



WIFILM ACT Curriculum

Technical role: Key Grip





Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, you will gain the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes:

Key Grip	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic knowledge of the role and responsibilities of a key grip in the film industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define 'key grip' and the key roles and responsibilities of a key grip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of the important role that a key grip plays in the film industry and who a key grip is.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic knowledge of key terms used by the 'key grip'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define some of the key terminology used by a key grip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to define key terminology used by the key grip.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factual knowledge of the important role the grip plays in working and communicating with the camera and electrical department and the director.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss how the key grip must liaise with the camera and electrical department to ensure the safety of all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of the equipment required by the key grip.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theoretical knowledge of the key equipment needed by the grip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articulate why it is important for the key grip to be able to think ahead and foresee any problems that may arise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciation for the ability of the key grip to foresee problems and the awareness of safety protocols.





What is a Key Grip

- The Key Grip is the person in charge of **building and maintaining all the equipment used to support and move the camera**, making sure it is fully secured to prevent them from falling.
- It is a kind of glue that makes all departments come together on the set, providing creative and technical solutions to all of them.





What does a Key Grip do?

- The Key Grip is responsible for three areas on the set:
 - Safety.

The are proficient in basic safety rules, technical mechanical fasteners and first aid, techniques of building static and mobile structures, and the use of the appropriate tools.





What does a Key Grip do?

- The Key Grip is responsible for three areas on the set:

- Camera support

Pushing dollies and sliders, and with their crew, assembling the dolly tracks, so they are responsible for camera movements on set.

When they do their job well, camera movement through scenes will be smooth so you won't even notice it, meaning you'll never think there's a person assisting camera movements.





What does a Key Grip do?

- The Key Grip is responsible for three areas on the set:
 - Light support.

Organizing it but without doing the lights. That means they don't touch the lamps. They take care of the non-electrical equipment used to modify the light.





What are the key terms a Key Grip should know?

- The processes of "blackouts" and "tenting-out".

When shooting scenes occur at night in fiction but are shot during the day, doors and windows require preparation.

It is necessary to eliminate all daylight entering the set. If windows/doors are not visible, the light can be obscured with a cloth.

But when these appear on set, blackout marquees must be created outside to place lights outside, or green screens to be seen through the window, illuminated only by lights placed by electricians.





What are the key terms a Key Grip should know?

- The following tools:
 - ☐ Arm up (or down) – To raise (or lower) the arm of a crane.
 - ☐ Baby plate - Used for mounting light fixtures that have a 5/8-inch receiver (known as a "baby") to a flat surface, such as a wall/floor.
 - ☐ Batten - Used to fasten and secure fixtures. They can be made of wood or metal.





What are the key terms a Key Grip should know?

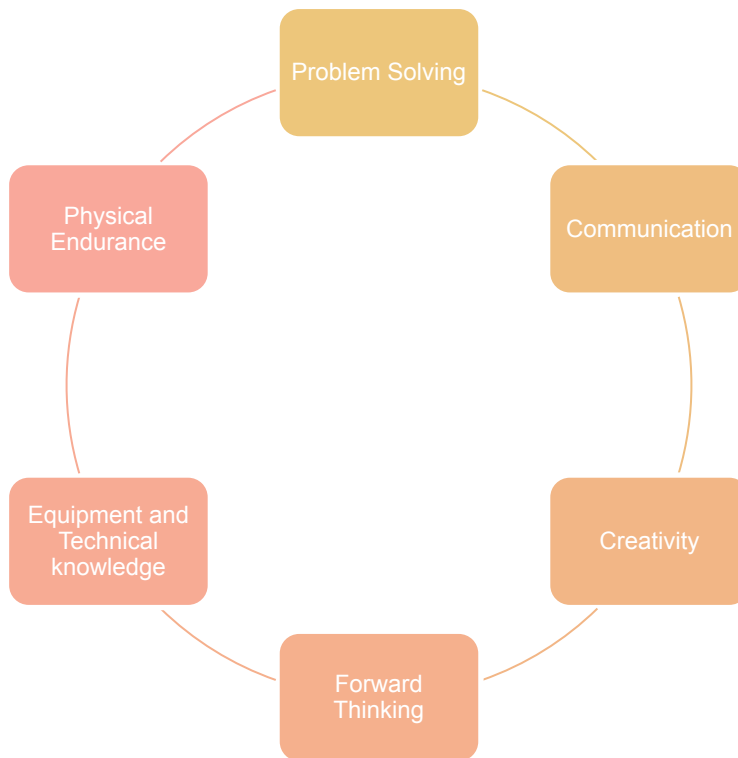
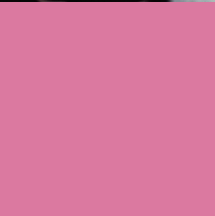
- The following tools:
 - Gobo - Acronym for "Go Between," "Go Blackout" or "Goes Before Optics," is a dark plate or (partial) screen placed in front of a light source to shield a lens and control the shape of the light emitted.
 - Clapperboard: A board that is placed in front of the camera at the beginning of each shot. It is usually black and white and is used to identify the scene and shot attempt numbers.

