

Content Creator's starter kit

A toolkit to utilise your creative skills

by Mark Wells and Emma Collins



Contents

Introduction	5
Making content for other people	6
Responding to a client	10
The Brief	13
Creating	14
Making	20
Editing	28
Case Study – The Mint House	33
Next Steps	36
Glossary of terms	38



Introduction

Whether you're already posting content for fun, or you've spent hours analysing why a video works before you even realise you're doing it, this toolkit is for you.

The chances are you already have more creative ability than you give yourself credit for. You see things differently. You notice details others miss. You understand instinctively what makes something worth watching and what makes someone scroll past. Those instincts are real skills, and this toolkit is designed to help you recognise them, develop them, and start putting them to work.

The Content Creator's Starter Kit takes you through everything you need to move from making content for yourself to making content with purpose – for an audience, for a client, or for a career. We'll cover how to understand who you're making things for, how to plan and pitch your ideas, how to film and animate with more intention, and how to edit your work so it lands the way you want it to.

This isn't about turning you into someone you're not. It's about giving you the tools, the language, and the confidence to do what you're probably already doing – with more clarity and more impact.

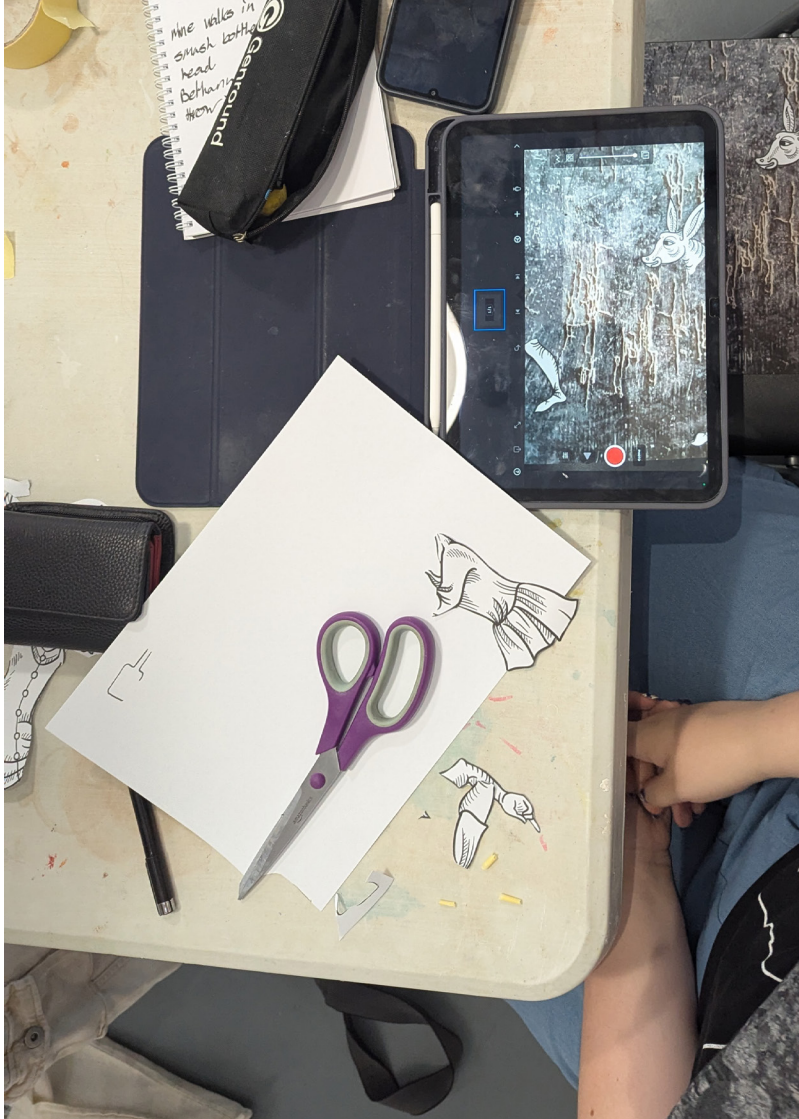
Making content for other people

You have amazing creative skills and abilities, you think in ways that others do not and can see things in new ways, ways that many others envy.

