



MOVIE MAGIC
SCHEDULING 5

Academic Lesson Plan

NOTE: The Scheduling 5 lesson plan has all elements of the Movie Magic Scheduling 6 program, except the Calendar feature.





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ACADEMIC LESSON PLAN

Get a jump on your curriculum with the official lesson plan for the industry standard production scheduling program. This fully illustrated teaching tool features detailed, focused lessons, student assignments, and insightful Teaching Tips throughout.

The following is the Table of Contents and an excerpt from the Academic Lesson Plan.

For more information about Movie Magic Scheduling and details on acquiring the full lesson plan, contact:

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INTRODUCTION

- Organization of the Lesson Plan
- A Brief History of Motion Picture Scheduling

Creating an efficient schedule for shooting a script is the backbone of making the most of a production's finite resources. Whether shooting a five-minute short film or a \$100 million studio feature film, there will always be limits to the resources available, and each of those resources needs to be scheduled as efficiently as possible.

This Lesson Plan is intended to guide instructors through the step-by-step process of creating a production schedule from a properly formatted screenplay. Using Movie Magic Scheduling 5 software and a sample short film script, this Lesson Plan, including Student Assignments, will teach students how to think like a filmmaker as their story moves from words on a page to a large set of physical Elements, each with its own scheduling requirements.

The Lessons begin with an overview of the concepts involved in scheduling, and then proceed to the physical creation of a database of Elements. Along the way, the software is used first as a reminder checklist of areas that students will need to consider in analyzing their script. As key Elements are input into the software, it becomes a valuable storage space for key information. Next, the software allows an infinite number of scenarios to be created based on the criteria that are important to the scheduler. Finally, once a scenario becomes an agreed-upon schedule, the software provides the ability to create a range of reports—standardized industry reports, as well as customizable ones—to communicate information effectively to the production's cast and crew.

Organization of the Lesson Plan

This Lesson Plan will assist teachers in building the curriculum of Production Scheduling for film and television classes. It begins with the breakdown of a six-page screenplay, "ICU," and proceeds through the scheduling process introducing different elements of the Movie Magic Scheduling 5 software in guided exercises. These Student Assignments are placed at the end of each Lesson.

After the screenplay is broken down and information is input into the software, students are guided through the process of creating an initial shooting schedule, and then a number of alternate scenarios.

Please note, the screenplay "ICU" is recommended, but any script will work. The key to teaching this subject successfully is for all students to work on the same script to prepare their first schedule. These lessons will illustrate not only the discipline of scheduling, but also the "art" of the process.

Throughout the text, there are **Scheduling Keys** that point to items essential for students to learn, **Teaching Tips** that act as guideposts and suggestions for instructors, and **Professional POVs** to help students understand how the software is used in real-world situations.



Scheduling concepts, as well as features of the software, are introduced in one lesson, and then revisited over the course of several other lessons to expand on student understanding. Scheduling for film and television requires a basic understanding of industry practices, so many of these are explained as they are introduced. This Lesson Plan is intended to be a rigorous, professional exercise in film scheduling.



A Brief History of Motion Picture Scheduling

Breaking down a written story into its component parts to create an efficient order for photographing each scene has been a challenge throughout the history of the film and television industry. Over time, standards were developed, and those standards are the backbone of scheduling techniques and tools used today.

The job of scheduling a film traditionally falls to the First Assistant Director (AD) on a production. A rough schedule may be worked out very early in the preproduction period by producers or production managers for use in budgeting a film, but it's not until the AD is hired that the real scheduling process starts. The AD approaches each scene in the script to determine what is required to shoot it per the specifications of the Director.

The first tool developed for scheduling is the AD's Breakdown Sheet. This was originally a standard form that would be filled out for each scene in the script and contained a list of all the requirements for shooting.

