# UNIT 1 (Pre-Production) – TASK 1a

## What is Pre-Production?

Pre-Production is the term used to describe the work on a product, particularly a film or broadcast programme of which takes place before full-scale production begins **(Oxford Dictonaries, N/A)**. For most film and drama based productions, pre-production usually consists of stages such as storyboarding, modelling **(4 Talent - Move It, N/A)**, location scouting, prop and wardrobe preparation, production scheduling and script finalisation, although this is often different depending on the production. Pre-Production also often differs in duration and detail depending on the production of which is being planned.

## Personnel

The amount and variety of personnel can often differentiate between productions as each production will have is own specific needs of which may require a significant amount of specialist staff. Most productions, like feature films and dramas also have core crew of which tend to be the same on all products. For most feature films and drama productions, the core crew usually consists of a director, producers, writers (including screenplay), lead actors, music composer, director of photography (or sometimes known as a cinematographer), editor, talent caster, art director and set decorator **(IMDb, N/A)**. Each key crewmember will manage a large team of specialists of which range differently in jobs roles (such as camera operators), all of which brings the production together. Core crew for documentary and live TV productions are naturally different to drama-based productions and often feature many contributions from outside individuals and are sometimes made on a low budget.

**KEY FEATURE FILM/DRAMA TV CREW**

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| **ROLE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **EXAMPLES** |
| Director | The director is at the helm of the film and is in charge of creative and practical decisions regarding the production. They are responsible for the visual storytelling and are often involved throughout all stages of production.  | There are many very well-known film directors such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and James Cameron. |
| Producers | Producers work closely with the director and are responsible for taking the story from paper and onto the screen. They are commonly involved in the story conception and work with the writer to develop a dramatic and engaging product. | There are also many well-known producers such as Jerry Bruckheimer, David Heyman and Kathleen Kennedy. |
| Writers | Writers are heavily involved with pre-production and are responsible for transforming a concept or idea into a story of which can be told via a visual medium.  | Although a lot of films are based on books and the story outline is already produced, many writers are responsible for adapting these texts for the big screen. Well known writers include Neal Purvis, Robert Wade, John Logan as well as directors James Cameron and Alfonso Cuaron. |
| Music Composer | Although mainly a post-production role, it is up to the music composer to create all the original music for the film, which can often help tell the story and display particular emotions or feelings.  | There are many very well-known music composers such as John Williams, Hans Zimmer and James Horner. |
| Director of Photography | The Director of Photography is responsible for the visual look of the film and often works closely with the director, camera and lighting crews.  | Examples of Cinematographers include Janusz Kaminiski, David Tattersall BSC, Roger Deakins ASC BSC, Anthony Dod Mantle BSC, Dariusz Wolski ASC and Barry Ackroyd BSC. |
| Editor | As with the Music composer, this is very much a postproduction role and is responsible for cutting and arranging a film. | Many well-known editors include Michael Kahn and Stuart Baird. |

**(IMDb, N/A) (My First Job in Film, N/A)**

Many film and TV personnel (such as camera operators, floor runners, sound recordists etc.) are freelancers and will bounce between different productions as and when they come. On many productions, only a limited amount of what is usually producers will be employed either by an independent TV production company (such as Thames and TwoFour) or by a broadcaster such a ITV or the BBC. Many big companies such as the BBC and ITV also have their own internal production companies such as ITV Studios **(ITV Studios, N/A)** of which creates content for it and other broadcasters. Many freelance individuals often employ an agent or are a part of an agency company, whose responsibility is to get the freelancer work via there large portfolio of contacts in the industry. One such business is Films@59 of which provides pre and postproduction services for many large UK broadcasters. The firm does not only provide postproduction and equipment hire services, it also represents a number of freelance individuals such as camera operators, editors and sound recordists **(Films@59, N/A)**. Many of the firm’s freelancers have worked on high profile productions such as sound recordist Rich Whitley, who has worked a double BAFTA nominated production, Deadly 60 (CBBC) and ITV’s This Morning **(Films@59, N/A)**. Another agency conducting similarly to Films@59 is Lip Service which provides representation for voice overs and narrators. The company also represents some high profile individuals including Hugh Laurie, Jamie Theakston as well a commonly heard Mark Halliley who narrates The Hotel Inspector (Channel 5) and The Apprentice (BBC) **(Lip Service, N/A).**

**TYPICAL LOW BUDGET DOCUMENTARY KEY JOBS – Junior Paramedics, shown of BBC Three in 2014 and produced by BBC Productions Salford**

