

City of Film

TEACHER'S NOTE



About UNESCO Cities of Film:

The UNESCO City of Film status is awarded to any city which has a unique film heritage, and is filled with great minds and inspiring innovators who led cinema and the moving image to what it is today. The network is designed to encourage greater partnerships between creative cities around the world that have worked to establish a strong reputation and foothold in the creative sectors.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

This resource has been created as part of Into Film and The British Council's City of Film competition. It is designed to support educators in UNESCO Cities of Film – specifically, Bristol and Bradford in the United Kingdom, and Kathmandu in Nepal – to complete short documentaries to submit to the City of Film competition.

The information, tasks, and activities in this resource will help you to support your students in becoming young creatives, and creating a short documentary on celebrating their city.

PLEASE NOTE: Documentaries created for the City of Film competition must be 5 minutes in length (including credits).

SKILLS DEVELOPED IN THIS RESOURCE

ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS:

- Problem solving
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Analytical
- Negotiation

21ST CENTURY SKILLS:

- Evaluating self and peers
- Working with others
- Thinking critically
- Making judgements and decisions



ABOUT INTO FILM

Into Film is the UK's leading charity for film in education and the community. We provide screen industry careers information and advice, support young filmmakers, and bring the power of moving image storytelling into classroom teaching.

The core Into Film programme is free for UK state schools, colleges and other youth settings, thanks to support from the BFI, awarding National Lottery funding, and through other key funders including Cinema First and Northern Ireland Screen.

www.intofilm.org



ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Since 1934, the British Council has created friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. Their work in the arts has been central to this mission for more than 80 years, seeking new ways of connecting with and understanding each other through creativity.

- **SAFEGUARDING**
- Please watch all films in this resource prior to delivering these activities in class to ensure content is appropriate for your students. We also recommend you view content on external links in advance of sharing these with students as we are unable to accept responsibility for the content which may change, move or become unavailable without our knowledge .

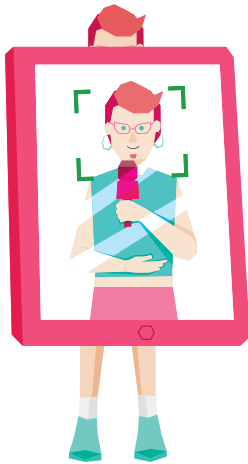


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Documentary Filmmaking

There are many different ways to make a documentary film. This resource is a guideline to some of the most important elements to include and structures to follow.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



A tablet/smart device



Editing software



Enthusiasm!

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU ALREADY HAVE?

We always recommend using available equipment, and to avoid spending money unless absolutely necessary.

If your school or students have an Apple device (**iPad or iPhone**) they will already have access to the **iMovie** app to edit their films.

If your school or students have an Android device we recommend using free editing software, such as **CapCut**.

WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

To begin, it's important that your students understand what a documentary is.

Ask them what the difference is between a **fiction film** (comedy, action, science fiction, etc) and a **non-fiction film**.

The definition you will want them to understand is that a documentary is a video examining a person, event, or place, which is entirely based on fact. But encourage your students to find their own wording.

ACTIVITY

In order to help your students understand what a documentary is, we recommend showing them these two films made by young creatives. We've also provided 3 steps for you to follow when watching the films:

1. [The Sandwich Thief](#)
2. [New Neighbours](#)



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STEPS:

STEP 1: Show them the first 30 seconds of the films, then pause it and ask them what kind of film this is, what they think might happen next.

STEP 2: After they've watched both films in full, ask them what the difference is between the films. You'll want them to understand that one is not real life but a made-up story with people acting as characters. The other represents real life; rather than a story, it communicates an idea/topic.

STEP 3: Create two lists with your students on the board: **fiction and non-fiction**. Ask them to tell you something they might see in a fiction film (e.g. a comedy, a science fiction film, etc) and then ask them how they might describe it in a non-fiction film.