Do you find yourself constantly creating and editing videos that you share with your friends, do you look at other content creators and start to analyse their cuts, edits or framing?

Valuing your creative skills and unique abilities can give you the opportunity to become the creator and create meaningful change amongst your communities.

By now, you have said to at least a few of the questions above, but how do you make the transition from making content for fun to making a career from it?



What are your skills?

Recognising the creative skills that you have and your specific interests are the first steps to helping find your place. As a bit of fun, scan the QR code above to take a creative skills audit this will help you to start to think about your creative skills and what you might like to create:

- Think about how you see and show things, do you notice details in ways that others do not?
- Do you like having fun with words and enjoy finding the right word or phrase?
- How do you create ideas? Do you like making things you have seen?
- When making things, do you like to learn new tools and edit content?
- How do you think about who you are making content for?

Who might benefit from your skills?

With your creative skills it is good to think about who will benefit from the skills that you have. Can you think of clients who might benefit from your creativity?

The list can be almost endless. To help you to begin to think about audiences, scan the QR code above and think about:

- Why you create?
  – what's actually driving you?
- How you currently think about audiences?
- How you find a niche? – specificity versus broad appeal
- How do you emphasise with audiences? – can you see through someone else's eyes
- What platforms do different audiences use? – where your audience lives

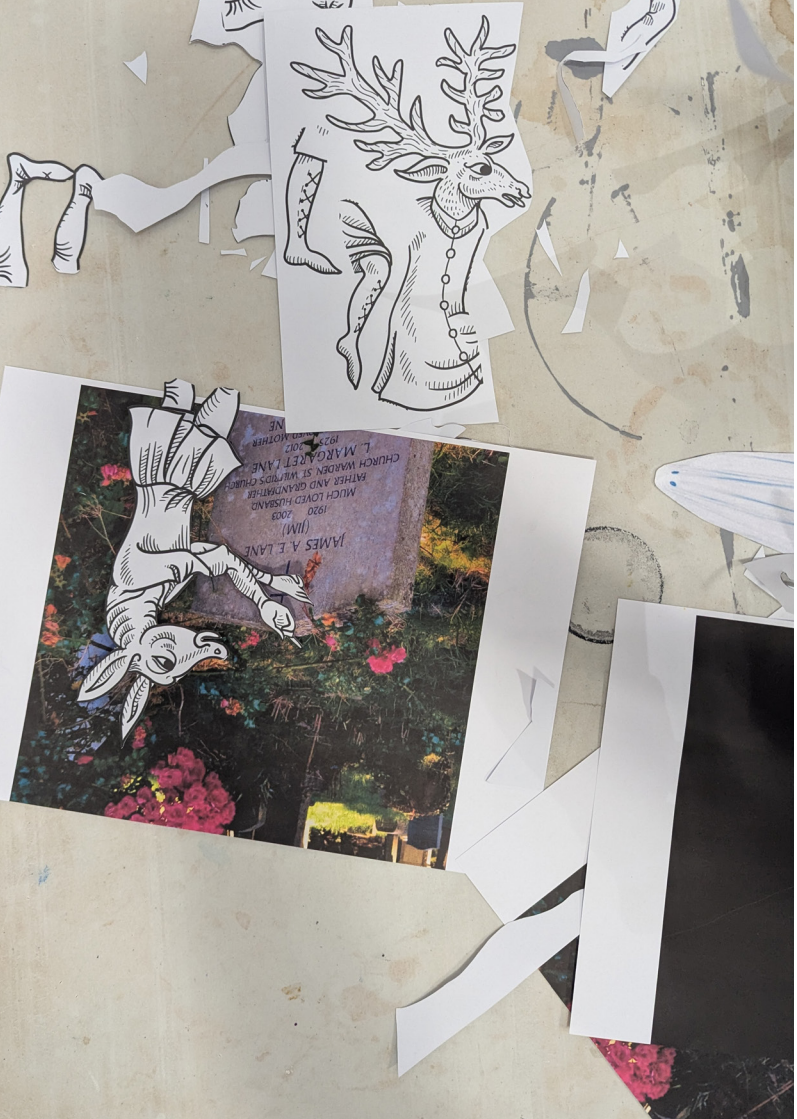
Responding to a client

When you first start to work with clients, understanding their needs and goals can be challenging. However, it is important to remember that everyone involved in the project will have something valuable to add, but they are likely to have different needs and ideas based on their roles. Therefore working with your client and team are vital to creating a successful outcome to the project..