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| **ROLE** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| Narrator | Responsible for providing a voice over the visuals and is often heard explaining complex terminology, guiding a viewer through a story and mentioning statistics/definitions. |
| Online Editor | Usually occurs during postproduction and simply involves editing a film/programme on another device after undergoing offline editing. |
| Dubbing Mixer | Again, this role is more postproduction and roles a number of jobs into one. The Dubbing Mixer is responsible for mixing dialogue, sound effects and music together to create a final product.  |
| Production Team | In the case of Junior Paramedics, the production team consists of nine individuals all of which are responsible for moving the concept of the programme onto TV screens. |
| Production Secretary | Responsible for assisting producers by completing general tasks such as organising meetings/interviews and contacting individuals on behalf of a producer. |
| Researchers | For a fact based documentary like Junior Paramedics, the researchers are responsible for collating facts and figures of which can be shown additionally on the final programme. |
| Assistant Producers | Assistant Producers provide additional support to the main production unit and consist of three people on this particular production. |
| Producers/Directors | As with the Dubbing Mixer, this is joining two roles into one and in the case of this production, the team consist of nine producers/directors. Also in this production, these people filmed the production rather then employee specialised crew such as camera operators. |
| Story Producer and Assistant Story Producer | Similarly to a normal producer, the story producer is responsible for bring the idea of the programme to TV screens.  |
| Film Editor and Series Editor | This is again a very much postproduction role of which involved selecting and arranging shots. |
| Production Manager | Responsible for overall production and is responsible for managing the large team of producers and other staff involved in the programme to ensure it is made to the right requirements set in pre-production. |
| Commissioning Executive Producer & Executive Producer | Again this role is a unification of two separate jobs. As a commissioner, this person is responsible for allowing production to happen and is also responsible for providing funding for the production. In the case of Junior Paramedics, this person will be from the part of the BBC of which will show the final programme. As an executive producer, this person is responsible for the management of aspects such as accounting and legal affairs. |

**(BBC iPlayer, 2014)**

## Finance

Finances for both TV and Film are highly important and in most cases in today’s financial climate, the amount of money available is decreasing. There are many factors of which need to be considered when creating a product with a high budget as this can reduce the amount of profit made on the product. Most feature films are funded directly by the film’s distributor such as 20th Century Fox and Paramount Pictures and or Production Company who is making the film. Sometimes films are also funded and supplied by corporate sponsors who provide items such as laptops for a film, in return for on screen advertising or pre/post film advertising. This is common with technology companies and car companies. Directors also occasionally make additional funding or producers (e.g. James Cameron who partially funded Titanic with Paramount and 20th Century Fox **(Wikipedia, 2014)**). TV shows such as Downton Abbey, of which are broadcasted on commercial TV channels, are usually funded by a mixture of investment from the host broadcaster, Production Company and sponsors and in the case of period drama Downton Abbey, this is ITV, Carnival Films and Amazon. This is however very different to how TV productions are funded on publically owned channels such as the BBC. Due to strict advertising rules of which are placed on the broadcaster, no corporate sponsorship is given to BBC productions, although this aspect is making more and more appearances in recent years. The BBC via its royal charter and licence fee system funds most production and is most of time made on a not-for-profit basis **(Wikipedia, 2014)**. Some productions made by the BBC however, such as Top Gear are also funded by the BBC’s commercial arm, BBC Worldwide who is responsible for selling BBC and UK made content abroad **(Wikipedia, 2014)**. Many productions both film and TV are also made possible by incentives of which are made by Governments and film institutes, of which are aimed to attract film makers to film in their country. One such example is the new Star Wars films of which will be mostly shot in the UK. It has been reported that an increasing amount of American film makers are taking advantage of tax relief of which have been put in place by the UK Government, and many large scale films such as Star Wars are being filmed at UK studios **(The Telegraph, 2014)**.

**The 3 Most Expensive Films Ever Made**

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| **RANK** | **TITLE** | **YEAR** | **COST** |
| 1 | Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End | 2007 | $300 million |
| 2 | Tangled | 2010 | $260 million |
| 3 | Spider-Man 3 | 2007 | $258 million |

Depending on the production, there can be a whole variety of factors of which need to be considered when funding a film/programme and when using a budget. This can range from cast and crew to props and costumes to visual effects. Many different productions will have to have different requirements and this is usually reflected in the cost of making the production. Films such as Pirates of the Caribbean will naturally need a higher budget due to the amount of assists of which are needed to make the film. Due to the unique nature of the film (pirate based film set in the past), the majority of the films set, costumes and props have had to be made specifically for the production and this can amount to a high production cost **(IMDb, 2003)**. Other films on the other hand such as The Hurt Locker have been filmed outside a studio, in modern times. This has meant less money has had to be spent on purpose build sets, resulting in a significantly lower cost production of which has been no more or less successful **(IMDb, 2008)**. The complexity of a production can also influence how much money it costs the fund the project, as large scale animation productions will cost significantly less than TV documentaries as more specialist crew and technology is required to create it. In conclusion, there are a variety of factors of which influence how much money it takes for a product to be produced and it mostly depends on how complex the product is of which is going to be produced and what genre of production of which is being created.

