

People working for the screen

■ Film crew

It is said that making a movie takes an entire village... this village is the film crew. Its size may vary according to many factors, but all its components play an essential role.

The crew is organised into departments, each of which has a precise hierarchy. People who belong to a department cannot take on the work of another department due to safety reasons.

■ Production crew

Most of the people working above the line occupy leadership positions, like producers and directors.

Some of them form the film production crew, in charge of most operations: executive producers, line producers, associate producers, co-producers, production managers, unit production managers (called UPMs for short), production coordinators, production assistants (PAs), and production accountants. For small productions, of course, fewer people are involved and their tasks are less specific.

■ AD department

The Assistant Director (AD) is the person who runs the whole operation department. In a small production they can be included in the production team, whereas in a bigger one there may be a second AD and a second second AD. ADs are always depicted as people who shout at the others and get angry all the time, but really good ones should be just the opposite as they should run all operations smoothly and make things easy for the director.

■ Camera department

It goes without saying how important cameramen are to have good results. The person who runs this team is the cinematographer, who is the director of photography. Other members of this department are the assistant camera (AC), possibly a second AC, a camera operator, a focus puller, and a loader.



■ Grip and electric department

These departments are usually big as they include many production roles.

The chief of the grip department is called key grip and manages the work of all the grips, whose tasks consist in supporting cameras and providing the necessary devices like dollies, tripods, etc.

The chief electrician, who has to plan and carry out the lighting scheme of the movie, is called gaffer. The members of his team are the electrics or electricians.

The second in command of the grip or the gaffer is the best boy – who can also be a woman, despite the name and is also called a swing if he or she works for both departments.

■ Light department

It is responsible for the light plan and the necessary equipment (lights, bulbs, etc.).

■ Hair and make-up department

This department consists of hair stylists and beauticians. They have to take care of the actors' and actresses' looks before the shooting, but also to create special effects to give the impression of death, illness, blood, etc., according to the needs of the scene.

■ Art department

The crucial role here is that of the production designer, who is responsible for the strategy regarding the look of the movie and works with the producer and the director. The second one is that of the art director. The art department is usually a large one, often divided into subdepartments, such as:

- the prop department, which manages all that is used on set;
- the wardrobe department, responsible for the designing, making or renting of the costumes;
- the set dressing, which arranges the look of locations and works in conjunction with the location department.

■ Production sound department

The people working in this department are responsible for sounds, music, songs and the soundtrack. What they do is really crucial to the success of the movie.

■ Locations department

The task of location scouts is to find the right locations for the movie. Their work requires great experience and contacts.

■ Craft services department

People working in this department are not involved in the filming, but they make it possible as they provide food and drinks for the crew during the whole shooting.

■ Editorial and post-production


Post-production includes a variety of people from editors, assistant editors, colourists, visual effects (VFX for short) specialists, sound designers and editors, depending on the kind of production. Movies with lots of visual effects will require a big VFX department, for example. The work of post-production supervisors may change the result of the whole production and determine its success.

1  **Guess what department the director would call if...**

1. he is not satisfied with the light plan:
2. he needs to show that the protagonist has been wounded:
3. a dolly doesn't work properly:
4. a costume is inappropriate for the scene:
5. he wants to change a song:
6. he needs some extra catering for the week:
7. he is meeting with a lot of problems during shooting:
8. he needs a new place for the shooting:

2  **Complete the definitions.**

1. A manages the work of the grip.
2. Food and drinks provided to the crew is called
3. The is a subdepartment responsible for what the locations look like.
4., which create the illusion of reality, are a post-production operation.
5. The is the director of photography.
6. A is the person who determines what the audience will concentrate their attention on.
7. All the objects used on set are called
8. The is immediately underneath the grip or the gaffer.

3  **Decide if the information is true or false, then correct the false statements.**

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The film crew is made up of all the people on the set. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Electricians work under the supervision of the gaffer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Few people are involved in post-production. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Swings are electricians. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. ADs always shout at the actors. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. People from a department can easily carry out the work of people from a different department. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Producers and directors have top jobs in the crew hierarchy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. The set dressing department and the location department have to coordinate their work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |