

1. Watch the following short films and decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F).

- a. In "Hair Love", the girl's father doesn't want to waste time combing his daughter's hair. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. The boy in "The Present" doesn't like dogs. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. In "For the Birds", the big blue bird wants to make friends with the smaller birds. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. In "The Other Pair", the boy on the train throws his shoe at the other boy because he is angry at him. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The family in "Jafar" discriminate the stranger because he's poor. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. In "Pip", the small white dog saves the day. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Match each saying with one video that illustrates it. There is one extra short film you do not need to use.

- a. *"Clothes don't make the man."* \_\_\_\_\_
- b. *"Adversity and loss make a man wise."* \_\_\_\_\_
- c. *"Actions speak louder than words."* \_\_\_\_\_
- d. *"Every cloud has a silver lining."* \_\_\_\_\_
- e. *"You reap what you sow."* \_\_\_\_\_

1) The Other Pair

2) Jafar

3) Pip

4) Hair Love

5) For The Birds

6) The Present

## ***"Write what you know"***

I believe this is one of the most **misleading** pieces of advice given to writers and filmmakers today. It has become a cliché and is responsible for producing many of the **dull** stories that festival programmers see every year during short-film viewings. It denies and **subverts** the power of the writer's imagination, creativity, ingenuity and research. It undervalues the talent of professional writers. It sends beginning writers and filmmakers **scurrying** down a dark alleyway of uninspired filmmaking as they misinterpret this phrase to mean that they should make films based on their 'normal' lives, everyday lifestyle and locale.

If you are an average member of the public your life is generally pretty ordinary, unexciting and lacking in drama. When life runs smoothly there is no drama. There's nothing to inspire the great stories that the rest of us want to watch. People go to the cinema or dive into books to escape from the **dreariness** and boredom of everyday life, not to see it regurgitated in front of their eyes.

However, that said, there is another side to this phrase that is indeed appropriate and usually misunderstood. One thing you do know, we all know, is what it is to be human. Every one of us knows what it is to laugh, cry, feel pain, hunger, anger, grief, joy, love, and so on; in short, what it is to feel and experience human emotions. We all know the **primal** needs of hunger and thirst, warmth and shelter, love and desire, the survival instinct and protection of loved ones, fear of death and so on. These are the things you do know that you need to write about. Focus your attention on your knowledge of human emotion.

In writing what you know, think about your most intimate and personal emotions and experiences. What did they feel like? Now transfer that to the characters and imaginary situations in your story. Create emotional situations that will touch an audience using all that you've learned and know of human emotions. That's where the connection with the audience lies. Your first kiss or love, the tragic loss of a loved one, the **elation** or joy of winning some great success. Think about your own deeply emotional experiences and what they meant for you, then transfer that emotion to your stories. Now you are writing about what you know. Mix it with creativity, imagination, and the rest of your storytelling talent to create something special.

*Adapted from Short Films: Writing the Screenplay by Patrick Nash.*

## IDENTIFYING PURPOSE

1. Read the passage and choose the correct option. What is the writer's purpose?
  - a. To explain how to make a good movie.
  - b. To give advice on how to improve writing.
  - c. To urge writers and filmmakers to experience life more intensely.

## IDENTIFYING KEY DETAILS

2. Read the following statements and decide if they are true (T) or false (F).
  - a. Filmmakers make dull movies because their lives are uninspiring.
  - b. Drama is necessary to come up with a good story.
  - c. Exploiting human emotions is what makes a story appealing.
  - d. Your story is good if the audience can relate to it.
  - e. Good writers have suffered losses that inspired them.

## WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

3. Match the highlighted words with their meanings.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*): relating to the time when human life began. // basic and relating to an early stage of development.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*): not interesting or exciting in any way. // not clear, bright or shiny.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (*verb*): to move quickly, with small, short steps.
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*): the fact of being boring and making you feel unhappy. // a situation causing sadness or gloom.
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*): a state of extreme happiness or excitement.
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_ (*verb*): to try to destroy or damage something, especially an established political system. // Undermine the power and authority of (an established system or institution).
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*): causing someone to believe something that is not true. // Giving the wrong idea or impression.

**PREPARE TO SHARE** Think about your own story (real or fictional) to tell your classmates.