SEQ. NO.	ASSISTANT DIRECTORS BREAKDOWN SHEET					SCENE	COSTUME NO.
	PICT. NO. _____	SET NO. _____	SHEET NO. _____				
	EXT. _____						
	INT. _____						
	SCENE NUMBERS						
	TOTAL SCENES	TOTAL DIALOGUE	NO. PAGES	DAY	NITE		
	DESCRIPTION						
	PROPS	ATMOSPHERE			BITS		
	CARS - LIVESTOCK	SPECIAL EFFECTS			MUSIC		

Figure Intro.1 Assistant Director's Manual Breakdown Sheet

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As you look at this Breakdown Sheet, note that it contains spaces for major Categories of information: Cast, Props, Atmosphere (or Background Actors), etc. An AD would generally fill out one Breakdown Sheet for each scene in a script.

After completing each sheet, the AD would have a complete set of Breakdown Sheets that correspond to each scene. Early on, the need for a larger visual reference was recognized, and from this need came the invention of the Stripboard.

A “strip” (Glossary, Appendix A) is a thin piece of cardboard containing summary information from the Breakdown Sheet. There is generally one strip for each Breakdown Sheet, which translates to one strip per scene.



TEACHING TIP: Certain types of scenes that will be discussed later may be grouped on one Breakdown Sheet, but for students it is best to keep the rule of “one scene, one Breakdown Sheet.”

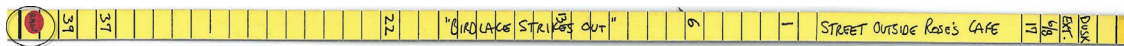


Figure Intro.2 Handwritten Strip Representing One Scene

This strip above indicates (reading from right to left) that the scene is taking place at Dusk, is an Exterior, is a total of 6/8th of a page long, is Scene # 17, taking place on the “Street Outside Rose’s Café.” The numbers indicate that Cast Members #1, 6, 13, 22, 37, and 39 are in the scene. Further, there is a description of the action: “Birdlace strikes out.” Finally, at the far left is a red dot indicating “Rain” as a Special Effect.

These strips were fitted into a large cardboard “holder” with a series of panels. The number of panels in a Stripboard was determined by the number of strips or scenes in the script.

The strips are color-coded based on the criteria of Interior or Exterior in combination with Day or Night. The standard colors for strips are as follows:

- Interior Day: White
- Exterior Day: Yellow
- Interior Night: Green
- Exterior Night: Blue

When fully assembled, the Stripboard could be opened to display the entire production.



Figure Intro.3 A Manual Stripboard

The AD could then manipulate the individual strips into the most efficient order for shooting based on a variety of criteria. With the inclusion of special strips denoting Day Breaks (black and white strips) and Week Breaks (red strips), the AD could experiment with different scenarios for shooting the scripted material. This manually created Stripboard was at the heart of the production scheduling process. The order of those strips dictated the order of the shooting schedule, as well as the workflow of each department.

For example, the order of the strips determined when the various actors were scheduled. Also, the schedule for tasks—like set construction, with all of its related decorating and design needs—was determined by the Stripboard. Simply moving a strip from one day to another could set off a chain of events in every department. The Stripboard became the production roadmap for completing the film, and communicating how it was changing became critical to the success of the production.

Automation was introduced to the process in the mid-1980s. Movie Magic Scheduling was the first software that tackled the issues and requirements of managing a production. While the technology would bring huge advantages to the process, it also had to provide a bridge to the past. The techniques and reports that had been developed over decades needed to be automated, but in such a way that made them understandable to a generation of production people (Producers, Unit Production Managers (UPMs), ADs, and studio executives) who were accustomed to handwritten Breakdown Sheets and the manual Stripboard.

Most of the conventions developed in the early days of production are still in use today. The concept of representing a scene with a “strip” carries over to present-day productions. The types of reports and the information in them remain the same. While Movie Magic Scheduling has been able to automate the process by building a huge database from the information entered, the initial entry is still done in an AD Breakdown Sheet format and still generates a “Stripboard” style schedule. Throughout this Lesson Plan, there are references to the historical conventions that remain an integral part of film and television production.

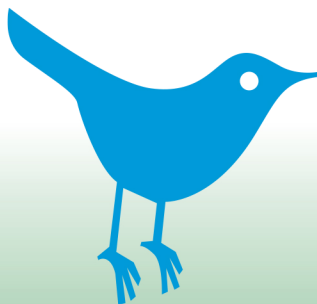
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