

Devising ideas for feature films or short films

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A good rule of thumb is to brainstorm thirty one-sentence ideas for the film before choosing one (because the first few tend to be clichés) Do not be one of those people who think of an idea in the lift and devote three years of their lives trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear before giving up in despair.

Remember, give yourself permission to be silly when you brainstorm. Go for quantity and quality will come. Think 'real but unusual' as a trigger, but go for the bizarre and then explore the metaphor you create. Keep ideas to a few words at this point. You want fragments only (eg 'Cinderella story involving commuter') not a plot. Check out all of the creative techniques in the first section of the book and give them a try. Don't forget to try: brainstorming by mind map; using headline in a newspaper as a trigger ('No respite for miners' - brainstorm 'respite' brainstorm 'miners' - turn it to 'minors' - turn it to 'musicians who play in minor keys' etc) and so on. If you are brainstorming from a genre, define the plot components of the genre and brainstorm from those as well. Hence, if an element of a spy story is 'infiltrating enemy territory', use that as a creativity trigger

Think of your own creativity triggers and use them. Look at the section on getting ideas in my book [Screenwriting Updated](#)