Remember you are working with the client because you have the skills and knowledge that they may not and they need your help in creating a successful and amazing project.

Part of working with a client is listening to them and understanding what they need and are aiming to achieve. For example, the client may use different specialist language to you, but remember that you may be using specialist content creation language that they may not understand either. With this in mind, it is important to make sure that you are both clear with each other and understand what each other means. Sometimes this might involve asking questions to help understand their needs and goals so that you can be confident when creating work that they will help achieve the clients objectives. Ultimately you need to be clear on what is being asked of you. With this is in mind it is always good to reflect your interpretation of your task back to the client, verbally and then written as a short brief.





The Brief

A brief has two roles, it can act as a form of agreement between yourself and the client, but it should also act to inspire and enthuse you to create exciting ideas. With this in mind, when writing a brief you need to make sure that you are not too vague or too restrictive.

The brief should:

- Bring clarity and a starting point to any project, balancing helpful structure with enough freedom to ignite ideas
- Always be created with the client
- Be an exciting and engaging part of the conversation that sets out the ambitions of the project while building trust and relationships with the client
- Contain a statement about the problem to be solved
- Identify who the audience is
- Contain possible approaches
- Include any mandatory requirements
- Have a statement of ambition that communicates the aim of the project
- Set SMART goals for the everyone

Creating

You may have a brief, you may have some ideas, but how do you go about creating these and how do you plan your content so that you can communicate this to a client? Thinking about how to do it – not just diving in – already puts you ahead of most people. It's important to remember that the creators you admire most didn't just pick up a phone and go viral. They figured a few things out first. And so can you.

With this in mind, you need to do a few things. Firstly a bit of research and secondly a bit of planning.



Research

Know who you're talking to

Before you make anything, ask yourself one question: who is this for?

Not "everyone" – that's not an answer. Think about a specific kind of person. Someone who'd stop scrolling, watch the whole thing, and come back for more. What are they into? What do they find funny, useful, or interesting? What do they already watch?

When you make content for a real person in your head – even an imaginary one – everything gets clearer. Your tone, your style, your topics. It all clicks into place.

Know the niche

Your niche isn't a cage. It's just a starting point – a reason for people to follow the client rather than someone else.

Your idea does not have to cover everything. Aim to do one thing in a way that feels authentic for the client. Maybe that's football tactics explained in under a minute. Maybe it's budget cooking that actually looks good. Maybe it's an honest take on the music nobody is listening to yet.

Niche doesn't mean small. It means specific enough that the right people can find the client.

Planning

Plan before you create

Winging it feels free but usually looks chaotic. Even a rough plan makes a massive difference.

Before you create anything, ask three questions:

What's the hook? The first three seconds decide whether someone stays or scrolls. Lead with the most interesting thing – a surprising fact, a bold statement, a question they need answered.

What's the value? Every piece of content should do at least one thing for the viewer: teach them something, make them laugh, show them something beautiful, or make them feel understood. If you can't answer "what does this give them?" – rethink it.

What's the through-line? A good piece of content has a shape. It starts somewhere and ends somewhere. Even a 30-second TikTok needs a beginning, a middle, and a payoff.

Be engaging, not just present

A few things that always work: talk to people, not at them. Ask questions. Respond to comments like they matter – because they do. Use your real voice, not a performance of what you think a creator sounds like. People can tell the difference, and they always choose the real thing.

And don't sleep on trends – but don't be a slave to them either. Use a trending sound or format as a vehicle for your idea, not a replacement for one.

Storyboarding

How do you get your idea out of your head and into a format that is going to show your idea? We encourage you to do this in two ways.

Storyboard, sketch our your ideas, however basic the storyboard it is good to get this down before undertaking a whole piece of filming.

