STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

Smartphone Filmmaking — Workbook

This workbook pairs with the Smartphone Filmmaking course and gives you hands-on exercises, structured worksheets, and production templates you will reuse on every shoot. Complete each section alongside its corresponding module — do not skip ahead, as later exercises build on earlier ones. Every template is designed to be printed or filled in digitally on your phone.

Camera Fundamentals for Mobile Sensors

Build the habit of manual exposure control and configure your phone correctly before every shoot.

Exercise: Exposure Walk Test

Set your camera app to manual mode (Blackmagic Camera or Filmic Pro). Lock shutter to 1/50s, white balance to 5600K. Walk from indoors to bright sunlight in a single continuous take, adjusting only ISO to maintain a flat waveform. Review the clip and answer the prompts.

• At what ISO did your exposure clip to white outdoors? Note the value and location conditions.

• At what ISO did noise become visible in the shadows? Screenshot the frame and describe what you see.

• Did the motion blur look natural at 1/50s or unnatural? If unnatural, what was different about your movement?

• Would an ND8 or ND64 filter have helped in any part of the walk? Explain which and why.

Worksheet: Pre-Shoot Camera Configuration Sheet

Fill out one row for each shoot day before you leave home. Keep a running log in the second template tab.

Shoot date

Location / environment (indoors / outdoors / mixed)

Expected lighting conditions (daylight / overcast / tungsten / mixed)

Camera app chosen and reason

Frame rate selected

Shutter speed locked to

White balance (Kelvin value)

Codec and resolution

ND filter required (ND8 / ND64 / none)

Battery % at start of shoot

Available storage (GB) at start of shoot

Notes / surprises on the day

Checklist: Camera Fundamentals Readiness Checklist

[ ] I can name the three manual controls (ISO, shutter speed, white balance) and explain what each does
[ ] I have downloaded and opened at least one manual camera app (Blackmagic Camera or Filmic Pro)
[ ] I have shot 30 seconds of video with shutter locked to 1/50s at 24fps
[ ] I have reviewed the clip and confirmed motion blur looks natural
[ ] I understand the difference between H.265 and ProRes and have chosen the right codec for my editing hardware
[ ] I have completed the Exposure Walk Test and documented my ISO limits for my phone model
[ ] I own or have ordered an ND8 or ND64 filter that fits my phone

Cinematic Composition and Shot Grammar

Practice framing, angles, and lighting until they become instinctive — use the shot log to build a personal composition reference.

Exercise: Four-Angle Scene Study

Choose a single scene: one person performing a simple action (making coffee, reading, working at a desk). Shoot the same 20-second scene four times using eye level, high angle, low angle, and Dutch tilt. Do not change lighting or performance between takes. Review all four clips back to back and answer the prompts.

• In one sentence, describe the emotional impression created by the eye-level angle.

• In one sentence, describe how your feeling toward the subject changed in the high-angle version.

• Which angle felt most unnatural to execute physically? Why do you think that is?

• If you were editing a scene where a character loses their job, which angle would you use for their reaction and why?

Worksheet: Shot List Planning Worksheet

Fill this out before every shoot — a complete shot list prevents missed coverage and reduces time on location.

Project / scene name

Location

Shoot date and call time

Scene description (1-2 sentences)

Shot number

Shot type (EWS / WS / MS / CU / ECU)

Camera angle (eye level / high / low / Dutch)

Movement (locked / push / pull / orbit / follow)

Lens (wide / standard / tele / ultra-wide)

Lighting setup (key source / fill / backlight)

Notes / special considerations

Completed? (check when captured)

Checklist: Composition and Lighting Field Checklist

[ ] Grid overlay is enabled in my camera app before every shot
[ ] Subject eyes are placed on the upper third line for close-up and medium shots
[ ] Lead room is present in the direction the subject faces or moves
[ ] A foreground element creates depth in at least one shot per scene
[ ] I have the 5-shot B-roll formula memorized: wide, medium, close, POV, reaction
[ ] Light source is identified and at 30–45 degrees to the subject's face
[ ] Mixed color temperatures have been resolved (same Kelvin, gels, or all-natural light)
[ ] A white foam board or bounce card is in my kit bag

Gimbal Operation and Camera Movement

Log your gimbal drills and builds so you can track improvement and diagnose persistent wobble or balance issues.

Exercise: Gimbal Drill Log

Complete 5 reps of each of the four core moves (push, pull, orbit, follow). After each rep, review the clip at 0.5x speed. Score each rep on the scale below and note what to improve.

• Push: rate each of 5 reps 1–5 (1 = visible bounce/wobble, 5 = silky smooth). What caused the lowest-scoring rep to wobble?