Here's an example of how that might look.

FICTION

- Actors
- Set
- Costumes
- Music
- Imaginary Stories
- Special Effects

NON FICTION

- Presenter
- Location
- Clothes
- Sounds
- Real Stories
- Real World

TOP TIP

Your students might understand non-fiction as 'news,' so we have included links to a wide variety of non-fiction documentaries from young creatives in this resource. It's important to show your students that documentary can be so much more than just a news format. It can be informative, like the news, but it can also be very creative!

Throughout the process, encourage your students to be more creative with their documentaries. Use the links to documentaries in this resource to inspire your students by showing them different examples.

SUGGESTED VIEWING ACTIVITY

Whenever you show your students a documentary from this resource it's a good idea to follow a structure to ensure everyone is paying attention, here's a simple one we recommend:

STEPS:

STEP 1: Play the first 30 seconds of the film. Pause the film and ask your students what they think the film is going to be about, what images they expect to see and what they think is going to happen.

STEP 2: Play the rest of the film. Ask your students to work in groups/pairs and create one sentence that they would use to describe the film and encourage someone else to watch it.

STEP 3: Ask your students to share what they think we can learn from a film like this. You may wish to give guidance by asking how film is similar or different to other pieces of evidence like photographs, letters or newspapers.

TOP TIP

Every time you show your students a documentary from this resource, keep a record of the differences they notice between all the films. This will give your students a collection of ideas they can use in their documentary.



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IDEAS

Before you can make a documentary, you'll need an idea of what their documentary could be about.

Your city has been named a **UNESCO City of Film**, so what is it that makes your city so great? Write down key words with your group.



TOP TIP

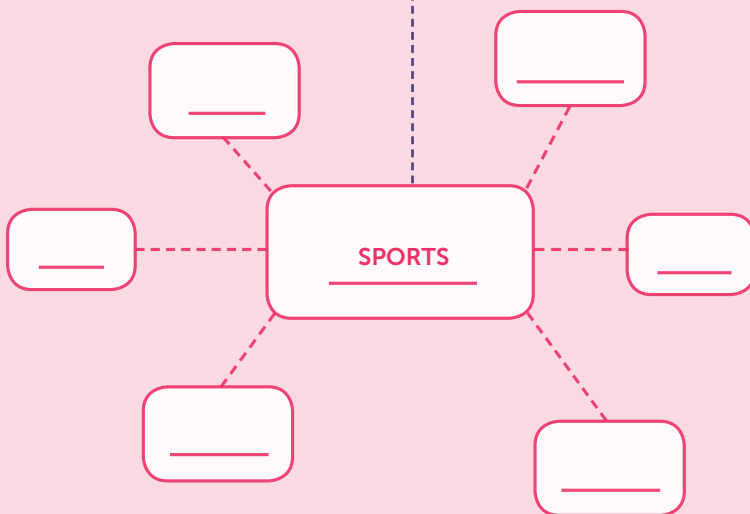
You can do this in **columns, mindmaps, or a word cloud** – whichever works best for your group

- Possible ideas to include:
- Culture
 - Green spaces
 - Public transport
 - Cycling
 - Welcoming/Friendly
 - History
 - Diversity
 - Clubs
 - Sports
 - Food
 - Architecture / Buildings
 - Rivers
 - Animals / Wildlife