Test ideas out, create short clips, testing out elements of what you are planning to create. A storyboard and tests will help you to develop your ideas and to also share your ideas with others.

Tools and links

Graphics & thumbnails:

Canva – drag-and-drop design that actually looks good, free tier is generous

Adobe Express – similar to Canva, good for quick branded content

Social media trends tools

Tiktok trends: https://ads.tiktok.com/business/

Youtube trends: https://www.youtube.com/trends/discover/

Pinterest trends: https://trends.pinterest.com

Making

Planning is great. Ideas are great. But now you need to make some content. You have probably experimented with and made lots of different types of content already and the good news is that you can use the skills and knowledge that you have already acquired to make content for others. Here we cover a few of the approaches to help elevate your already existing knowledge further.



Filming

You've made content before. You know the basics – you've pointed a camera at something, hit record, and put something out into the world. That's further than most people get.

But you've probably also watched your own content back and felt that gap between what you had in your head and what ended up on screen. That gap is exactly where this section lives. It's about closing the distance between the content you're making and the content you know you're capable of.

Stop thinking about shots

– start thinking about sequences

If you've been filming for a while, you're probably already comfortable with the basics of shot types. Wide, mid, close-up – you know the drill. The next step is thinking about how shots work together.

A sequence is a group of shots that tells a small story on its own. Think about the way a well-edited cooking video moves: a wide shot of the kitchen, a close-up of hands chopping, an over-the-shoulder of the pan, a reaction shot of the taste test. No single shot does the work – they build on each other. That rhythm is what you're aiming for.

Start planning your shots in groups rather than individually. Before you film anything, ask: what are the three or four shots I need to tell this moment properly? Then go and get all of them. It takes more time upfront, but it makes the edit dramatically easier – and the finished thing dramatically better.

Get more intentional with your b-roll

You've probably already got the idea of b-roll (see glossary). But there's a difference between b-roll that fills gaps & b-roll that actually adds something.

The best b-roll isn't just wallpaper – it carries meaning. A close-up of someone's hands tells you something about them. The texture of a surface, the light through a window, the look on someone's face when they don't know the camera is on them – these shots do emotional work. They make the viewer feel something, not just see something.

Next time you're filming, challenge yourself to get b-roll that says something rather than just covering your edit. Ask: what detail in this moment would make someone understand the vibe immediately? Then find a way to capture it.

Also worth developing: the habit of filming more than you think you'll need. Experienced filmmakers are ruthless about coverage – they get the shot from multiple angles, they get it again when the light changes, they grab the thing they almost didn't bother with. You'll never regret having too much b-roll. You'll absolutely regret having too little.

Analogue animation

If you've experimented with stop motion before, you already know the basics work. The question now is how to push it further – how to make analogue animation that feels like a deliberate creative choice rather than a novelty.

The creators who do this well treat their analogue work with the same intentionality as any other kind of filmmaking. They think about composition, pacing, and texture. They're not just moving things around and hitting capture – they're building a visual language.

A few directions worth exploring if you're ready to go further:

Mixed media – combining analogue and digital in the same piece. Stop motion footage of physical objects, edited alongside live action. Cut-out animation overlaid on real footage. The contrast between the handmade and the filmed can be genuinely striking when it's done with intention.

Playing with frame rate – most beginners shoot stop motion at a consistent frame rate throughout. Try varying it. Faster frames for energy and chaos, slower frames for something more deliberate and eerie. The frame rate is an expressive tool, not just a technical setting.

Using imperfection deliberately – fingerprints on the set, visible rigs, deliberate flicker. The handmade quality of analogue work is its biggest asset. Don't sand it down trying to make it look clean – lean into it and make the roughness part of the aesthetic.

Sound design – this is where a lot of stop motion content falls flat. The visuals are interesting but the sound is an afterthought. Think about what the world of your animation sounds like. Layer textures, use silence, find sounds that feel physical and tactile. It transforms the experience.

Develop a more critical eye for your own work

One of the biggest jumps you can make as a creator is getting genuinely honest about your own footage – not harsh, just clear-eyed.

After your filming session, watch everything back before you start editing. Not to decide what to keep yet – just to notice things. Where did the energy drop? Where did the light do something interesting you didn't plan? What shot do you keep wanting to cut away from, and why?

