How to Make Great Movies: A Tutorial
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In this tutorial, I will be explaining how to make great Sims2 movies in a flash. I will give recommendations on video editing programs, and I will also give a few personal secrets and tips. The easiest way I can explain the movie making process is to start at the beginning. I will use a few examples from my latest movie, A New York Minute.

A The giant "A" tells you that the following information is advice from other moviemakers. These will show up periodically.

Step 1: Brainstorming

After you have the game, the first step is to brainstorm some ideas for your Sims2 movie. If this is your first time creating a movie, I suggest picking your favorite song and making a music video to it. Remember that The Sims 2 has some limitations, so don't try to get too elaborate with your ideas. If you have an idea, you are ready to move on to Step 2.

Advice: Keep a notepad and pen/pencil by your bed so that you can write down any ideas that you may think of while you're asleep. As soon as you get up, be sure to write down any ideas you thought of.

A -Watch a lot of other people's movies. You'll learn a lot... either what to do or what NOT to do!
-Don't ask OTHER people for ideas! Okay, maybe this is just a pet peeve of mine, but everyone has ideas. If you don't have ideas, then you're dead, and making movies is the least of your worries. Think about what makes you laugh/cry/upset/etc. Whatever motivates and inspires YOU is what you should make. Use someone else's ideas, and it'll come out flat. A favourite song or TV show or film is a good place to start, but for the love of logic, don't post on the BBS asking people to write your script or do you thinking FOR you!

Step 2: Scripting

The next step is scripting. If you are making a music video, this step is pretty easy. For my music videos, I make a table. On the left side is the lyrics to the song, and on the right is the scenes I need. Here's an example:

I love you,	Woman's face
You love me.	Man's face
We're a happy family.	Both holding hands
With a great big hug	Both hugging
And a kiss from me to you,	Both kissing
Won't you say you love me too.	Talking

Then, under the table, I would list the characters and sets I needed for the movie. It may look this:

Characters Needed:	Sets Needed:
Man	Room
Woman	

If you are scripting a regular movie, be sure to include all of the characters' lines, sets, characters, and actions. You may want to print the table and lists of sets and characters so you can have them while you are playing and filming.

> **A** -First picture the movie in your head over and over and over, act it out if you have to…this helps me understand how others will view my movie, and it also makes me wonder 'OK how can I achieve this or that?'
> -I would reccommend planning out your movie ahead of time. Write out your script, and sketch out a storyboard. Shoot a scene a few times to make sure you get exactly what you want. The same can be said about recording voice as well.

Step 3: Creating Sets and Sims

There is nothing wrong with using someone else's sets, sims, or custom content, but using material you make yourself seems to add to the creativity and obvious hard-work put into the movie. If you do use something created by another person, be sure to give them full credit.

I find that it is better to create a sim in Body Shop rather than the in-game Family Creator because if you were to accidentally delete the family, or ever want to use that exact sim again, you will still have it. Of course sometimes the Randomize button can be great for creating interesting characters for your movies. Also, don't worry about making a different sim for each individual character. Remember that you can change their appearance with a dresser and mirror very easily. Take advantage of it.

When it comes to sets, I usually just by an empty 5X5 lot and create everything on my own. For inside shots I usually just make one room, and change furniture, flooring, and wallpaper as needed. Here's a picture of the lot from my latest movie, A New York Minute:

As you can see, the house, cemetery, and park are all on one lot, with plant barriers to keep them from being seen from one location in a scene. I had three different in-house designs throughout the film, but they are all in the same room. Only two of them were used in the movie. Here are the two you saw:

Did you realize they were in the same room?

The two scenes that were just outside the house were the same too.

Did you notice?

-Something I also try not to do personally is film the whole neighborhood on a lot with only one house because it looks as if the house is in a deserted city with nothing but grass and a street, unless that's the theme you're going for.

-Build multiple scenes one lot or one scene instead of building a complete house just to film a kitchen scene. This could improve game performance. Build a seperate complete house on another lot for exterior shots...Unless you want to capture your sims walking from inside to outside or all over the lot.

-Don't use the street unless absolutely neccessary.