• Orbit: did you maintain a consistent radius throughout the arc? If not, what body movement caused you to drift in or out?

• Follow (behind): was the gap to the subject consistent? Note any points where you accelerated or decelerated and explain why.

• After all 20 reps: which move feels most natural? Which needs the most practice? Write a 2-rep correction plan for your weakest move.

Worksheet: Gimbal Balance and Configuration Log

Record your gimbal setup for each phone/case combination you use. A saved balance log means you can re-rig in 90 seconds.

Phone model and case (if any)

Gimbal model

Tilt arm position (cm from default center)

Left/right balance (level / adjusted left / adjusted right)

Roll balance result (level / adjusted CW / adjusted CCW)

Operating mode used

Follow speed setting (if adjustable)

Accessories mounted (LED / mic / none)

Counterweight added? (yes / no / weight in grams)

Total balance time (minutes)

Notes (any motor noise / drift / calibration needed)

Checklist: On-Set Gimbal Readiness Checklist

[ ] Gimbal is balanced with today's phone and case combination before powering on
[ ] IMU auto-calibration has been run in the last 30 days
[ ] Battery is above 80% at the start of shooting
[ ] Operating mode is confirmed before each shot (Follow / Lock / FPV)
[ ] I have completed all 20 drill reps at least once before using the gimbal on a real shoot
[ ] A backup handheld stabilization technique (elbows in, wide stance) is ready if gimbal fails
[ ] The gimbal case is packed with a USB-C charging cable for field top-ups

On-Device Editing and Export

Build editing consistency with a scene-matching workflow and a per-project export checklist that ensures every platform gets the right file.

Exercise: 90-Second Rough-Cut Timing Exercise

Import your footage from Modules 1–3 exercises into LumaFusion or CapCut. Assemble a rough cut in story order without trimming. Note the total runtime. Then apply the four-step trimming method from the course to reach 90 seconds or fewer. Answer the prompts below.

• What was the total runtime of your rough cut before trimming? How many minutes over target were you?

• Which of the four trimming steps removed the most time? Why do you think that was?

• Describe one scene or shot you cut that you had emotional attachment to. Did removing it improve or hurt the overall film?

• Play your final cut back with the sound off. Does the visual story still make sense? What does this tell you about your composition and shot selection?

Worksheet: Color Grade and Audio Mix Tracking Sheet

Complete one row per clip after grading and audio mixing. Use this to maintain consistency across a multi-day edit.

Clip name / filename

Original exposure (over / correct / under)

LUT applied (name)

LUT intensity (%)

Exposure adjustment after LUT (stops)

White balance correction applied (yes / no / Kelvin shift)

Audio source (on-board mic / lapel / shotgun / backup recorder)

Dialogue level (LUFS)

Music level (LUFS)

Ambient/room tone added (yes / no)

High-pass filter applied to dialogue (yes / no)

Final clip approved (yes / needs revision)

Checklist: Final Export and Delivery Checklist

[ ] 4K master exported at 80 Mbps H.264 or H.265 with AAC 320kbps audio
[ ] LUFS level confirmed at -14 LUFS integrated before export
[ ] Instagram/TikTok 9:16 crop exported separately at 1080x1920
[ ] Captions or subtitles added (auto-generated in CapCut or manually in LumaFusion)
[ ] Archive master saved to external SSD, not cloud storage only
[ ] All original raw clips backed up (not just the edit project file)
[ ] Project file saved with a version number (v1, v2) so earlier cuts can be recovered
[ ] Final film played back on both a phone screen and a TV/monitor before publishing

Your Action Plan

1. Download Blackmagic Camera (free) or Filmic Pro ($15) today and complete the Exposure Walk Test before your next shoot
2. Order an ND8 and ND64 clip-on filter sized for your phone model — budget $30–$60 total
3. Buy a white foam board from a dollar store and a TRRS lapel mic (Rode SmartLav+ or equivalent) for $70
4. Complete the Four-Angle Scene Study exercise using a household subject before shooting any real project
5. Rent or purchase a 3-axis gimbal (DJI OM 6, Zhiyun Smooth 5S, or Hohem iSteady V3) and complete 20 drill reps in your first week
6. Download LumaFusion ($29.99) or use CapCut (free) and import the footage from your first practice shoot
7. Download three free LUTs (Ground Control Film Emulation pack) and apply them at 60% intensity to test footage
8. Complete a full rough cut and trim it to 90 seconds using the four-step trimming method
9. Export your first finished film to all three platforms (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) using the correct export settings for each
10. Share your completed short film for peer feedback — focus review questions on framing, pacing, and audio quality