The more you do this, the faster your instincts develop. You start to notice problems while you're still filming rather than discovering them in the edit. That shift – from reactive to proactive – is what separates creators who plateau from creators who keep improving.

A useful habit: after you post something, watch it back a week later with fresh eyes. What works? What would you do differently? Keep a note somewhere and remember your past self is your best teacher.

Bring more intention to your edit decisions

At this stage, you're probably comfortable cutting footage together. The next level is making edit decisions that serve the content rather than just assembling clips in order.

Think about pacing as a tool. A fast cut creates energy. A held shot creates weight. Silence can be more powerful than music. The edit isn't just about removing the bad bits – it's about shaping how the viewer feels as they move through your content.

One technique worth trying: cut your edit down until it feels too short, then add back only what's genuinely necessary. Most of us over-edit – we keep shots because we remember how long we spent getting them, not because they're earning their place. Be ruthless. The viewer doesn't know what you left on the cutting room floor, and they never will.

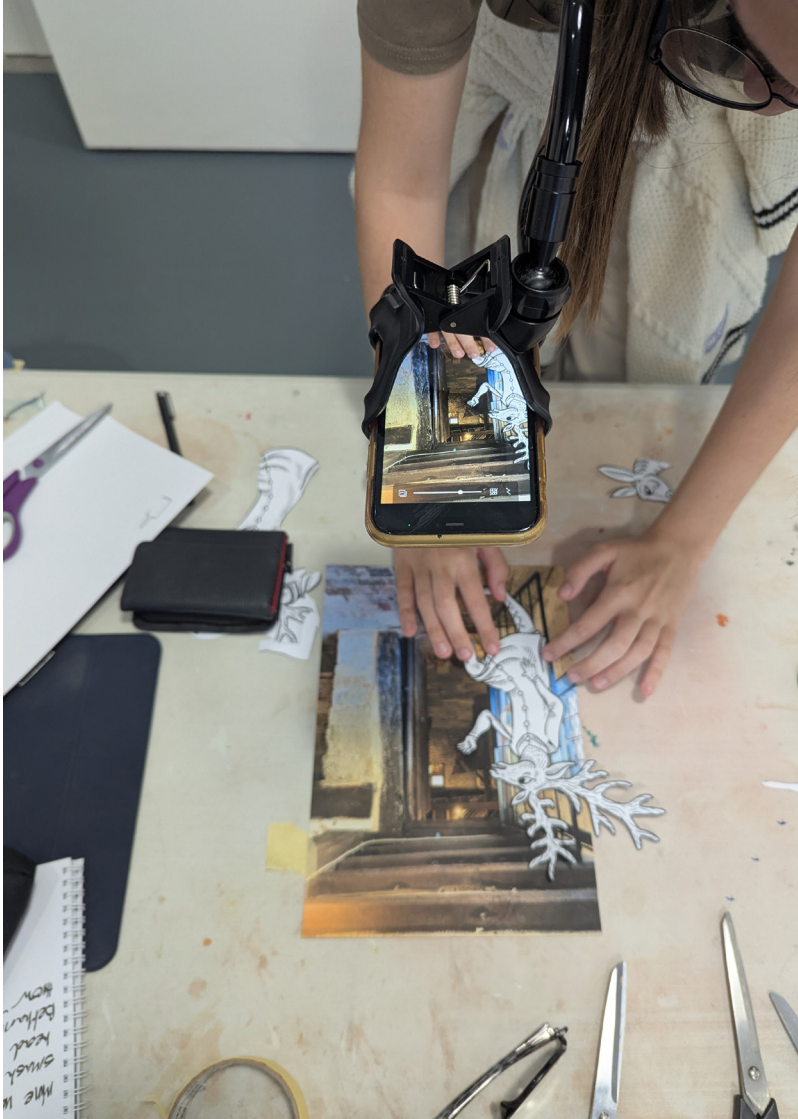
Tools and links

Capture/Stop Motion: Stop Motion Studio or Dragonframe (mobile/desktop)

Black Magic Cam to capture your footage.

