

LEARN FILMMAKING WITH CLAUDE

EPISODE 01

PHASE 1 · MODULE 1 · STORY & WRITING

IDEA *vs* STORY

ಮಿ idea ಕಿ story ಒಂದಾ?

COURSE MATERIAL · FREE

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WELCOME TO LEARN FILMMAKING WITH CLAUDE

A free, practical filmmaking course in Telugu-English. One craft at a time, from your first idea to the finished film, with Claude as your creative assistant at every step.

PHASE 1 · LEARN

4 modules, 20+ episodes

1. **Story & Writing** ← you are here
2. Pre-production
3. Production Craft
4. Post-production & Release

PHASE 2 · PRACTICE

You make, we review

You apply each lesson to your own film. The best submissions get a live breakdown with Claude on [@cinmaa.ai](https://twitter.com/cinmaa.ai).

EVERY EPISODE HAS FOUR PARTS

PART	WHAT IT GIVES YOU
1 · The concept	One filmmaking principle, explained simply.
2 · Claude demo	The exact prompts to use Claude for that step of your film.
3 · Claude can't do this part	The human side of the craft: taste, judgment and choice. This part stays yours.
4 · Mee Turn	A small task to try today. It builds the habit you'll need in Phase 2.

EPISODE 1 · LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

1. Tell the difference between an **idea** and a **story**.
2. Test any idea with the **three story questions**: WHO, WANT, OBSTACLE.
3. Write a clear, one-sentence **logline** for your film.
4. Use Claude to generate and stress-test loglines, and know where your own judgment takes over.

IDEA VS STORY

మీ దగ్గర ఒక super film idea ఉంది కదా? కానీ నేను మీకు ముందే Sorry చెప్తున్నా — ఎందుకంటే అది idea మాత్రమే. అది ఇంకా story కాదు.

You have a great film idea? Sorry, but it's only an idea. It isn't a story yet.

Most beginner short films don't fail because of the camera, the lighting or the edit. They fail much earlier, at the page, because the filmmaker mistook an **idea** for a **story**.

చాలా short films fail అయ్యేది camera వల్ల కాదు. Idea ని story అనుకోవడం వల్ల.

Most short films fail not because of the camera, but because an idea was mistaken for a story.

WHAT IS AN IDEA?

An idea is a **situation**: something interesting that happens. It can be exciting, funny or strange, but it doesn't move by itself. It has no person driving it, no goal and no pressure.

Idea అంటే just ఒక situation. 'Auto driver కి lottery తగిలింది.' బాగుంది... కానీ తర్వాత ఏంటి?

An idea is just a situation. "An auto driver wins the lottery." Nice... but what happens next?

WHAT IS A STORY?

A story is a **person who wants something badly, facing something that stands in the way**. That tension forces choices, and choices create drama. An audience keeps watching because it wants to know how the struggle ends.

	IDEA	STORY
What it is	A situation	A struggle
Who's in it	Anyone, vaguely	A specific person
What drives it	Nothing; it just sits there	A clear want
Tension	None	An obstacle, which creates conflict
Audience asks	"So what?"	"What will they do?"

Example

An auto driver wins the lottery.

A debt-ridden auto driver finds a passenger's winning ticket. Return it, or change his life?

IDEA = just ఒక situation



'Auto driver కి lottery తగిలింది.'
బాగుంది...

కానీ తర్వాత ఏంటి?

LEARN FILMMAKING WITH CLAUDE · EP 01

From the episode: an idea on its own is a flat picture. It looks nice, but nothing pulls the audience forward.

“కానీ తర్వాత ఏంటి?”

(But what happens next?) is the question every idea must answer before it becomes a story.

THE THREE STORY QUESTIONS

Story కావాలంటే మూడు questions కి answer ఉండాలి.

To have a story, you need answers to three questions.

1

WHO

ఒకటి — ఎవరు?

Who is the story about? A specific person with a situation, a flaw and a reason we care.

2

WANT

రెండు — వాళ్ళకి ఏం కావాలి?

What do they want, badly and specifically? A goal we can see them chase.

3

OBSTACLE

మూడు — ఏది అడ్డుగా ఉంది?

What stands in the way? A person, a force, a rule or their own conscience.

WHO + WANT + OBSTACLE = STORY · miss one and it's still just an idea

1 · WHO: make the person specific

"A man" is not a character. "An auto driver drowning in debt" is. Give your protagonist a **situation** (what their life is like now) and a **pressure point** (what's already hurting). The more specific the person, the more original the story feels.

- Weak: *a boy* → Strong: *a shy village boy who stammers*

2 · WANT: something we can see them chase

The want must be **concrete and visible**. "Happiness" can't be filmed; "₹50,000 by Friday to save his auto" can. A strong want gives your film direction: every scene either moves the character toward it or pushes them away.