COLUMNS

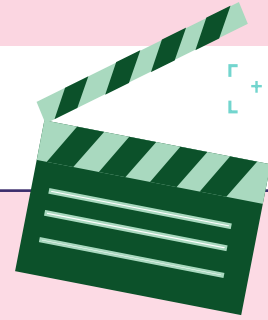
RIVERS	LANDMARKS

MIND MAPS



WORD CLOUDS





ACTIVITY

THINK IN PICTURES



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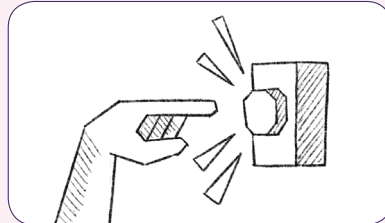
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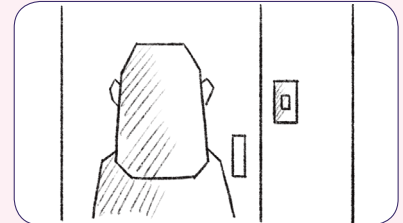
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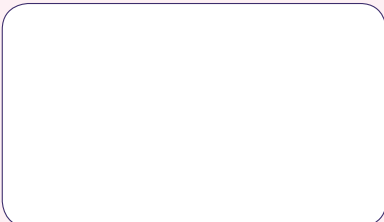
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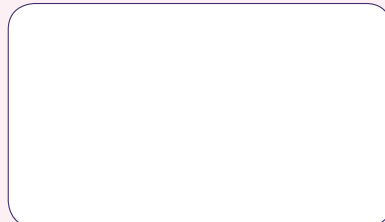
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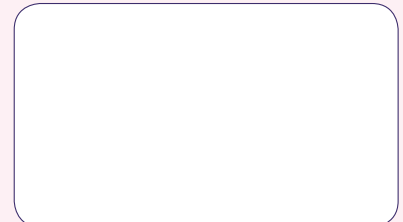
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STEPS:

STEP 1: Now that your students have their keywords, ask them to think of 10 pictures that would accompany these ideas/keywords. Don't ask for an order, just get them to create 10 pictures.

The images don't need to be in order or even good drawings (images sourced online will do), as long as they visualise their idea.

STEP 2: Ask your students to put the pictures in an order that tells the story they want to tell.

STEP 3: Ask your students to write one sentence for each picture.

Once you have 10 pictures with 10 sentences underneath, congratulations! This is the first plan for their documentary.



STRUCTURE AND TIMING:

Now that your students have a visual plan they can structure their films in the same way they would structure a piece of writing.

Documentary films usually start by introducing the subject, then give more detail, and finally end with a conclusion – just like a piece of writing.

Creating a structure for their documentary can really help your students to organise their thoughts, and makes the filming process much easier. We recommend a **two step structure** for younger students and a **four step structure** for older students.



TWO STEP STRUCTURE

A documentary structure for a film about a city can be very simple, for example:

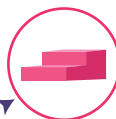
1. Introduce the city
2. Explain what makes it so special



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We have created **activity sheets** at the end of this resource for you to use with your group.

Look for this symbol



- An example of simple but effective **two-step structure** film is Unity.
- In this film, the young filmmakers open with a sentence "We asked a few people about what unity means to them..." and then we see different people from the school saying what 'unity' means to them.
- It's a really simple structure, but very effective.

FOUR STEP STRUCTURE

If your students are older, or experienced filmmakers, they might want to make a more detailed structure, for example:

1. Introduce the city
2. Explain a problem it encountered
3. Explain how the problem was solved
4. Explain the benefit



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A

For an example of the four-step structure, a clear example is this documentary *Save Your Money, Methane Ain't Funny*.

We've expanded the four-step structure of *Save Your Money, Methane Ain't Funny* so you can understand how it works a little better. You can see that it is a simple idea and structure, and very similar to how a piece of writing might be made.

B

1. **INTRODUCTION:** The students noticed that there were no big shops in their town.
2. **THE PROBLEM:** This means that the only way to get good shopping is to drive or take a bus because it's too far to walk, and this creates pollution.
3. **THE SOLUTION:** Their school has now created a shop for children and parents, and it's much cheaper than the big shops.
4. **THE BENEFIT:** Shopping is much easier to do, and the people in the town don't need to drive so much, as a result less pollution is created.

