

Storyboarding tips

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First things first

Storyboards can be basic outlines or elaborate drawings but it all functions in the same way.



Stickmen would do. But if you can't draw anything apart from stickmen then at least use different colours to differentiate the characters.

So then, why use a storyboard?

1. It helps you work out, what will or won't work (re. angles/placement of actors/pacing etc.). You can read your script like a comic strip.
2. It helps the actors to visualise the scene (experienced actors won't like being given 'line readings' or being told how to act, so this helps them immensely).
3. The most important reason..... It makes your shoot go 100% faster/easier. You'll regret not working out that shot beforehand!

Fail as fast as you can, as soon as possible, without spending any money.

Make your failures on paper **not** on the film set.

Not knowing what you're meant to be shooting on set, lowers morale, it wastes people's time and costs money. You want every minute on set to count for something and it shouldn't be used to work out shots which could have easily been done on paper beforehand.

In a way, it's sort of disrespectful to the other people on the set. How can you justify getting people helping you, when you haven't done the basics?

Ultimately how can you have everyone pulling in the same direction when the director doesn't believe enough in the film to have taken the time to work out the shots and look of the film?

If you can't do the grind on paper then you simply can't make the film unless you're willing for other people to do it all for you!

Things to work out:

Shot sizes (CU/MS/WS/1-shot/2-shot/3-shot. etc.)

Character movement (moving from left/right, into/out of shot)

Camera movement (zoom/tilt/pan/dolly/tracking or truck/crane)

Camera angles (OTS-over the shoulder/POV/bird's eye view/worm's eye view/
Dutch.e.g.tilted)



Some key things:

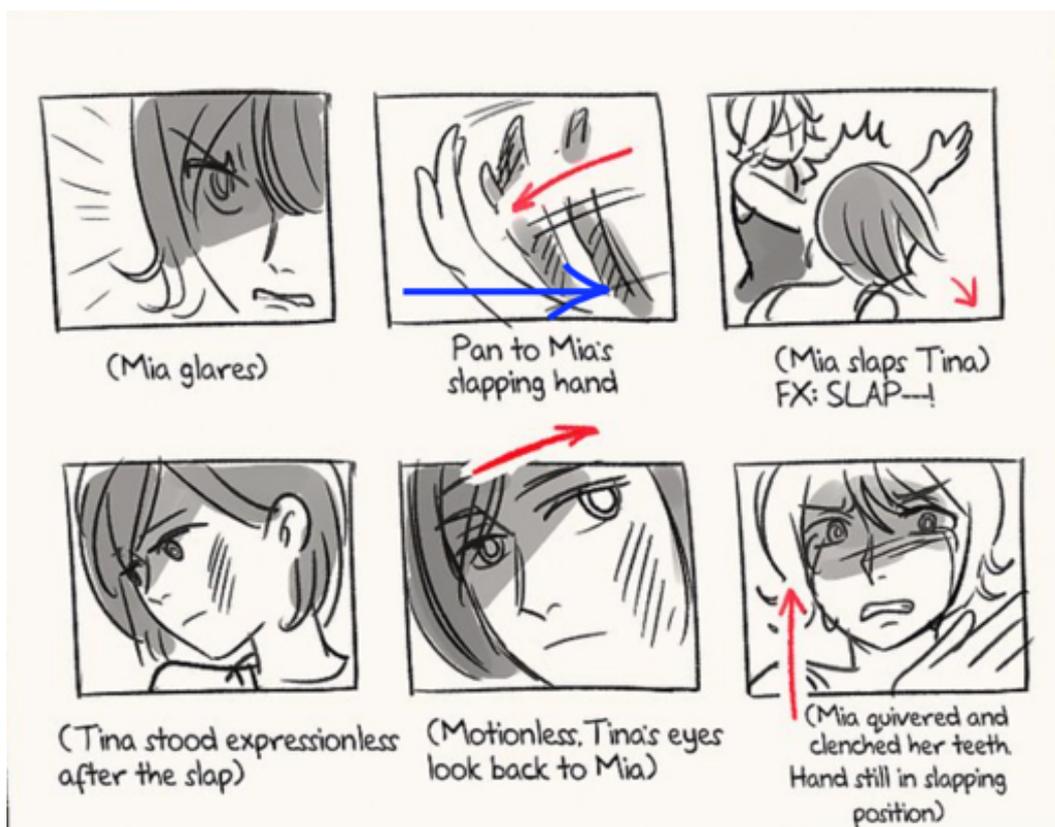
Start with simple thumbnails first, if you're struggling to draw.



