FILMMAKER PLANET

WEEKEND FILMMAKING CHECKLIST

A practical, print-and-use roadmap from first idea to final export.

THE CHALLENGE	YOUR TARGET
Make a complete short film in 48–72 hours. Keep the story focused, work with the gear and people you have, and finish by Sunday.	Aim for a tight 3–7 minute film. A clear, finished story is better than an ambitious project left unfinished.

YOUR FILM AT A GLANCE

Film title:

Challenge start: _____ **Final deadline:** _____

Director / filmmaker: _____ **Team / collaborators:** _____

One-sentence premise (what happens?):

Beginning • middle • end (your story beats):

BEFORE THE WEEKEND | PRE-PRODUCTION

Do these ahead of Friday if possible

- ☐ Brainstorm 3–5 simple concepts; choose the strongest and most achievable.
- ☐ Lock the concept and define a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- ☐ Finalize a short script or outline (a one-page treatment can work).
- ☐ Create a basic shot list; identify essential coverage and inserts.
- ☐ Confirm locations; scout light at likely shooting times and listen for noise.
- ☐ Confirm cast, availability, roles, and a simple schedule.
- ☐ Keep the scope manageable: one main location and a small cast where possible.

Scope check: Avoid complex VFX, lots of locations, large casts, and elaborate setups on a first sprint. Build buffer time into the plan.

DAY 1 • FRIDAY EVENING

PRE-PRODUCTION + FIRST SCENES

Lock the plan, then start filming

SCRIPT LOCK | HOURS 1–2

- ■ Complete a final script pass; commit to the story before shooting.
- ■ Check that each scene is practical for your cast, location, and available time.
- ■ Share the latest script / scene outline with everyone involved.

GEAR CHECK + LOCATION WALK-THROUGH | HOURS 2–3

- ■ Camera or smartphone tested; recording settings selected.
- ■ Microphone / recorder tested; monitor levels with headphones.
- ■ Lighting tested; identify useful window light and practical lights.
- ■ Tripod, stabilizer, cables, media cards, and accessories ready.
- ■ Batteries fully charged; spare power available.
- ■ Memory cards formatted only after confirming existing footage is backed up.
- ■ Location checked for sound, access, safety, and continuity details.

BLOCK, REHEARSE + SHOOT FIRST SCENES | HOURS 3–6

- ■ Block the action and camera positions before recording.
- ■ Run a quick rehearsal; confirm performances and eyelines.
- ■ Capture the most important scenes while the team is fresh.
- ■ Record a few seconds of room tone at the location.
- ■ Review key takes for focus, exposure, framing, and clean audio.

QUICK GEAR INVENTORY

Check what you have — no expensive kit required

Camera Phone / camera / charged batteries	**Audio** Mic / recorder / headphones
Stability Tripod / mount / stabilizer	**Lighting** Window light / LED / reflectors
Storage Formatted cards / drive / cloud backup	**Set essentials** Chargers / cables / props / script

Friday notes / changes to the plan:

DAY 2 • SATURDAY

THE PRODUCTION SPRINT	Aim to wrap all principal photography today

MORNING | FINISH DIALOGUE + PERFORMANCE SCENES

- ■ Review the shot list and prioritize any essential scenes not yet filmed.
- ■ Shoot performance-heavy scenes while cast and crew are fresh.
- ■ Capture wide, medium, and close-up coverage where useful.
- ■ Check audio with headphones during takes — do not rely on meters alone.
- ■ Record additional takes only when they improve the story or solve a problem.

AFTERNOON | B-ROLL, INSERTS + COVERAGE

- ■ Capture establishing shots of the location.
- ■ Film cutaways, prop details, hands, reactions, and other useful inserts.
- ■ Get any missing angles or transitions needed to make the edit flow.
- ■ Capture intentional visual variety: wide, medium, and close-up shots.
- ■ Watch continuity: prop positions, wardrobe, eyelines, and screen direction.
- ■ Use natural light intentionally; plan outdoor shots around available daylight.