- Weak: *wants to be successful* → Strong: *wants to win the district singing contest*

3 · OBSTACLE: where the drama lives

Without an obstacle there's no conflict, and without conflict there's no film. The best obstacles force a **difficult choice**. They can be:

TYPE	EXAMPLE
Another person	A rival, a strict father, a corrupt official
A force	A flood, a deadline, poverty, the city at night
Society or rules	Caste, family honour, the law, an exam system
Themselves	Fear, guilt, pride, their own conscience. Often the most powerful.

FROM IDEA TO STORY

STEP 0 · THE RAW IDEA

“ఒక ఆటో డ్రైవర్ కి లాటరీ తగిలింది.”

An auto driver wins the lottery. It's a situation, not a story.

STEP 1-3 · ASK THE THREE QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER	WHY IT WORKS
WHO?	An auto driver drowning in debt	Specific, with a pressure point we feel
WANT?	Money to escape the debt, which a ₹1 crore ticket could give him	Concrete, urgent, visible
OBSTACLE?	The ticket belongs to a passenger who forgot it; his own conscience	Forces a moral choice

THE RESULT · NOW IT'S A STORY

అప్పుల్లో మునిగిపోయిన ఒక auto driver కి, passenger మర్చిపోయిన lottery ticket దొరుకుతుంది. అది ఒక కోటి గెలిచింది. Ticket తిరిగి ఇస్తాడా? లేక తన జీవితం మార్చుకుంటాడా?

A debt-ridden auto driver finds a lottery ticket a passenger left behind, and it has won ₹1 crore. Does he return it, or keep it and change his life?

ఇప్పుడు ఇది story. ఒక మనిషి ఉన్నాడు, ఒక కోరిక ఉంది, ఒక conflict ఉంది.

Now this is a story. There's a person, a desire and a conflict.

NOTICE WHAT CHANGED

- **The lottery is no longer the point.** The choice is. The audience now leans in to see what he'll do.
- **The story has a built-in ending question:** return or keep? Every scene can push toward that decision.
- **It reveals character.** Whatever he chooses tells us who he really is. That's what makes an audience care.
- **It's shootable on a small budget:** one auto, one street, one night. A great story doesn't need a big budget.

THE LOGLINE

దీన్నే logline అంటారు — మీ సినిమా మొత్తం, ఒక్క sentence లో.

This is called a logline: your whole film, in one sentence.

A **logline** is a one or two-sentence summary that contains your WHO, WANT and OBSTACLE. Filmmakers use it to pitch, to stay focused while writing, and to test whether a story works *before* spending weeks on a script.

THE FORMULA

WHEN [SOMETHING HAPPENS], A [SPECIFIC PERSON] MUST [ACHIEVE A GOAL], BUT [OBSTACLE] STANDS IN THE WAY.

Advanced version: add the stakes, meaning what happens if they fail. "...or else [consequence]."

EXAMPLES ACROSS GENRES

GENRE	LOGLINE
Drama	When a debt-ridden auto driver finds a passenger's winning lottery ticket, he must decide whether to return it, before the owner traces it back to him.
Thriller	When an auto driver realises his last passenger left behind a ₹1 crore ticket, he must find her before the men following her find him.
Comedy	When an honest auto driver tries to return a winning ticket, everyone he meets claims to be the owner, and he has one day to find the real one.
Classic film	<i>Finding Nemo</i> : an overprotective clownfish father must cross the ocean to rescue his captured son, despite his deep fear of the open sea.

The first three are written for this booklet to show how one idea can grow into many different stories. That's exactly what you'll do with Claude in Section 5.

LOGLINE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Is there a **specific** protagonist (not just "a man")?
- ☐ Is the **want** concrete and visible on screen?
- ☐ Is there a clear **obstacle** that creates conflict?
- ☐ Does it raise a **question** the audience wants answered?

- ☐ Is it **one or two sentences**, under about 40 words?
- ☐ Can you realistically **shoot** it with your resources?

COMMON MISTAKES

MISTAKE	FIX
Describing the theme ("a film about honesty")	Describe the person and the struggle; the theme will show through.
Telling the ending	End on the dilemma or question, not the answer.
Too many characters or subplots	One protagonist, one want, one main obstacle.
Vague words ("faces many challenges")	Name the actual obstacle.

CLAUDE AS YOUR WRITING PARTNER

ఇక్కడే మీరు Claude ని మీ writing partner గా చేయవచ్చు. Claude కి మీ raw idea ఇవ్వండి.

This is where Claude becomes your writing partner. Give Claude your raw idea.

