

# CREATIVE CAREERS

creative  
skillset

# FILM

**“It’s a fantastic time to be working in Film. You can get in if you’re good at what you do.”**

**Daniel Bishop**  
**Camera Operator**

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Most people think about directors and camera operators, but there are many more jobs in production across the UK. Even if you’re the type of person who doesn’t want to be on location, there’s still work in the film industry for you. There are also smaller markets like commercials that can offer creative opportunities. Independent video producers have also made their home online.

*Zoella, TomSka and CGPGrey* are all popular YouTube channels based in the UK. These companies and producers work in a different way to the rest of the industry and have no set entry route. More often than not, the people running the channel are the original creators. If you’re dedicated and want to teach yourself production skills, you can set up something yourself.

The industry is very competitive, and being able to stand out from the crowd is key. Having a degree isn’t necessary when applying for jobs, but they can boost your chances. There are limited opportunities for apprenticeships in film, usually publicised by production companies and the apprenticeship service.

Choosing where to live is important as well. There are major studios in London and emerging markets in Scotland and the South East. Crews also travel away from home to work for several months of the year.

Think outside the box – gaining relevant experience in another sector can be a good alternative. There is no set way into a career in film. The department ladder isn’t for everyone, and people often move between industries before returning to film.

Technology moves quickly. Keeping up to date with the new equipment will help to keep you employable. Attend industry workshops and seminars and follow blogs to stay updated with new productions and what’s developing.

## FIRST STEPS

Look up your favourite films on IMDB to find out who directed, edited and produced them. What are these people responsible for? Find out at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Get out and film something with your phone, camera or your school’s equipment. Learn about story, framing and editing. Put the film online and get feedback from friends.

## GETTING IN

Think about how to climb the ladder. Learn about the junior roles in the department you’re interested in and contact local companies and crew members for work experience.

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# TV

**“If I’m not learning, I’m not enjoying what I’m doing. The day I get bored, we’re all in trouble.”**

**Jamie Hindhaugh**  
**COO, BT Sport**

The TV industry has a lot of production roles, with many of the bigger budget dramas having crews similar to a feature film. Other programs, such as live news broadcasts and sports, hire their own technical specialists.

The industry is huge, and has proven to be a vital part of the economy.

There is a lot of work outside of the traditional on-set roles that would be worth considering. Whether you’re in front of the camera or behind the scenes, there are jobs for all types of people, you don’t need to be a traditional creative type to work in TV.

To get into the industry, start by watching TV! Consider what you like, what you would change and what kind of programmes you would like to make. Look out for the five genres: news, factual entertainment, drama, comedy and children’s TV. Watch the credits to find out who made it. These production companies could be good contacts for work experience.

Many people start out as runners or researchers, jobs that allow you to

experience a little bit of everything before deciding on where you’d like to move up to. Running allows you to see how the different departments work before you specialise.

The industry is also very competitive, so you’ll need to find ways to stand out from other applicants. Having a degree isn’t necessary, but it is one of the ways you can show your knowledge and training despite not having much experience. A portfolio of work or showreel is key to showcase your ability. Create your own work!

Most TV programming is actually produced by independent production companies, not TV channels. Finding out which companies make what will be important when looking for work.

## FIRST STEPS

Look up your favourite TV shows on IMDB to find out who directed, edited and produced them. What are these people responsible for? Find out at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Get out and film something with your phone, camera or your school’s equipment. Learn about story, framing and editing. Put the film online and get feedback from friends.

## GETTING IN

Think about how to climb the ladder. Learn about the junior roles in the department you’re interested in and contact local companies and broadcasters for work experience.

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# ANIMATION

**“There’s no set path, you have to put your work out there.”**

**Gavin Strange**  
**Senior Designer, Aardman**

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There are a lot of roles within animation, and in a smaller company it's common for people have a wider skill set. Large companies will look for specialists in rigging, character animation and modelling. Production and infrastructure staff focus on the day-to-day operations, managing the studio and delivery of projects. 2D animation starts as hand-drawn art, and composited in 2D space.

3D animation is built from 3D models, using cameras in 3D space to “film” the virtual world. The only analogue medium left is stop motion – photographing models in sequence to create the illusion of motion. The UK is best known for the stop motion series *Wallace and Gromit*.