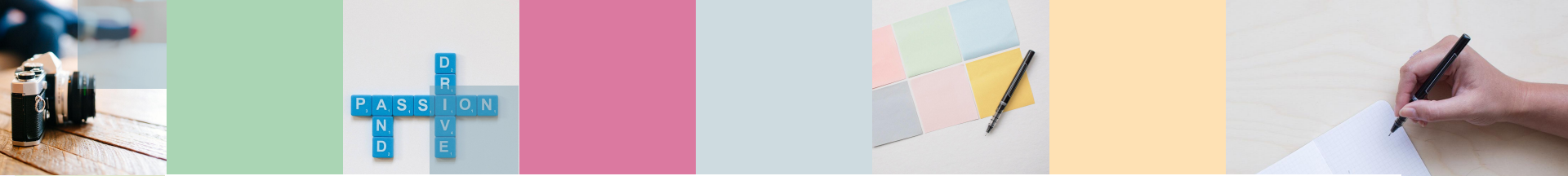




Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Skills Needed for Key Grip





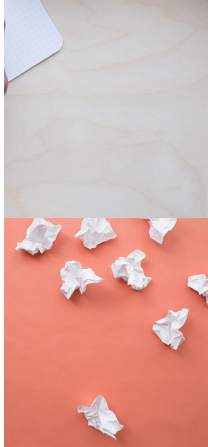
Learning Activity 1: Identify the obstacles in your communication!

Step 1: Think of situations in which you have been dissatisfied with a conversation or communication process.

Step 2: Identify what elements or situations led to that failure.

Step 3: Try to reconvert those elements to improve the situation: your reaction, your emotions, your tone, your body language...?

Step 4: Think about your feelings about each of the alternatives.





Case Study: What Is a Grip? The Few Women Doing the Job in Hollywood Explain



Besides being overwhelmingly male and handed down through families, these 4 women said many of their male colleagues are supportive, while others heckle them or worse.

They are surprised that more women do not end up as grips or key grips, and suspects it is because the job has the reputation of being all about brute force, when it is often about being nimble.

Whenever women ask about getting into the field, they tell them to go to the gym, get ripped and develop a thick skin. “Because you’re going to be tested”.



“It’s not for the faint of heart, but it’s also deeply rewarding because it involves behind-the-scenes problem solving. Grips are the unsung heroes on set.”

Melanie A. Ragone

“There have been male crew members over I was there to do hair, makeup or wardrobe”.

Tana Dubbe

“I have zero ego, and that makes working in a team very different for the fellas that work with me as well”.

Tana Dubbe



Case Study: What Is a Grip? The Few Women Doing the Job in Hollywood Explain

De-briefing Question 1

*As you have seen,
female grips are
sometimes
questioned by
their peers.*

***How would you
deal with the
frustration of
feeling that you
are being
doubted?***

De-briefing Question 2

*If you were in that
situation*

***How would you
convince those
peers to reverse
the situation?***

De-briefing Question 3

*Key Grips need
collaboration with
various
departments.*

***What are the
keys to teamwork
for you?***





Tips to enter the Key Grip profession:

Maintain communication

The communication between directors - producers - grips – electricians or any other department is crucial. That means, that everyone on the set will know what directors want to do, how producers can do it and how grips will make it happen.

Prioritize the sense for security

Be patient and ask for patience from your team until you secure the equipment and the people involved with it. Avoiding scares and accidents is priceless.

Experiment!

Get your hands dirty and experiment and play with the different types of equipment. This is the best way to discover how each element works separately and its influence on the others.

Be open-minded and creative

Listen to the requests of the set members and study how to propose different alternatives to achieve them. Be clear about what the result should be and develop your creativity to get there.

Keep on learning!

Witnessing how other Key Grips work and build specialized rigs, equipment, how they deal with the sun and what gear they order.

Always surround yourself with more challenges!

Encourage and believe in the team

A Grip doesn't work alone. Without collaboration, the work doesn't flow. It takes communication, help and support from everyone to make the equipment work in the most efficient way.



Opportunities of being a Key Grip

Get to know from the inside how film directors, directors of photography and other "artistic" profiles work through their requests.

This will give you some basic knowledge to make the leap to the artistic side of the industry.

Helping many
people

By collaborating with other technical profiles, you can learn first-hand how the electricians or camera operators for whom you provide solutions work. This will give you some basic knowledge about equipment and tools to make the leap to more specific professional profiles.