-If you're building a house or set for a movie, and not for playing the game, build it facing away from the street unless you absolutely need to. The last thing you want is a stray townie, mail carrier, or paperboy walking through your carefully-prepared shot.

Step 4: Filming

The fourth step in the movie making process is filming. Before filming, you may want to change

a few settings to help you out.

To change these settings, go to Options.

General Settings: The first setting I suggest you change is free will. Turn it OFF. This will keep your sims from walking into scenes in the middle of filming.

Camera Settings: There are a few settings you can change in the Camera settings to make your movies much better. I would first start off by selecting the film quality and size. I would suggest that these are not any lower than Medium. If your computer can handle it, I would definitely go with the highest settings. Choosing these will make your footage look great, but it will slow your game down quite a bit. Next, I would either Enable or Disable in-game audio. If you want to hear the simlish when you play your movies, enable it. If not, disable it. If the audio is enabled, it will slow down your game speed while filming as well. The last thing I suggest you change is the Maximum Recording Time. I would set this way above what you actually think you would need to record. You can always stop the camera manually.

Now that you have all of your options set, put your scene together. Get all of your actors/actresses in their starting positions, then PAUSE the game. Tell each of the sims what you want them to do, and then place your camera. You are almost ready to film.

Before you start filming, which can be done either by pushing 'v' or clicking the video camera icon, make sure the walls are up and try to make sure that the plumbob is not visible for as much of the shot as possible.

When filming, you may find that trees and many other objects start to disappear if you get too close. This can be stopped by going into cameraman mode.

To enable cameraman mode: Press TAB (also disables cameraman mode)

Here are some more keyboard controls to remember while in cameraman mode:

Z	Zoom In
X	Zoom Out
A	Move Left
D	Move Right
W	Move Forward
S	Move Back
Q	Lower Camera Height
E	Raise Camera Height

Remember that you can always center the view on a sim by right-clicking on its portrait in the toolbar or on a location or objects by right-clicking on or near it.

To assign the camera a certain position (great for achieving that perfect crossfading shot), make sure the camera is in the exact position you want it in, and then push Ctrl and any number from

4-9. WARNING-Do not press the numbers on the keypad! It will not work.
To move to a camera position, press the number you assigned to it (4-9). To jump from one location to a defined camera position, press Shift and the number.

-Put the sims you dont neeed in a little box so they wont come on in shots
-Don't lose sight of your original plan. Sometimes even in storytelling, people stray away from what the story was originally about and it becomes something totally different and/or confusing.
-Don't get lazy toward the end. Once you start a movie, you're so pumped up and hype and the movie may start off strong, but then after a few hours you began to lose interest. It may take a day or two. Start strong, end strong.
- Be realistic as to how you can achieve different effects. Think of how you can make the guy jump off the roof (Make him dive into a pool, pause in mid-air and use the 'moveobjects on' cheat to place him on the roof, unpause and it will look like he actually jumped be creative.)
-- Some ppl wonder how to get voices to fit with the Sim's expressions. What I do is write out the scene and lil miniscript, then I watch film over and over and try to match my words with their expressions, or change the wording in the script to match them etc.
-Never underestimate the power of in-engine post processing. To turn post processing on hit ctrl+shift+c to bring up the command console. Enter the following (without the quotes of course) "boolprop enablepostprocessing true" and hit enter. The game will turn sort of fuzzy on you, dont' worry, it's supposed to look like that. Now that you have post processing active, you can do some cool tricks, here are a few of my personal favorites:

Letter Box
Letter Boxes are those black bars you see above and below a film that's in wide screen. While The Sims 2 letterbox doesn't actually change the aspect ratio, it still creates a cooler palette to frame your shots on. To activate letter box type "letterbox #" into the console, where # is any number you choose. Be warned though, you want to use numbers somewhere between 0.0 (no letterbox) to 0.4 (very wide aspect ratio). While I haven't actually figured out what the proper number to enter to get academy and anamorphic aspect ratios is, I usually go with 0.2, because it's easy to remember between various filming sessions (don't want your aspect ratio to change mid movie : P) and it seems like a nice enough size to me.