EVENING | AUDIO CLEANUP + BACKUP

- ■ Record missing dialogue, Foley, room tone, or ambient sound.
- ■ Check that every scene and important shot is accounted for.
- ■ Review footage for focus, exposure, sound, and continuity problems.
- ■ Copy all footage to a primary storage location.
- ■ Create a second backup on a separate drive or cloud location.
- ■ Verify that both backups contain the files before clearing any media cards.

SATURDAY WRAP CHECK	Do not start Sunday with missing footage
Principal photography: ■ Wrapped ■ Still in progress	
Audio / Foley: ■ Complete ■ Needs pickup	
Two verified backups: ■ Yes ■ Not yet	
Sunday pickup shots needed: _____	

Saturday notes / outstanding tasks:

DAY 3 • SUNDAY

EDITING + FINAL CUT

Protect time for export and final playback

MORNING | IMPORT, ORGANIZE + ROUGH CUT

- ■ Import footage and confirm files are copied safely.
- ■ Organize folders; label clips and group footage by scene or setup.
- ■ Review takes and mark selects.
- ■ Assemble a rough cut in story order from beginning to end.
- ■ Watch the full rough cut; identify missing shots or confusing story beats.

MIDDAY | FINE CUT + AUDIO POLISH

- ■ Tighten pacing; remove dead space and unnecessary shots.
- ■ Make sure the story is clear and the ending lands.
- ■ Clean dialogue and balance audio levels between scenes.
- ■ Add Foley, ambience, and sound effects where they support the story.
- ■ Add properly licensed / royalty-free music where appropriate.
- ■ Listen through with headphones and on another speaker if possible.

AFTERNOON | COLOR, TITLES + EXPORT

- ■ Apply basic color correction for consistent exposure and color.
- ■ Add opening / closing titles and credits.
- ■ Check spelling, names, music credits, and any required acknowledgments.
- ■ Export a web-ready master in 1080p using H.264.
- ■ Watch the exported file from start to finish; check picture and sound.
- ■ Save the final export and project files in organized locations.

FINAL DELIVERY CHECK

The challenge is complete when the film is finished

- ■ Final film plays correctly from beginning to end.
- ■ Picture, dialogue, music, and sound effects are balanced.
- ■ Titles and credits are present and accurate.
- ■ Final export is saved and backed up.
- ■ Film is ready to share or submit.

FINAL FILM DETAILS

Runtime: _____	**Export format:** _____
Final file name: _____	

What did you learn? What will you do differently next time?

THE FINISH LINE

SHARE YOUR FILM

Let people see what you made

Choose a place to publish, present, or submit your finished film:

- ■ YouTube — publish the film and make it discoverable.
- ■ Vimeo — share a polished portfolio piece with the filmmaking community.
- ■ Instagram Reels / TikTok — post a teaser or behind-the-scenes moments.
- ■ FilmFreeway — explore suitable film festival submissions.
- ■ Filmmaking communities — invite constructive feedback from other creators.

AFTER THE CHALLENGE

Turn one weekend into steady progress

- ■ Document the process with a few behind-the-scenes photos or clips.
- ■ Write down one thing that worked especially well.
- ■ Identify one skill or workflow to improve on the next film.
- ■ Save the project, notes, and useful templates for future challenges.
- ■ Set a date for your next weekend filmmaking sprint.

POST-CHALLENGE REFLECTION

My biggest win this weekend:

The biggest challenge I faced:

One thing I want to improve next time:

My next filmmaking goal / challenge date:

MAKE THE FILM. FINISH THE FILM. LEARN FROM THE FILM.

You do not need perfect conditions, expensive gear, or months of preparation. You need a story, a plan, and the commitment to reach the final export.

FILMMAKER PLANET • Practical filmmaking guides, creative challenges, and tools for your next production.

Based on the Filmmaker Planet guide: “Make a Movie in a Weekend Challenge (With Guide + Checklist).”