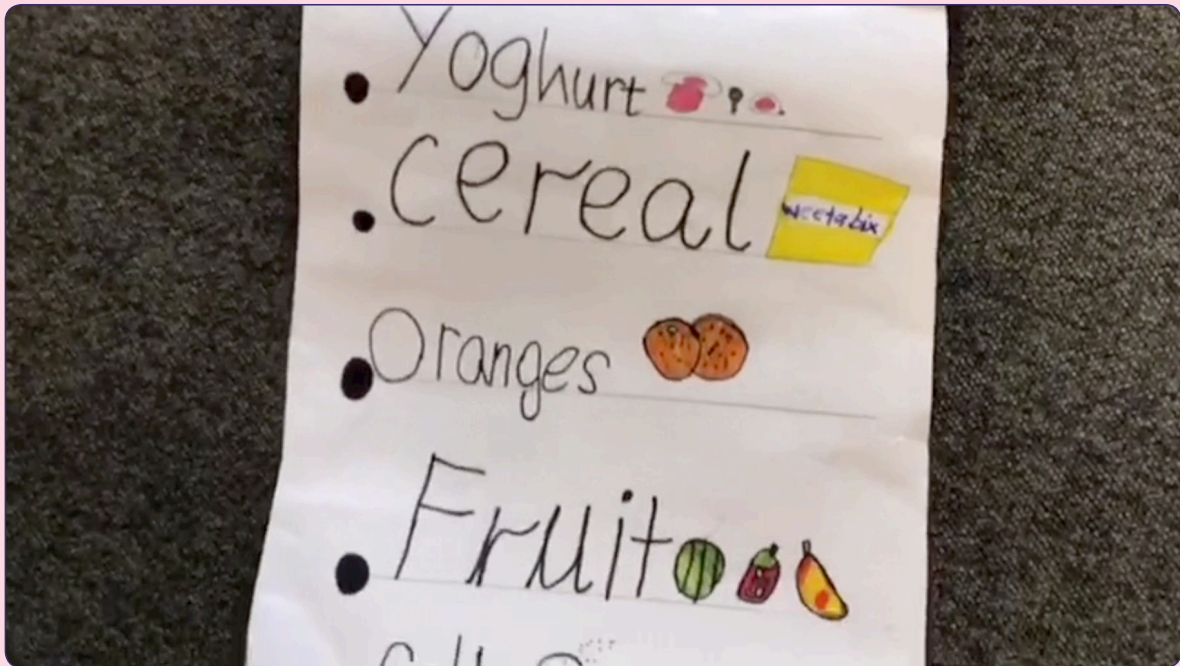
C

In the film, it is the young creatives who are often appearing on film, but it remains a real story about the real world.

TOP TIP

Encourage students to take their own creative approach to making their **four-step structure** documentaries and showing them a variety of short documentary examples. You can find these at Into [Film's Into Film Shorts YouTube channel](#). Remember to watch short documentaries in advance to ensure they are suitable for your students.

ACTIVITY



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STEPS:

STEP 1: Ask students to return to their 10 pictures and ask your groups to build a structure for their film. Using the worksheet at the end of this resource, ask students to write one sentence to summarise each part of their film.

STEP 2: Students should understand that each sentence will end up being approximately 1 minute long in their final film.

STEP 3: Students can then choose which of their 10 pictures goes with which sentence – the idea here is that each sentence will have 1 or more pictures to accompany it.

- For example, *Save Your Money*, *Methane Ain't Funny* is a four-step structure film, but the film is 4 minutes and 55 seconds long. Because of this, we recommend having a maximum of 5 sentences to describe each part of their documentary.

TOP TIP

This planning stage is a great way to make sure your students have achievable ideas of what they want their film to be about. They will also need to understand that each minute of their film will involve many different camera shots. Encourage their creativity, but make sure they are planning something they can achieve.

We have created **activity sheets** at the end of this resource for you to use with your group.