## Materials

Films and TV programmes differ significantly in complexity, genre and size and this can have an impact of what materials are required. Some more period productions usually require the most amount of materials, as most costumes and shooting locations are no longer available and measures have to be manufactured. An example of this is Steven Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan (1998) of which required a lot of US army costumes to be made for the many extras of which were on set. Specialist sets of which could be destroyed also had to be built such as a small French town of which was full constructed at Hatfield Aerodrome in Hertfordshire. Documentaries and Live TV usually have a reduced amount of material, as costumes are not really required. Although depending on what the documentary or Live TV show is about, some materials such as a set or archive material may be required. Due to cost, many films are now increasingly using green screens and computer generated imagery (CGI) instead of traditional sets. CGI offers and extremely large amount of flexibility and allows the director and producers to create an ideal look for their production, of which may not be possible on location or on a sound stage. One film of which used a mixture of CGI and live action shoots was James Cameron’s Avatar (2009). The film was created around 60% CGI and 40% live action elements and had a budget of $237 million. The film also used revolutionary 3D cameras as well as facial recording of which could be used on the animation aspects of the film **(Wikipedia, 2009)**. By using CGI, this was able to create Cameron’s vision of the film of which would be impossible to create using a set on a sound stage. A lot of films also include third party material such as music, TV programmes and film references and archive material of which all needs to be sourced. The majority of archive footage is usually provided by organisations such as the Imperial War Museum, who may hold significant amounts of old film and pictures. Films also provide a great opportunity for music artists to display their music to a large audience and third party music is often licenced by record labels, who themselves have their own media licencing division. One such well-known third party song was Celine Dion’s *“My Heart Will Go On”* from Titanic, which went on to become a worldwide hit. A lot of original music composed by a films composer is also published via specialist film record labels such as WaterTower Music **(WaterTower Music, N/A)**, Varese Sarabande **(Varese Sarabande, N/A)** and Sony Classical **(Sony Masterworks, N/A)**.

James Cameron’s Avatar used unique facial recognition cameras to capture an actor’s performance and place this onto the CGI created characters.

## Contributors

For many different productions, various specialists and contributors are required in order to take part in the production or to provide specialist assistance. This can be quite a common site on a lot of film sets of which may be based on a real life or historical event. One example of the use of contributors is the BBC One drama, Our Girl of which is about the day-to-day life of a new army medic who is sent to Afghanistan **(BBC, 2014)**. For the production, the producers have employed two Military Advisors as well as a BBC Military Liaison. By employing both Military Advisors, this is giving the production team vital insight into various military procedures, policies and equipment in order for them to make the programme more realistic. Both military advisors are able to give up-to-date, on set advice during production and can advise on aspects such as the script and what different situations the actors may go through, if they were in a real life situation. The production team also employed one Afghan consultant who would also be able to advise the production team on set and with the story. The Afghan consultant’s role is extremely important to this production as many of the cast or crew will be unfamiliar with Afghani culture, customs and set geography with the consultant playing an important role in advising acting, costume design and set design of which was creating in South Africa **(BBC iPlayer, 2014)**. Many other productions also feature expert contributors with James Cameron’s Titanic having two historians who advised on set design, etiquette and costumes **(Wikipedia, 2014)** and James Horner’s music score for Avatar having contributions from a ethnomusicologist who helped to create a soundtrack for an alien species **(Wikipedia, 2009**). Many TV programmes also require a lot of contributions from members of the public and this can range from TV talent contests to News programmes. Some of the best-known programmes of which require the contribution of the public voluntarily is talent contests such as The X Factor. Shows like The X Factor 100% rely on members of the public volunteering their time to take part in the show in order to win a large prize and possibly change their lives forever. Most shows like this would simply not survive without public participation and this also includes games shows such as Pointless and Deal or no Deal. Many specialists also feature on documentaries such as The Sky at Night where many take part in interviews in their specialist area and offer their knowledge into a particular subject area **(BBC, 2014)**.

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