Slow Motion
Slow Motion does just that, it slows all the action down.
To enable slow motion type "slowmotion #" into the console, where # is any number between 0 and 8. 0 is regular speed, and 8 is ridiculously slow. I usually recommend you go no slower than 5 or 6, but this is after all your movie.

Bloom
Bloom gives your scenes what has been dubbed as a softglow effect, or "romantic camera". This is great for scenes that are flashbacks, dreams, or just need more atmosphere. And heck, it just looks plain cool to boot.
To activate Bloom type "bloom R G B A" into the console, where R G B and A are all seperate numbers between 0 and 1. Bloom can be a bit tricky at first, because the logic behind it is closer to that of a computer's logic than a human's. Basically, the R G and B control the amount of red, green and blue respectively. If you want a night vision goggle effect you can enter 0 1 0 and have all green. If you want a nighttime filter look, you can use 0 0 1 for all blue. If you want a warm golden day time look, use 1 1 0 (red and green result in yellow with RGB). You can also use decimals for your colors, though this is sometimes a bit finnicky and hard to control. If you want a greener look to that golden warm for something like, say, a forest, you can enter 0.5 1 0 and that should give you what you're looking for. Don't hesitate to try various combinations of decimals to get some cool color combinations.
As for the fourth number "A", this has been said to control the amount of bloom, but I find it's closer to controlling the saturation. If you enter 0 you still have a bloom effect, but rather than highlights on things being ridiculously bright, you get more of a color overlay. If you enter 1, the colors don't come through as more, but you get brighter reflections on things. I've tried using decimals for this number, and get mixed (and rarely noticeable) results. I personally recommend you stick with blooming at 0 or 1, but again, don't hesitate to experiment.

The best way to get a hang of post processing effects is to simply practice and experiment, that's how I figured all this out.

NoteWhen using post processing effects you may want to reset everything to a clean slate. Simply type "boolprop enablepostprocessing false" into the console and hit enter to disable post processing and return everything back to normal.

-Try to get close ups so see emotions

-When you move your camera while you shooting. don't use the mouse. it gonna make the video jerky and not smooth. use the keyboard to move it and don't afraid to use the camera man mode.

Step 5: Putting it All Together

To put all of your film, music, and images together into one great movie to upload to your sim page, you will need a movie editor. There are several on the market, but one you may find is already installed on your computer. You can find Windows Movie Maker in the following folder:

C://Program Files/MovieMaker/   Then click on the icon named "MOVIEMK". You can also right-click that icon and select 'Create Shortcut' and drag it to your desktop to make it more easily accesible.

Some other movie editors include, but are not limited to:

Magix Movie Edit Pro
Adobe Premiere
Sony Vegas
Ulead Video Studio

All of these cost money, but most of them have trial versions available for download on the internet. I will not go into great details on how to edit your movie. I will not go into detail about editing in this tutorial because a lot of you will use different editors. Most movie editors have there own tutorial on the internet.

Step 6: The Big Premiere

Once you have your movie completely put together and saved correctly, you are ready to let us see it. I will explain how to upload it to your sim page. If you are uploading it to a different website, you will need to follow the instructions given there.

To upload your movie:

1. Go to 'www.thesims2.ea.com'
2. Log in
3. Under your avatar, or in the MySim Page area at the top, click Manage
4. Go to Edit Movies
5. Select the slot that is best for your movie. If it is 5MB or under, select one of the 5MB slots. If it is between 5MB and 10MB, select the 10MB slot.
6. Click Browse to find your movie on your computer. Double-click it. Type in a title and short description for your movie.
7. Click Upload. It may take a while for your movie to upload depending on the following things:

-Internet Speed
-File Size
Be patient, and when your movie is uploaded, let us know! Head on over to the Movies Forum and post a new thread about your movie. Also, do not post a bunch of threads about your movie. One per day is all that is needed. If no one is reading your post, try editing your subject. If it is just called "My New Movie", not as many people will read it. If it is titled "Giant Aliens Attack Pleasantview", you are more likely to attract viewers.

You are now finished creating your fabulous movie! Don't be discouraged if you get a lot of constructive criticism the first time. We are all just trying to help you become a great movie maker, which you will become someday.

To finish this tutorial, I would like to thank the following people for their contributions toward this tutorial:

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