While the job role you'd most often associate with the industry is an Animator, there are plenty of job roles if you're not an artist. Producers play a big role in animation and manage the production process. Studios will also hire runners, a junior job role that works across all departments. Runners will get experience working on all aspects of the production, and supported in finding an area to specialise in later in their career.

Employers will be looking for those with strong skills in design and illustration. Be creative with your CV to show this off – but don't let it overshadow the content.

You'll also want a portfolio of work. This will be a showreel of work with breakdowns, but can also include illustrations and drawings to give an example of your artistic ability. Start this early and add to it as you get more experience.

Have a look at a list of open source software that you can access online that will enable you to create your own animations. Software is more accessible than ever, so you can experiment in animating sequences and shots at home.

## FIRST STEPS

Look up your favourite films on IMDB to find out who directed, modelled and lit them. What are these people responsible for? Find out at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Try out free or demo software like **Maya** and **Blender** – make your own work and release it online. Look at movement in the world around you and try to recreate it on screen.

## GETTING IN

Think about how to climb the ladder. Learn about the junior roles in the department you're interested in and contact local companies and agencies for work experience.

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# VFX

**“Every artist has their own handwriting, we put our life into the character.”**

**Marion Strunck**  
**Animator, Framestore**

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The industry creates images and sequences for film, TV, animation and games that are otherwise too difficult, expensive or impossible to create.

Using technical and artistic skill, teams create alien landscapes, explosions and cute fluffy creatures. Artists also repair footage, removing wires and replacing green screen backgrounds. While the job role you'd most often

associate with the industry is the VFX artist, production staff support the different teams. Artists in large studios specialise in modelling, compositing or technical direction. Smaller studios tend to hire generalists.

In larger studios, there will be whole departments devoted to human resources or marketing, whereas the smaller studios will still offer roles in studio development or administration. Like most creative industries, most studios will also hire runners if you want to experience a cross-section of the roles available.

Having a great portfolio will get you noticed, but having a qualification helps to show that you are skilled. The major studios in the UK are in

London, so studying close to the capital could make sense. Developing skills like illustration, photography and automation will all be useful no matter where you end up.

VFX careers require you to work with others – team skills are important in this sector. If you're interested in production or leadership roles, you'll need an understanding of the technology first. Anyone interested in VFX should also try common software, such as After Effects, Maya and Nuke.

As the industry grows, new technology and trends will begin to emerge. Staying updated is vital to working in VFX, attend industry workshops and seminars, and follow VFX websites.

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## FIRST STEPS

Watch visual effects breakdowns from your favourite films. Find out which elements of the shot are handled by which team member at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Try free or demo software like **After Effects**, **Nuke** and **Blender**. See if you like modelling or compositing, the two key skills. Rewatch films and look out for the VFX shots!

## GETTING IN

Find out about local work experience at post-production and VFX houses. Try your hand at creating your own shots through shooting your own plates yourself, or downloading them.

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# GAMES

**“Go and experiment, it’s not as difficult as it used to be.”**

**Gary Lightfoot**  
*Programmer, Radiant Worlds*

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There are a lot of job roles within the Games industry. It’s common for people to be adept at a lot of aspects of development to allow them to work on whatever is needed. Larger companies will look for specialists in coding, modelling and animation.

Publishers still commission games from studios, but with new platforms many studios self-publish. Games are also commissioned by ad agencies.

Games employers are looking for people in development and scripting, art and design. Companies are also looking for more expertise in publishing and marketing. Independent and self-published studios, in particular, have skills shortages in marketing and PR.

Most of those looking to enter the industry will enjoy art or coding. However, there are many roles within the industry that don’t require these skills. Producers are in charge of project management, and narrative designers plan scripts and puzzles to build the story and the world.

Games development is one of the fastest growing industries in the UK, getting in requires dedication.

Most workers have a degree. While science, technology, engineering and maths courses are valued, you’ll also need artistic skills and training to get by. There are also specialist games courses, although the focus on different disciplines will vary.

Studios will use different tools, so it’s recommended that you try out different development software. You will also want to research into the locations of studios you want to work with. Most studios are in the South, but there are hubs all over the UK.

