

## What happens in Post Production

This is a training module from the ScreenSkills 'From Script to Screen' programme.

The text includes multiple choice questions for you to answer. Each question is identified with the words 'Multiple choice question' and finishes like this:

**Question end**

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That's so you can stop and think. Each question end is followed by the correct answer and feedback.

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### Section A: Introduction

Post Production is where the rubber hits the road. It's the place where everything that has come before is stitched together by the Editor and Post team to build the narrative... creating a compelling audio-visual story that hopefully legions of fans will want to watch.

This is where music is added to intensify emotions... where we sculpt colour and sounds to carefully set the perfect mood... and where the illusions of the screen come to life with Visual Effects – or VFX.

### Section B: Pre-production

Post Production starts not at the end as you might believe, but at the beginning, in the Pre-production stage and during the Shoot, especially for scripted content.

The Post Production Supervisor is responsible for this part of production. Decisions made at the very start affect how the whole production will be run. Things like cameras and lenses, data capture, aspect and shooting ratios, and formats are agreed on to meet the creative and technical needs of the content being produced. And all of these things affect the budget and the schedule.

In fact, it's not uncommon for the Post part of production to take longer to complete than Pre-production and Shooting combined! That's especially true for sci-fi or fantasy stories.

Discussions at this stage will impact all areas of the production, from the size of the Camera team, to the physical equipment required and the Post Production workflow.

## Section C: The Shoot

So how does Post Production get involved during the production itself?

Well, did you ever wonder where the footage that's being shot actually goes? First it's usually backed up on set by the Data Wrangler, Data Manager or the Digital Imaging Technician, also known as a DIT. Then it's transferred to a Post facility either via the cloud or a hard drive. And, to make certain that there are no data transfer errors and to evaluate the tech quality of the material, the Digital Lab examines all the footage from that day. They also are responsible for converting the original camera files into low-resolution files that are faster to work with and smaller to store.

It's then passed onto the Editing team, also known as Editorial. Editorial will work with this low-res footage, in what's called offline editing. They'll check that they have all the shots and if there are any obvious continuity issues.

Editorial is also in charge of setting up a viewing platform for the dailies so that the Director, key members of the Production team and the studio can see what's been shot each day.

**Multiple choice question.** Why do you think Editorial check the footage each day?

- A. To decide which shots they like
- B. To make sure nothing is missing
- C. To see if any reshoots are needed

**Question end**

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The correct answers are B and C. They check it all carefully to make sure there's nothing missing and that there's continuity, in case any reshoots are needed.

## Section D: After filming

After filming has finished, the Assistant Editor will sort the clips by scene number, theme, action, or other categories that make it easy for the Editor to find the clips they need to build the scene in the most impactful way possible.

Editors will take the dailies and cut them into sequences until they've built an entire film or an episode.

Using the shooting script and continuity notes, the Editor builds or assembles a cut of the story.

The best Editors inherently understand how to tell an engaging story – so much so that many in the industry call editing the "last rewrite" because it's the final opportunity to sharpen the film or episode.

There are many different cuts on the road to a finished product. And it's during these versions where the Editor will chisel out the story using feedback from executives, the Director, and the studio until the creative vision is realised.

**Multiple choice question.** During this process, they'll get to what's called the fine cut. Do you know what that is?

- A. When people are generally happy with the rough cut
- B. When you start to refine each shot
- C. When sound and music are added

**Question end**

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It's all these things. The fine cut is the stage when the cuts are mostly in place and can start to be refined – after which sound is selected, colour is decided on, and music is added to enhance the story.

When there are elements that can't be filmed in real life, like fantastical creatures, or where we need to remove elements that shouldn't be in shot, that's where VFX, also known as visual effects, comes in. We talk all about VFX in another module.

Meanwhile, the Sound Editor will make sure that the audio is clean and will re-record any dialogue tracks that are not audible.

Once the Producer, Director, and the studio are happy, and all necessary changes have been made, the Editor has a locked cut, or picture lock, which means the cut of the film or episode is complete.

## Section E: Finishing processes

Picture lock doesn't mean we finish working on it, because image and sound still need to undergo finishing processes.

Now we'll go back to the original camera files to work with high resolution material in what is called online editing. The footage gets colour-enhanced or graded and multiple audio elements like music, sound effects, and recorded dialogue are assembled and mixed together.

Sometimes Composers will involve a full orchestra to deliver music, and the Sound Designer may record sound effects to enhance quality and the story.

**Multiple choice question.** Do you know what it's called when sound effects are created?

- A. Sonic
- B. Foley
- C. Alternation

**Question end**

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It's B. Creating sound effects to mimic particular noises is called Foley. For example, they might fry bacon to sound like rain, or bend celery stalks to sound like broken bones.

Both the sound and picture Post Production processes allow the Director and Producer to create a visual language and mood for the film or episode. But, we're not quite done yet. We still need to add a few more elements to the film, like credit captions and graphics.

It's only when we put all of this together – the graded image, the mixed audio, the VFX and such, that the filmmakers are able to see the content in its final form.

Then it's on to Quality Control, or QC, where everything is checked to make sure the content is technically ready to distribute and that there are no mistakes.

Aside from the brilliant title that was created, there are also some other deliverables that will have been worked on throughout the production. For example, legal documents that assign rights to the distributor, as well as publicity and marketing materials.

So, once it's all looked over, the copyrights and clearances are double checked and done, and deliverables are ready, then finally the film or episode can be released! Now, it's time to pass the popcorn!

And that's the end of this module. This was created by ScreenSkills.