

Short Film

A Game about making movies by Josh T. Jordan



How to Play

Short film is a game for four players. Together, you imagine and describe a short film. Each of you has a different role in the making of your movie.

ONE PERSON IS IN CHARGE OF THE MOVIE'S SOUNDTRACK. That player needs a phone, computer, or other source of music.

THE SECOND PERSON IS IN CHARGE OF THE MOVIE'S LOCATIONS. That player needs a phone, computer, or other source of images of places and landscapes.

THE THIRD PERSON IS IN CHARGE OF CASTING MOST OF THE CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

That player needs a phone, computer, or other source of images of people.

THE FOURTH PERSON IS IN CHARGE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER, THE STAR, OF THE MOVIE.

That player needs a phone, computer, or other source of video clips of an actor.

Gather four players.

Talk briefly about what kind of film you want to make together. Don't get too specific.

Discuss your boundaries and mention any subjects you don't want in the movie.

Decide on a rating for your movie. (This step is optional.)

Each player chooses a role (Soundtrack, Locations, Star, Casting.)

Each player follows the instructions for his or her role.

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Soundtrack Player

This is a story game for four players about making a short film. Each player has a different job in the production of the film. Choose a Soundtrack player, a Locations player, a Star player, and a Casting Player.

Whenever a character tries to do something important, the player in charge of describing that character plays paper, rock, scissors with another player. On a win, the character succeeds. On a loss or tie, the character fails. Either way, start a new scene. A new scene means a new location or new supporting characters or both. The lead character may be in any and all scenes.

You don't usually play a character in the film, but you are in charge of beginning and ending the game. You play music during the story and make sound effects whenever you like. No one else can introduce any sound into the story other than talking in character. Change music when you want to change the tone of the movie. The story starts when you start the music and ends when you stop the music and say, "The End." Stop the music when you feel the lead has succeeded or failed at getting the measurable thing described by Star.

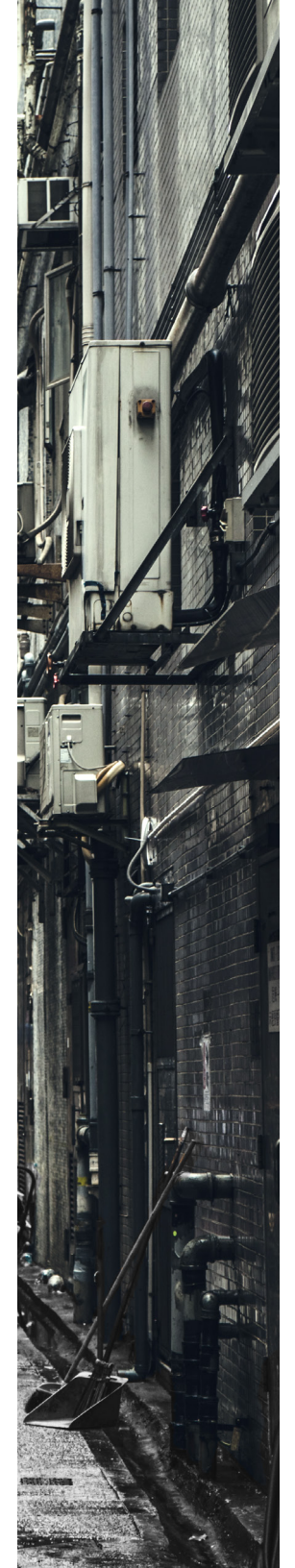
If there are more than two characters speaking in the same scene, the Casting player may offer to let you play one of the supporting characters for this scene. If you agree to do so, work with the Casting player to determine which character you play. When you play as a character, you speak, act, and make decisions for that character.

Locations Player

This is a story game for four players about making a short film. Each player has a different job in the production of the film. Choose a Soundtrack player, a Locations player, a Star player, and a Casting Player.

Whenever a character tries to do something important, the player in charge of describing that character plays paper, rock, scissors with another player. On a win, the character succeeds. On a loss or tie, the character fails. Either way, start a new scene. A new scene means a new location or new supporting characters or both. The lead character may be in any and all scenes.

You don't usually play a speaking character in the film, but you play all the extras, non-speaking characters. You begin after Soundtrack and before Star. You show other players pictures or silent videos. These visuals represent the scene: the location, the extras, and the time of day. Extras do not talk to or directly interact with the lead character. You may also describe the scene or describe how the scene is similar to or different than your pictures. No one else introduces images to the story except by describing their character.





Star Player

This is a story game for four players about making a short film. Each player has a different job in the production of the film. Choose a Soundtrack player, a Locations player, a Star player, and a Casting Player.

Whenever a character tries to do something important, the player in charge of describing that character plays paper, rock, scissors with another player. On a win, the character succeeds. On a loss or tie, the character fails. Either way, start a new scene. A new scene means a new location or new supporting characters or both. The lead character may be in any and all scenes.

You are the star of the movie, which means you play the lead character in the film. You begin after Locations and before Casting. You describe the appearance, actions, speech, and, if you wish, the thoughts of the most important character, the lead. No one else can describe this character.

Begin by describing something measurable that the lead wants right now, but doesn't have. Whenever Casting describes a supporting character helping or hurting your pursuit of this thing, you describe how the lead reacts.

Casting Player

This is a story game for four players about making a short film. Each player has a different job in the production of the film. Choose a Soundtrack player, a Locations player, a Star player, and a Casting Player.

Whenever a character tries to do something important, the player in charge of describing that character plays paper, rock, scissors with another player. On a win, the character succeeds. On a loss or tie, the character fails. Either way, start a new scene. A new scene means a new location or new supporting characters or both. The lead character may be in any and all scenes.

You play the supporting characters, that is, all the characters with speaking roles in the film except the lead character. Begin after Star. You describe supporting characters, characters besides the lead and extras. Supporting characters want things. Their pursuit of the things they want directly helps or hurts the lead's attempt to get the thing he or she wants. Describe how these characters look, speak, and act. Their actions should measurably provoke the lead.

If there are more than two characters speaking in a scene, you may choose to let the Soundtrack player or Locations player take over one of the supporting characters. If you choose to do so, work with them to decide together which supporting character they play during this scene.

Otherwise, only you can describe the actions of supporting characters. Remember, the messier and more emotional their interactions with the lead, the better. With permission from Locations, you may turn an extra character into a supporting character by giving that character a name and describing them speaking.