Don’t wait until you’ve made a playable game to get started on your portfolio. Tech demos can be a deciding factor in an interview, as they can show off your skill and passion.

## FIRST STEPS

Look up your favourite games to find out who directed, designed and programmed them. What are these people responsible for? Find out at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Try out free or demo software like **Twine**, **Unity** and **Blender** – try to find young developer communities in your area for support. Play games to understand how their systems work.

## GETTING IN

Think about how to climb the ladder. Learn about the junior roles in the department you’re interested in and contact local companies and publishers for work experience.

# CREATIVE CAREERS



# VR & AR

**“We look for flexible people, people that are excited by solving problems.”**

**Matthew Allen**  
**Director, Rewind**

Although the industry is young, virtual reality is set to touch all corners of the creative industries. With applications in games, medicine and architecture, a career in VR could be a great path.

The VR industry creates virtual worlds explored through VR headsets like the Oculus Rift, HTC Vive or Google Cardboard. These experiences have

to be realistic as well as flexible, so that audiences can experience your work without seeing the seams. Projects range from independent 360° video, to large blockbuster game productions.

Look at how companies apply VR and AR technology. Although games are a big part, there are also applications in science, medicine and architecture that could offer great job prospects.

This type of work requires 3D modelling, animation and texturing skills. Many of the current VR artists in the UK have moved from games or animation companies. You'll also need specialist knowledge about the different VR platforms, and how they work. Try to experience different

VR platforms, and think about how developers deal with movement, interaction and sound.

There aren't any defined routes in, but developing your own VR projects is a great way to stand out when applying for junior roles. A strong portfolio of animation and modelling work will also be a great way of getting attention. It's also easy to start by self-publishing your projects online, using existing tools to prototype your idea and even sell your work.

Careers in VR will require technical skill as well as artistic skill, and most of your projects will be team-based. As the technology is moving so fast, you'll also be expected to keep up with the latest developments.

## FIRST STEPS

Play VR experiences and try the different technologies. Who in the team creates the art, the music, the game engine? Find out at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

Try out tools like **Unity**, and **Blender**, to see which parts of the process you enjoy. Look for local meetups and communities to meet and try out other developers' VR projects.

## GETTING IN

Find out about local work experience at development studios. Try your hand at creating your own projects and upload them online for feedback and user testing.

# CREATIVE CAREERS



# PARENT'S GUIDE

## The creative industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK.

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We're famous around the world for our Film, TV, VFX, Animation and Games industries. With more jobs available every day, a creative career is rewarding and practical.

Job security is a key factor when looking at future careers. While many creative industries hire on a per-project basis (think feature films, games and TV series), organisations also hire for permanent positions.

There are also "non-creative jobs" in the creative industries. Even production companies and game studios need project managers, HR staff and customer service departments. Artistic skills are secondary in these roles, so drawing ability is no longer a factor when thinking about a creative career.

Employers look for STEAM skills – that's Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths. Art skills are helpful, but more and more the creative industries are hiring people that show promise in other areas. Graduates that might have once ended up in finance, now apply for VFX roles. And engineers interested in the automotive industry now work for games companies.

There are many opportunities for on-the-job training in every field. If university isn't an option, there are apprenticeships and trainee schemes just like any other industry, aimed at all age levels. These tend to be flexible and designed to bring out the best skills in their applicants.

You can start thinking about creative careers at home. Encouraging artistic thinking and developing a wide skill set will put your child on the right track. Get them to think critically about their favourite games, TV shows and films.

Building a portfolio of creative work (how employers tend to hire, rather than looking at CVs) can also start at any age, and evolve with time.

## FIRST STEPS

Watch films, TV shows and play games, and find out which ones were made in the UK. Watch the credits to find out who does what, at [creativeskillset.org/jobroles](http://creativeskillset.org/jobroles)

## MOVING UP

If your child wants to start making creative projects, try to provide the tools and environment to do so. Encourage STEAM qualifications and enrichment activities outside school.

## GETTING IN

Think about apprenticeships, university and trainee schemes. Look up the defined career path for fields they're interested in, and watch interviews online with practitioners.