Editing

If you're starting out as a content creator, good news: you don't need fancy equipment or complicated software. Your phone is already a powerful editing tool, and with a few simple techniques you can turn raw clips into smooth, engaging videos that look like they belong on any pro creator's feed.



Trimming and Cutting

Most editing apps let you tap on a clip and drag the ends to shorten it. Start by:

Cutting out awkward pauses

Removing mistakes

Keeping only the best moments

Shorter = stronger.

Adding Clips to a Timeline

Your timeline is basically the "storyboard" of your video.

Drop your clips in the order you want them to appear.

If something feels slow or messy, move clips around until the flow feels right.

Trust your instincts – your brain already knows what looks smooth.

Transitions

Transitions help your video flow from one clip to the next without feeling jumpy. Keep it simple at first:

Cut – the most natural transition. Use it for fast-paced edits.

Fade – a soft, smooth change from one scene to another.

Slide/Swipe – great for travel, lifestyle, or aesthetic videos.

Zoom transitions – energetic, but don't overdo them.

How to add a transition:

Tap between two clips on your timeline.

Choose the transition style you want.

Adjust the duration (short transitions usually look cleaner).

Pro tip: Use transitions sparingly. Too many can make your video look chaotic. Think of them as seasoning – just enough to enhance the flavour.

Adding Music & Sound Effects

Most apps have built-in music libraries. Choose something that matches your vibe.

Keep the music lower if you're talking; louder if the visuals are doing the storytelling.

Filters, Text & Effects (But Don't Go Wild)

You can add:

captions | subtitles| stickers |

colour filters | slow-mo or speed-ups

Keep your style consistent and use appropriate techniques so the video is right for your audience.

Exporting

Once you have your footage, don't forget to export in preparation to upload to your platform or show to your client.

Tools and links

CapCut (free + super popular with TikTokers and YouTubers)

Edits (Instagram's free video editing tool)

InShot

VLLO

iMovie (iPhone only)

Adobe Premiere Pro/Final Cut Pro, Adobe After Effects

DaVinci Resolve (for desktop computers)



Case Study — The Mint House

As creatives, teachers and researchers we wanted to explore how making digital content can connect us to a place and its history so we found a 'client', The Mint House and a group of young people interested in developing content creation skills to work with.

The Mint House: Home of Sussex Folklore is a heritage site that seeks to 'do heritage differently'. Based in a Tudor minting house in Pevensey they position themselves as a gathering place for artists, makers, historians and folklore enthusiasts, and act as a living archive of heritage, not a museum but a community that keeps evolving. Their goal as an organisation is to collect, create, and share the tales and traditions that connect us to the land and to one another.

As with all creative work, the starting point was to understand their ethos and agree on an aesthetic that represents who they are and how they want to be seen. Often a client will have images in their head so making a visual moodboard together will help you and them to be on the same page when it comes to making something that looks right.

They wanted content that referenced the heritage of the site but reflected the creativity, community and some of the stories of the Mint House. They have a strong illustrative element to their branding so they provided graphics, imagery and some characters for us to work with.

The four day project:

Day 1

Met the 'clients' and they shared their ethos, ambitions and outlook as well as some ghost stories associated with the house and a folk tale written about a witch in Pevensey. The day was then spent getting to know the site and collecting film and photos. We used the ghost stories as a starting point and collected footage that told some of those stories as well as B-roll footage of the village, castle and churchyard. We also collected photos of the house (details and wider images) to use for content.

Day 2

Introduced apps and editing to work with the collected footage to make ghost stories. Through an iterative process that used storyboards and some development, sophisticated short form films were made that had an authentic voice of the different creators and told stories about the building.

Day 3

Introduced Adobe apps to create 3D animated models of architectural elements of Mint House, these elements can be triggered to pop up on a phone screen on any real-world surface.

Day 4

Introduced stop-frame animation with characters from Mint House as a content tool. Hand-making and 'traditional' crafts are an important part of Mint House's heritage link so the stop-frame technique was a good way to make content that represented the ethos of the house. (All of the images in this guide come from that session).

Result

The result from these sessions was a collection of different content outcomes that the Mint House integrated into their content strategy and new skills in making better quality content for the young people.