Look for this symbol for four-step structure

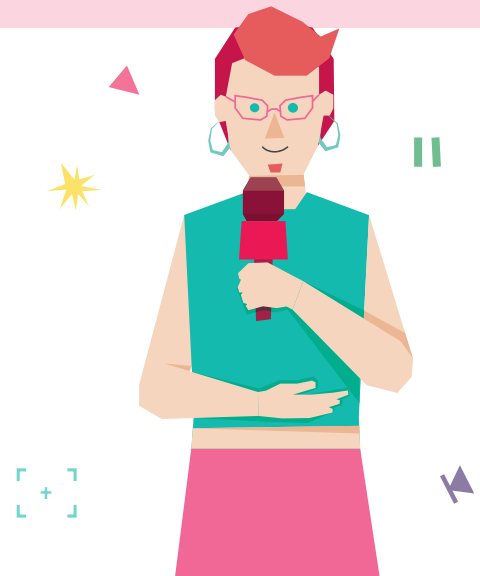


DIFFERENT TYPES OF DOCUMENTARIES:

So now you have your idea, your keywords, and your structure, but what type of documentary will it be?

There are lots of different types of documentaries, in this resource we're going to look at two main types:

- **Presenter led**
- **Voiceover led**



PRESENTER LED DOCUMENTARY

This is a documentary where a presenter speaks to the camera, explains the topic, gives information, and might even interview people. Your students should be very familiar with this type of documentary, we see it often on the news.

If you're making a presenter led documentary then it's important that the presenter is engaging, confident, speaks clearly, and is passionate about the topic.



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- Here's two examples of presenter led documentaries:
- 1. [Pangra Jatra 2019](#)
- 2. [Wings](#)



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TOP TIP

You can choose to have no voiceover or presenter, and just use music. This can be much easier, and can work very well with young creatives who have less filmmaking experience.

This film, [The People of Kathmandu](#), is a good example. It doesn't give any information, but it's a great way to create a feeling of what it's like to be in a particular place.



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- Panga Jatra 2019 (for English subtitles you'll need to hit the CC button in the bottom right-hand corner of the video).

- In this documentary the presenter teaches us about the topic (the Panga Jatra in 2019) and explores it. She doesn't speak to any experts or people at the Jatra to get information from them, she simply shows us what the experience is like, and what kind of costumes everyone wears and activities everyone does (as well as what kinds of delicious food are available).

- Wings: In this documentary we have three presenters, and they interview a number of experts to get more information about the topic (birds in Sri Lanka).
- A presenter led film is a good place for young creatives to start.
- As you saw in Wings, your students can have more than one presenter, allowing several students to have an opportunity to be in front of the camera.



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VOICEOVER LED FILM

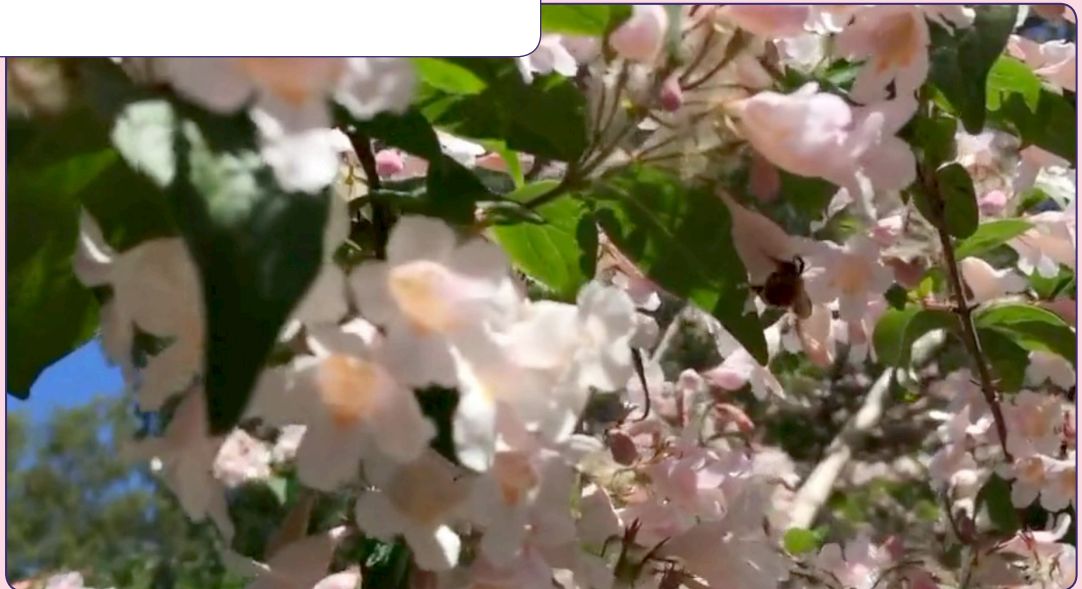
You may also have noticed that the presenters in *Panga Jatra 2019* and *Wings* also provide a voiceover at times. A voiceover is when we hear a voice, but don't see someone speaking.

