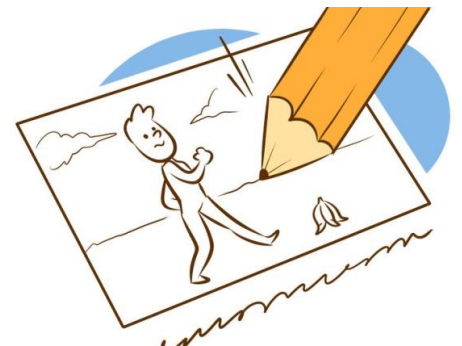
1. Decide what medium to use for your template. You can draw a basic storyboard template by hand, simply dividing a posterboard into empty frames of the same size using a pencil and a ruler. The set-up should look similar to that of a comic book, with rows of square cells that show how the scene will look on a screen. If you want to pay for a professional version, you can use Adobe Illustrator or InDesign, storyboardthat.com, to create a storyboard template in vertical or horizontal format, but we are going to use Microsoft PowerPoint template because it is free!



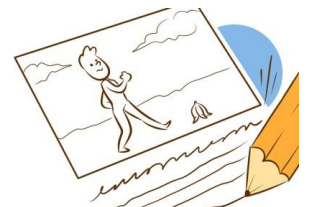
- ✓ The cell sizes should be drawn in the same aspect ratio as the finished video, such as 4:3 for a TV screen or 16:9 for a feature film screen.
- ✓ A storyboard template for advertising should be comprised of rectangular frames into which you insert the visuals. If you want to include captions, make sure there's space where you can write in video descriptions. There should also be a space for the audio, which is where you include the dialogue and sounds or music.

2. Sketch your thumbnails. Start bringing the scenes to life by drawing the sketches you mapped out into the template you designed. This is just your rough draft, so don't try to make it perfect. As you sketch each scene, play around with the following elements, erasing and redrawing as often as necessary:

- ✓ Composition (lighting, foreground/background, colour palette, etc.)
- ✓ Angle from which the camera is shooting (high or low)
- ✓ The type of shot (wide shots, close-ups, over-the-shoulder shots, tracking shots, etc.)
- ✓ Props (objects in the frame)
- ✓ Actors (people, animals, etc.: anything that can act rather than be acted upon)
- ✓ Special effects

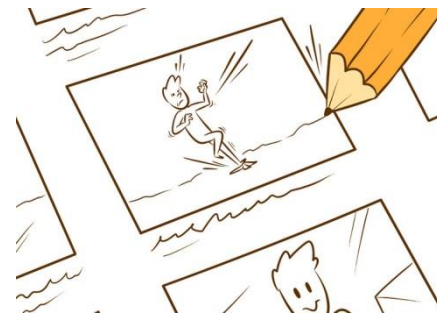


3. Add other important information. Next to or below each cell, fill in your description of what's happening in the scene. Include dialogue that will take place. Add information about the **length of time** the shot will take. Finally, **number the cells** so they're easy to reference when you discuss your storyboard with others.



4. Finalise the storyboard. Once you have identified the key points of the subject and worked out a design for each frame, review your work and make final changes. Be sure that each cell portrays the action you want it to portray. Review the descriptions and dialogue if necessary. Work as a team: it's a good idea to have someone else review the storyboard to make sure it flows well and isn't confusing.

- ✓ **Consider adding colour.** If you're creating an advertising storyboard, this will help your ideas come to life.
- ✓ Remember that it's not necessarily important that the drawings look realistic or perfect. Simple stick figures are usually clear. In most cases, storyboards don't need to be perfect: they only need to make sense to your team.
- ✓ Think about using **text**, **extra images** and **subtitles** to improve the quality of the message to your target audience.



Part 3: Fine-Tuning

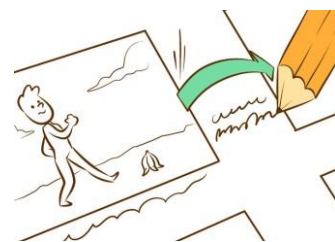
1. Think in perspective. While your storyboard illustrations don't need to look like they were created by a professional artist, use perspective to make your images look more like movie scenes.

- ✓ Instead of drawing all of your characters as though they were standing on the same horizontal line, put them in perspective. Have some standing a little further from the camera and some standing closer.



2. Have reasons for your cuts. As you storyboard your film, think about your reasons for making each cut to a new shot. Advancing the story is about more than just jumping to the next point; you need to give a reason for why your characters do what they do. Storyboarding the motivations for your cuts will help you understand how to build tension and keep the story moving when it comes to making the film.

- ✓ For example, if you want to cut from one room to another, have a character in the first room look towards the door because they hear a noise.
- ✓ This helps the story's continuity and keeps the viewer engaged.



3. Let your storyboard evolve as you go. Your storyboard is a very important tool when you're setting up your shots and directing your film. However, don't let the storyboard decide: you are the one in charge! As you make your film, you're bound to come across ideas for shots you didn't think of before. Allow yourself to drift from the board, or at least revise it, so that the filmmaking process is a bit more organic.

- ✓ Remember to accept others' input as you go along, especially if you're working with a talented film crew. A storyboard is meant to be edited and changed. It can often be improved by ideas you might not have thought up on your own.
- ✓ Most film directors have a different style when it comes to storyboarding. Some map out every last detail, while others use it as a loose guide.



Practical application

1. What sorts of videos can be made for this Erasmus+ project?
2. What audience will each have?
3. Where will each be broadcast?
4. What does this mean about the way you communicate the message?
5. How can you work together as an international team to help one another?

Now let's make some storyboards before making videos about:

1. How students feel about the Talavera workshop.
2. How the students work together as a European team.