Next Steps

Exploring Creative Paths

If making content excites you, there are brilliant opportunities right on your doorstep to keep developing your skills and building your confidence. The De La Warr Pavilion runs programmes specifically designed for young creatives – including the Talent Accelerator and a range of programmes and resources that connect you with professional artists and creative industries. You can also explore Coastal Catalyst, which supports young people across the coast in turning their creative ideas into real projects. These are great places to experiment, meet like-minded people, and start building a portfolio of work that reflects who you are and what you can do.

Scan here to find out about the Talent accelerator

Looking Further Ahead

When thinking about where your skills could take you in the future, it's worth knowing that content creation is now a degree-level subject. The University of Brighton's Content Creation BA (Hons) is a three-year course designed for ambitious creatives who want to turn their passion into a career – covering everything from video, photography and animation to podcasting, social media strategy and AI-driven design. You get to work on live industry briefs, take placements with real organisations, and graduate with a professional portfolio. Brighton itself has been named the UK's most creative city, making it a hugely inspiring place to study. If that's a path you're curious about, it's never too early to explore what's out there and start thinking about the work you'd want to show.

Scan here to find out about studying Content creation

Glossary of terms

A–B

Audience
The specific group of people a piece of content is intended for. Creators are encouraged to think about who will watch, what they value, and where they spend time online.

B-roll
Supporting footage that adds meaning, context, emotion, or visual interest to the main shot. High-quality b-roll enhances storytelling and makes edits smoother.

Brief
A document (or verbal/written agreement) created with a client outlining the project goals, audience, requirements, and ambitions. It should both clarify expectations and inspire ideas.

C–D

Client
An individual or organisation commissioning a creator to produce content. Working with clients requires understanding their needs, goals, language, and expectations.

Coverage
Capturing more shots, angles, and variations than you think you'll need. Ensures flexibility in the edit and reduces the risk of missing essential footage.

Cut (Transition)
A simple transition where one clip immediately replaces another. The most natural and commonly used transition.

E–F

Editing
The process of selecting, ordering, and refining video clips to create the final piece of content. Includes trimming, pacing, transitions, effects, and sound design.

Exporting
Saving or rendering a finished video from an editing app so it can be uploaded or shared with clients.

Frame Rate
The number of frames per second in video/animation. In analogue animation, varying frame rate is a creative tool to influence energy, speed, or mood.

G–N

Hook
The compelling opening moment (typically the first 1–3 seconds) designed to grab a viewer's attention so they don't scroll away.

Imperfection (in analogue animation)
Deliberate use of handmade textures – such as visible fingerprints or flicker— to enhance authenticity and charm.

Mixed Media
Combining analogue and digital elements such as stop motion with live-action footage or cut-outs over real imagery.

Niche
A specific topic or focus area that defines what a creator is known for. Not meant to limit creativity but to make content discoverable and targeted.

P–S

Pacing
The rhythm and speed of the edit. Fast pacing creates energy; slower pacing creates weight or emphasis.

Planning
Preparing ideas, hooks, value, and through-line before creating content. Prevents chaotic or unclear videos.

Sequence
A group of shots that together tell a mini-story. Thinking in sequences helps create more intentional and engaging visual storytelling.

SMART Goals
Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound objectives set for a project or client brief.

Sound Design
The intentional selection and layering of sound effects, ambience, and music to enhance emotional impact – especially critical in animation.

Storyboard
A series of sketches, frames, or outlines used to visualise the structure of a video before filming or animation.

T–Z

Through-line
The logical flow or narrative direction of a piece of content – even short videos need a beginning, middle, and payoff.

Timeline (in editing)
The arrangement of clips, audio, and effects in the editing interface, representing the order in which they will appear in the final video.

Transitions
Visual effects used to move smoothly between clips – such as cuts, fades, swipes, or zoom transitions.

If you have used this resource we'd love to hear from you about what you used it for, what was useful, what could be included in future versions.

You can contact us using the QR code or email address below.

m.e.wells@brighton.ac.uk





Supported by:

University of Brighton

Powered by Coastal Catalyst:

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

FUTURE CREATORS

talent accelerator

DE LA WARR PAVILION