If you're making a voiceover led documentary then it's important that you choose a voice that's clear to understand, and is able to create the right amount of emotion or mood for your film. And remember, whether you're making a presenter led documentary or a voiceover led documentary, your students will be working from a written script either way.

Voiceover led documentaries can be a great choice. It can be much easier for students to record a voiceover than to present sometimes, and it's very easy to get good sound recordings by adding a voiceover.

Here's an example of voiceover led documentary:

Ted's Lessons from Nature



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TOP TIP

It's very important that you record the voiceover in a quiet room. And it's best to choose a room that doesn't have too much echo. Try recording some voiceover in different rooms to find the best option available to your students.

To avoid echo when recording a voiceover, it's best to choose a small room that has a lot of soft furnishings, such as carpet, curtains, etc. Remember, the bigger the room, the more the sound will bounce around, so try to find a smaller room.





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- ***Ted's Lessons from Nature***: Although you never see the presenter in this documentary, he illustrates his words by using camera shots that explain what he's saying.
- It's also a good example of youth-filmmaking that doesn't have much equipment. The filmmaker is only using his parent's phone, he has no tripod or any other equipment.
- The camera work is quite shaky at times – but because he is so interested in the topic, and so engaging to listen to, his film becomes very entertaining and interesting.
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- ***Ted's Lessons From Nature*** is also an excellent example of an authentically youth-made film – this young filmmaker has made a film about exactly what he wanted to say, and that feeling comes across very strongly.

For more information about making a voiceover led documentary, we created this instructional video which you may want to show your students:

[How To – Voiceover led documentary](#)

A voiceover led documentary is a great choice for young creatives. It works particularly well if your students don't want to appear on camera.





TOP TIP

Just because your students are making a documentary about something real, it doesn't mean they can't be creative.

This documentary, *The Heart of the City*, was made to celebrate the city of London. It's a voiceover led documentary, but the young filmmaker has turned his voice into something more like a song, with fast-paced music. It's a very exciting way to make a film about a city, and might be something your students want to do.