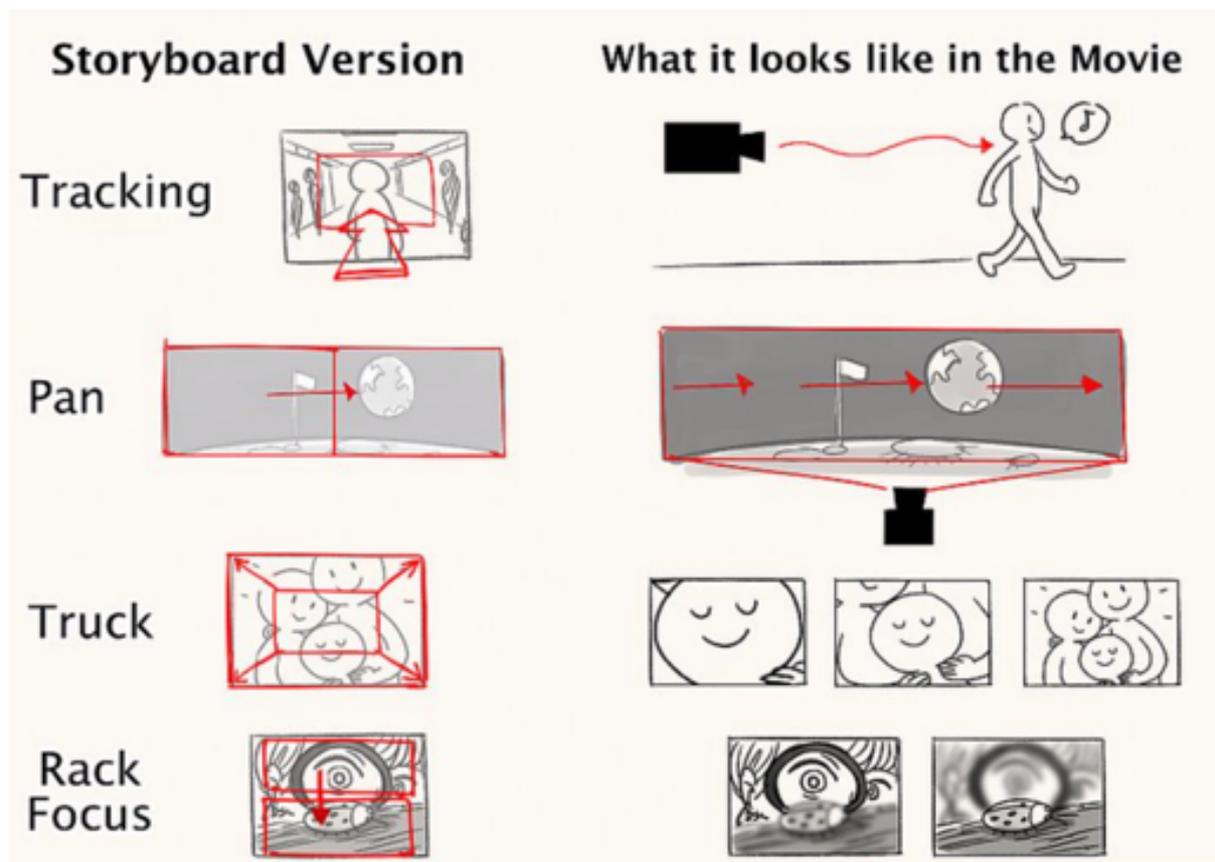
CU/MS/WS - How do you choose which one to use for your shot?

Try to vary the shots - so you don't have a MS followed by a MS for example.

If you struggle to visualise or to draw, then get friends to block it out for you and take a picture on your phone, using the framing you want to include in your film.



Use arrows to show which directions characters are going or where the eyes are looking. To help differentiate between the character movement and camera movement arrows you could use a red pen to show action (the eyes look back) and a blue pen to show the camera movement (camera pans in).



To show a shot zooming in or out, instead of drawing two separate pictures, use the method shown above in the 'Truck' shot. The arrows indicate that the camera should be zooming out and ending on a wide. To show the same shot zooming in simply change the directions of arrows.

Try to fill in any white space - this can be done easily with basic shading.

Tip: A storyboard doesn't have to start at the beginning. You can start by drawing one shot or scene in the middle. and working backwards or forwards from that point.