

SHAKE FEST STUDIO



Filming your piece

Things to consider when finding a spot to film

So now you're ready to put pen to paper, or should we say, performance to camera! But you might be wondering where to start? Well let's find a good place to film!

So what makes a good place to film? You'll want to keep in mind some key factors when thinking about where you might want to film your submission. **Let's jump right in!**

ACCESS:

Thinking about the place you might want to film: will you have access to it when you would want to perform? You'll also need to consider a few other things, depending on the type of space:

- **Home** - Will other people be around and making noise? Will you be able to perform at full volume? Has the vacuuming been done already? Has the cat been fed?
- **School** - Will you need to get permission for the classroom or performance space? Will you need a teacher present if it is outside school hours? Will there be people around who will create noise and distract from your amazing performance?

There are a million places you could film, and they will all have their pros and cons. Try and keep it simple and close to home so you can focus on doing what you do best: performing!

SPACE:

So how much do you need? Well that depends on your piece! You'll definitely want more than a broom closet, and less than a whole football field. Have a think about:

- Will you be moving around in your performance?
- What actions will you be performing?
- Are there any obstructions (tripping hazards, slippery floors)?
- Will you need to move furniture out of the way?

- How close to the camera will you be?
- Will you need to attach your camera to something, or do you have a tripod?

You'll know your piece better than anyone else, so think through what you need from the performance space. Try to keep it a comfortable size, but not too big.

LIGHT:

First and foremost, your amazing performance needs to be visible, but there is a lot more to consider about light! Make sure there is enough light, so you're not in darkness (moody lighting can help create atmosphere, but we still need to see you), and make sure there isn't too much light (direct sunshine, for example, can overexpose your face and won't show any details).

- Ceiling lights, lamps, stage lights etc. are great options, but will dependent on availability. Try multiple lights to fill in shadows that appear when you turn on your key light source. White surfaces can reflect light back at you to fill in shadows, or even a sheet of paper if you are in a close up shot.
- Sunlight is the easiest (and free!) source of light you'll find, but it can be harsh and create a lot of shadows! Think about how long you will need to film (will it go into night), and think about overcast days and clouds (TIP: Overcast days can create beautiful smooth light, as opposed to harsh direct sunlight, so all is not lost if the sun isn't out that day).

Tip: The best way to see what something looks like is to grab your phone and film some test footage!

SOUND:

Now that we can see you, let's make sure we can hear you!

- **Distractions** - Hopefully your space won't have people mowing or vacuuming, but you can always wait for the noise to finish before you try another take. Watch for pets, fridges, aquariums, and airplanes too! You can always make a "Filming in Progress" sign for the door! A nice quiet room is your best bet!
- **Echos** - Big rooms can have pretty big echos when you film. If you are at home, try putting a blanket up on the wall behind your camera, or close the curtains (unless you're using sunlight to film). Try to soften the space with blankets, rugs, and curtains the best you can, but it doesn't have to be perfect!
- **Microphones** - The microphone on your phone should do the trick in most cases, but if you have access to sound equipment like boom or lapel mics, then go for it! Remember to test them before hand and ensure they are capturing sound to your device. It can sometimes be better to keep it simple so that less can go wrong!

The only way to tell what a room will sound like is to grab your phone and give it a test! Remember to always do a soundcheck at full performance level! Review and adjust to your heart's content!

(TIP: At the end of the day, we aren't looking for the piece with the best sound, so don't stress if it isn't perfect).

FRAMING:

This is especially important for monologues that need to capture the actors face on screen. Depending on the size of your space, your camera will be either up close or far enough away to capture a full body performance. Think about what will work best for your piece!

- **The Rule of Thirds** - If you divide an image into nine boxes (as shown below in brilliant form by Chris Pratt), you will create an easy way to balance your shot. In theory, placing the subject on one of the lines in the frame will create a balanced frame that feels natural to watch.

- **Headroom** - Drawing our attention once again to Mr. Pratt, see how the top of his head gently touches the top of the frame? That is perfect headroom for this kind of close up. Too much headroom would have too much space above his head, and not enough headroom would cut half his head off!

- **Eyeline** - Back to Pratt! Notice how his eyeline is crossing most of the frame as he looks right to left? That's a well-balanced eyeline. If he were to change his eyeline and look to the right, there would only be a small amount of space before the edge of frame, and the image would feel unbalanced. This is especially true for close ups, so have a play around on your phone and see what looks best to you!

Framing is up to you. If you want your performance to be shown in a full body shot, then make sure we can see your head and your feet. If you want to film in a mid-shot, then think about your eyeline and headroom. There's heaps of information on the rule of thirds, headroom, and eyelines, out there, so if this is something you're interested in, then the skies the limit! Thanks Chris Pratt.

TEST:

At the end of the day, the best way to figure out if a space is going to work for you is to try it out! Grab your phone and use it to test out all the things we've gone through above. Remember:

- Test out the light
- Test out full performance energy
- Test out full performance volume

- Test out any costume pieces you might have (are they too bright, can you move in them)

Review the footage and make any adjustments you need! Ask for advice from friends, family, or teachers too! Maybe they can help you set up some lights or microphones, or even be your cameraperson! But if you are riding solo and playing the director, cast, AND crew - then don't stress - **we'll see your passion and enthusiasm shine through, no matter what!**