@IntoFilm 2018

TOP TIP

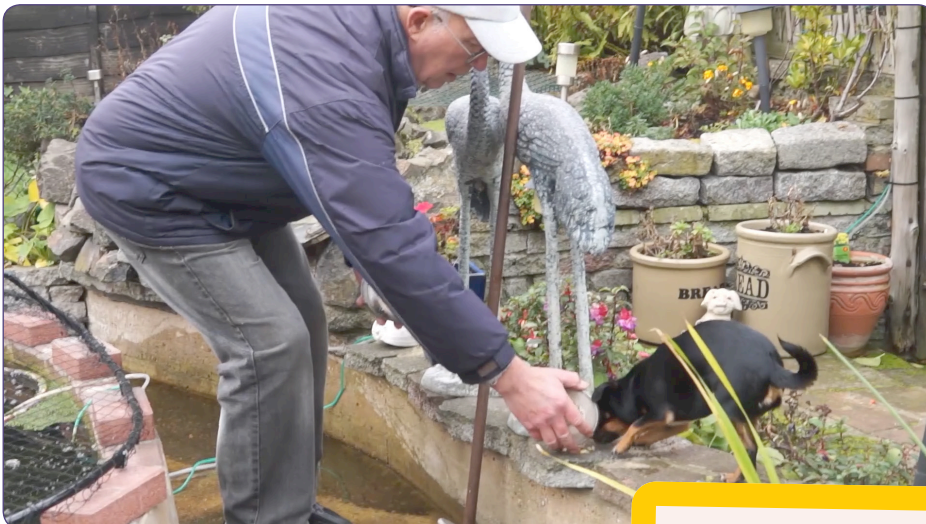
If you're using statistics or information from a source (e.g. a website, newspaper, etc) then make sure you credit that source on screen. Written information should be in a font which is easy to read, and on screen long enough for the audience to read it.

When editing, your students can practice putting information on the screen for different amounts of time and see which one works best. They want to make sure the writing on the screen is there for long enough for all audience members to read it and understand it. This is a great time to show the documentary to someone who hasn't been involved in the filmmaking (for example, another Teacher) – and ask them if it works.



INTERESTING PEOPLE:

Sometimes a documentary is about a person with an interesting story. When you're making a documentary like this, you can make the person in the documentary a bit like a presenter.



@IntoFilm 2019



TOP TIP

Pay careful attention when watching the example films in this resource to get some great filmmaking ideas.

For example, you can see in *The Art of Parkinson's* that only one interview has been recorded with the man – all of the shots of him telling his story are from the same angle. Then the filmmaker has followed the creation of one piece of art and mixed the shots of the interview with the shots of the artwork being created. It's simple, but very effective, and the finished documentary looks very professional.

- Here's an example of a documentary where the person the film is about becomes a bit like a presenter - *The Art of Parkinson's*.
- This kind of film works really well. We want to hear more about this man's life, and learn about the art he makes.

- To make a film like this to celebrate your city you will need to make sure that the subject of the documentary has a warm personality, or is interesting for the audience, and that they're happy to be filmed.



@IntoFilm 2019

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVITY:

It's important to include as many different perspectives as possible in our films.

So when speaking to people, or including advice from experts, make sure you include both men and women, boys and girls, old people and young people, and people from different cultures and backgrounds.

The more diverse your interview subjects and experts, the more perspectives (ways of seeing) you're covering – and this will make your documentary stronger, and more relatable for a wider audience.



STAYING COPYRIGHT FREE

This is a vital point for your students to understand. If they are using music in their documentary then it's important that this is copyright free. Most music is copyrighted by the owner and cannot be used in short films or documentaries without permission or payment to the artist.

The most creative solution is for your students to create their own soundtrack by playing instruments.

If this isn't possible then make sure they use a copyright free source to download music - sites such as [Incompetech](#), [Bensound](#), [Purple Planet](#), and the [YouTube Audio Library](#) are all good sources of copyright free music.

Congratulations! Your students now have all of their planning complete for their documentary!

PLANNING YOUR DOCUMENTARY STRUCTURE - ACTIVITY SHEET



TWO-STEP STRUCTURE

INTRODUCE YOUR CITY

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EXPLAIN WHAT MAKES IT SO SPECIAL

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FOUR-STEP STRUCTURE

INTRODUCE YOUR CITY

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EXPLAIN A PROBLEM IT ENCOUNTERED

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EXPLAIN HOW THE PROBLEM WAS SOLVED

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EXPLAIN THE BENEFIT

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CREATE YOUR OWN UNIQUE DOCUMENTARY STRUCTURE HERE:

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