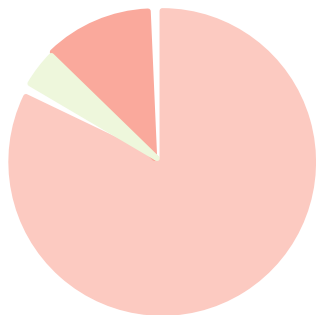




Gender Imbalance

Key Grip Statistics by Gender

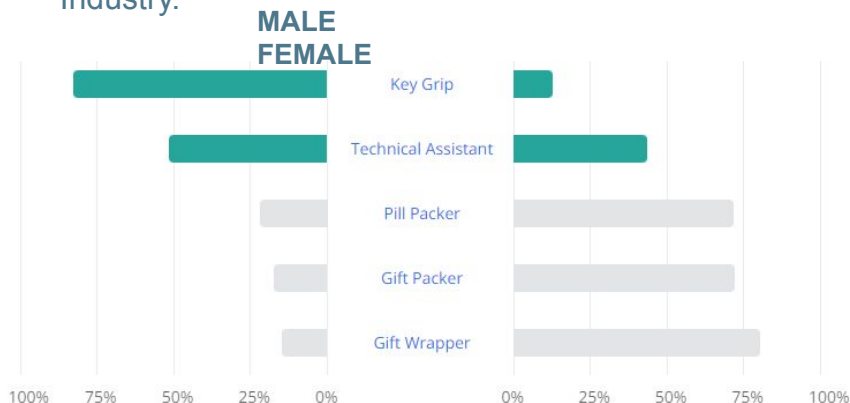
- According to US data, among Key Grips:
 - 12.9% of them are women
 - Compared to 82.6% which are men.
 - 4.5% is unknown.



- References from Zippia (USA).

Key Grip vs. other occupations

- According to US data, female Key Grips are less common than other female technical occupations in the Film Industry.





Learning Activity 2

Imagine you are on set and you have to shoot a scene where a living room with windows to the street appears. It's daytime and the scene must take place at night. What would you do?

Step 1: Determine if it is possible to pretend it is night outside even though it is daytime.

Step 2: Identify all the points to work on (windows, doors, cracks...).

Step 3: Make a list of the materials needed to treat these elements (fabrics, lamps that simulate street lighting...).

Step 4: Look for photos and examples of these processes.

Step 5: Compare your list of materials and tools with the examples researched.





Useful Resources – Top Tips

What A Key Grip Does On Set: Crew Breakdown

- YouTube channel about the “inside” of the Film Industry Crew, in this case, the Key Grip’s average day on set.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqpSLp9H-DY>

Grip Tips

- YouTube channel about different technical tricks for the Key Grip role.
- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6xliqRXcbqk6vU_GxalTQQ

Best Girl Grip

- Podcast with an interview with Rebecca Horsburgh, one of the few active women in the Key Grip profession.
- <https://bestgirlgrip.podbean.com/e/episode-058-rebecca-horsburgh-grip-key-grip-best-boy-grip/>

Grips Support

- A portal that gathers all the necessary information for Key Grips in activity: videos about tools, equipment, directory of international companies, international professionals, blog with curiosities about the profession, etc.
- <https://www.gripsupport.com/>





End of Module Key Grip

De-briefing Question 1

*After learning the
information in this
module*

***What do you think
would be your
strengths and
weaknesses in this
role?***

De-briefing Question 2

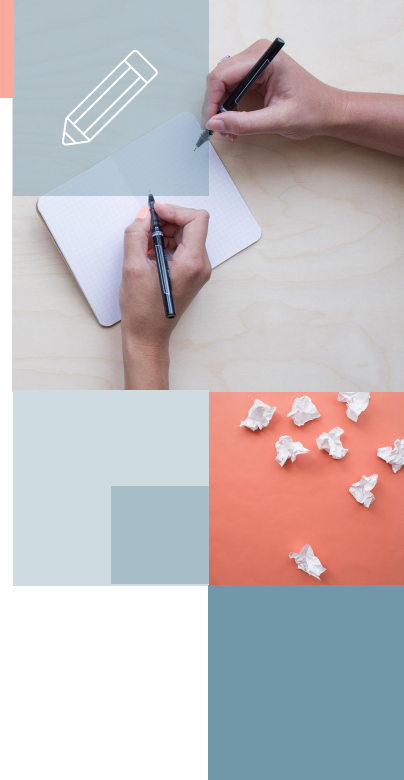
*If being a Key Grip
has caught your
attention*

***How would you
start preparing for
this job?***

De-briefing Question 3

*Once you know
more about the skills
and tasks of the Key
Grip*

***How would you
explain their
importance in the
film industry?***





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

WIFI

Women in the Film Industry



CREATIVE EXCHANGE



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."
Project Number: 2020-1-UK01-KA202-079201

