



Drone Exploring: Career Spotlights

Cinematography — Club

Overview: Drones have become a powerful tool for capturing creative photos and video for movies, TV, sports, and social media. In this session, youth explore how drone cinematographers plan and capture shots, practice basic camera composition, and build a mini storyboard to tell a 30-second story — all while learning to fly and film responsibly and respectfully.

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce youth to the career of drone cinematography and where its footage shows up (movies, commercials, sports broadcasts, social media).
- Teach basic photography and videography concepts: framing, angles, and camera movement.
- Practice storytelling by planning a simple shot sequence.
- Build awareness of safety and privacy when filming outdoors.

SUPPLIES

- Flip chart or whiteboard and markers
- Tablets, smartphones, or simple cameras for each small group
- Optional: a beginner camera drone (such as a small indoor-safe drone) for a supervised demo
- A device or projector to show 2–3 short sample aerial video clips
- Printed handouts: Camera Angles and Shots Cheat Sheet and 30-Second Story Storyboard
- Pencils or markers for storyboarding

ADVISOR NOTES

- If a camera drone isn't available, simulate aerial angles using a phone or tablet held high, a step stool, or a ladder (with supervision).
- Emphasize FAA guidance on privacy: never film people or private property without permission, keep the drone in sight, and stay below 400 feet.
- Encourage creativity over 'getting it perfect' — the goal is exploring, not producing a polished film.
- Consider inviting a guest speaker (a local drone hobbyist, videographer, or high school media or film student) to share their work in person or by video call — see Optional Extensions.
- If no guest speaker is available, Advisors can run the entire session using this outline and the resource links below.

SESSION OUTLINE

- **Welcome and Icebreaker (10 min)**
 - "Director's Chair": each youth shares a favorite movie, show, or video clip and describes what makes the camera work look cool.
- **Safety Moment (Fly Smart, Fly Safe, Respect Privacy) (10 min)**
 - Never film people or private property without permission.
 - Always keep the drone within sight and fly below 400 feet.
 - Watch for other aircraft, wires, trees, and crowds before flying.
 - Ask: "Why do you think it matters to respect people's privacy when filming?"
- **Mini-Lesson: What Does a Drone Cinematographer Do? (15 min)**
 - Show sample aerial footage clips and discuss where drones show up: movies, commercials, sports broadcasts, real estate, music videos, and social media.

- Discuss how a shot's angle and movement can make a viewer feel excited, calm, or curious.
- **Activity: Camera Angles Challenge** (20 min)
 - Break into small teams with a camera, phone, or tablet.
 - Each team practices four shot types from the Camera Angles handout: bird's-eye view, low angle, high angle, and tracking shot.
 - Teams review their shots together and vote on their favorite.
- **Activity: Storyboard a 30-Second Story** (15–20 min)
 - In small groups, use the Storyboard handout to plan 3–4 shots for a simple story (examples: a hike, helping a neighbor, a game of catch).
 - For each box, sketch the shot, note the camera angle, and describe the action.
- **Wrap-Up Share-Out** (10 min)
 - Groups share their storyboards and describe which shot they'd most want a drone to capture, and why.

REFLECTION SECTION

Advisor Note: Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own.

Focusing Questions

- What was your favorite camera angle to try today, and why?
- What movie, show, or video have you seen that might have used a drone?

Analysis Questions

- How does the camera angle change the feeling of a shot?
- Why do filmmakers need to follow safety and privacy rules when flying drones?

Generalization Questions

- Where else could you use planning and storytelling skills, besides filmmaking?
- What's one thing you'd like to learn next about cameras or drones?

Challenge: This week, take three photos from three different angles (worm's-eye, eye-level, and bird's-eye) and be ready to share your favorite.

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Guest Speaker: Invite a local videographer, drone hobbyist, or high school or college media or film student to share their work and answer questions, in person or by video call.

Advisor-Led Option: If a guest speaker isn't available, Advisors can run this session using the outline above and the resource links below — no outside expert is required.

Resource Links: FAA Know Before You Fly (knowbeforeyoufly.org) for youth-friendly drone safety basics; search “aerial cinematography behind the scenes” on a video platform for age-appropriate sample clips.

Group Extension: Create a short “simulated aerial” video by lifting a phone on a pole or from a step stool, then edit the clips together using a free, simple video editing app.

Handout: Camera Angles and Shots Cheat Sheet

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Use this sheet during the Camera Angles Challenge. Try each shot type and check it off!

Bird's-Eye View

Camera looks straight down from above.

Used to show a whole scene at once — like a football field or a neighborhood.

Low Angle

Camera is placed low, looking up at the subject.

Makes the subject look big, powerful, or important.

High Angle

Camera is placed high, looking down at the subject.

Can make the subject look small or show what's happening around them.

Tracking Shot

Camera moves alongside a moving subject.

Used to follow the action and keep viewers engaged — like following a runner or a car.

Handout: 30-Second Story Storyboard

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With your group, plan a simple 30-second story using 4 shots. For each box below, describe the shot, the camera angle, and what happens.

Shot #	What Happens	Camera Angle	Notes
1			
2			
3			
4			