

## Developing Characters in Short Screenplays

90 minutes is nothing compared to a whole lifetime of about 75 years. Films are capable of portraying a whole lifespan in the given time frame though. That is possible only if the film can be elliptical, lacking sequences, so to speak. And the audience must be able to reconstruct the missing parts. In shorts of about five minutes, the audience comes even more into play.

Even though it must not be a person's life to be visualized, yet small actions need to be cut due to a lack of time. Someone goes in with a knife and comes out with blood on his hands. That's it, nothing more, nothing less. But everyone understands what has happened. Each action has its typical beginning and its typical end, so that you can easily leaf out the plot or some other part.

Every action also indicates both a possible future and a possible past. You can start with a common happening like the last day of college and rely on the audience's ability to connect the present setting with its experience, imagining a context for the current scene. The art of creating characters in shorts is the art of knowing which point of an action serves to identify the whole path of action with its causes, reasons, and possible endings as well as character traits.

In order to create characters in elliptical short screenplays it is important to know what can be inferred by the audience, that, more than in any other genre, has to complete the film while 'receiving' it.