PROMPT 1 Turn an idea into loglines

My film idea: an auto driver wins the lottery.
Turn it into 5 loglines in different genres. For each one,
name the protagonist, what they want, and the conflict.

In seconds you get five different directions, such as thriller, emotional drama and comedy, each built on WHO, WANT and OBSTACLE. You're not asking Claude to write your film. You're asking it to show you **possibilities you hadn't considered**.

PROMPT 2 Stress-test the best one

Pick the strongest one. What's weak or clichéd about it,
and how would you sharpen it?

నిజాయితీగా చెప్పుంది. Ego లేని script doctor లాగా.

It tells you honestly, like a script doctor with no ego.

BONUS Make it yours

Here's my logline: [paste yours].
Check it against WHO, WANT and OBSTACLE. Which one is weakest?
Ask me 3 questions that would help me make it more specific.

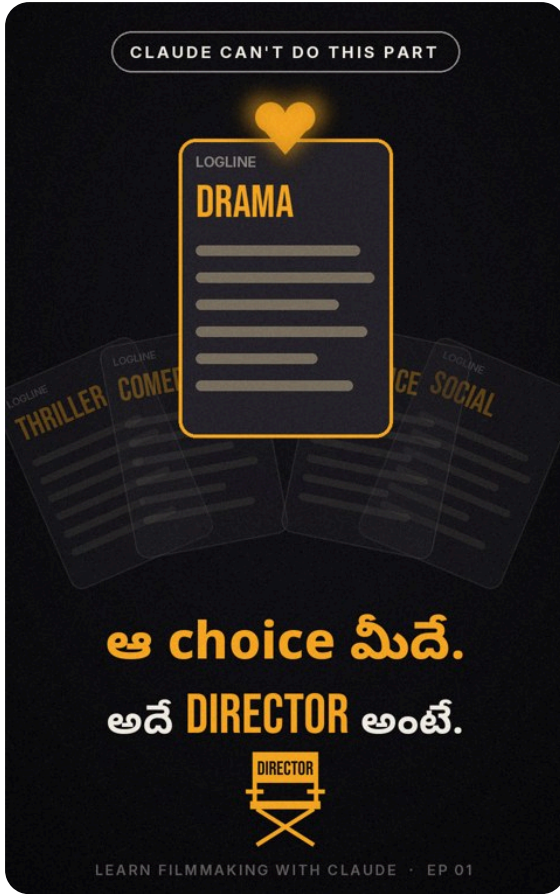
TIPS FOR WORKING WITH CLAUDE

- **Give context:** your budget, location, language and runtime ("a 5-minute Telugu short shot on a phone in Hyderabad"). Better input, better output.
- **Ask for options, not answers:** "give me 5" beats "give me the best one".
- **Push back:** if a logline feels generic, say so and ask for something less predictable.
- **Mix and match:** combine the WHO from one option with the OBSTACLE from another.
- **Keep your voice:** treat every output as a draft to rewrite in your own words.

CLAUDE CAN'T DO THIS PART

కానీ ఒక్క విషయం. ఈ ఐదంటిలో ఏ story మీ గుండెకి దగ్గరగా ఉందో — Claude కి తెలియదు. ఆ choice మీదే. అదే director అంటే.

But one thing: Claude doesn't know which of these five stories is closest to your heart. That choice is yours. That's what being a director means.



Claude can give you many good options. Choosing the **one** you'll spend weeks or months making, and that only you can make well, is the director's job.

QUESTIONS TO CHOOSE YOUR STORY

1. **Which one would I pay to watch?** If it doesn't excite you, it won't excite an audience.
2. **Which one do I understand from my own life?** Personal truth makes small films powerful.
3. **Which one scares me a little?** The story you're nervous to tell is often the one worth telling.
4. **Which one can I actually shoot?** Check the locations, actors and budget you really have.
5. **Which one will I still care about in a month?** Filmmaking is a long road. Pick a story that can carry you.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

ఇప్పుడు Mee Turn. మీ idea ని ఈ 3 questions తో ఒక్క line logline గా రాసి comment చేయండి.

Now it's your turn. Use the 3 questions to turn your idea into a one-line logline and post it in the comments.

MY RAW IDEA

1 · WHO?

2 · WANT?

3 · OBSTACLE?

MY LOGLINE (ONE SENTENCE)

BEFORE YOU POST · SELF-CHECK

- ☐ My protagonist is specific.
- ☐ Their want is concrete and visible.
- ☐ There's a real obstacle that forces a choice.
- ☐ It's one sentence, and it ends on a question rather than the answer.

SHARE IT

Post your logline in the comments of Episode 1 on Instagram [@cinmaa.ai](https://www.instagram.com/cinmaa.ai) and tag **#LearnFilmmakingWithClaude**.

Practice phase లో best loglines ని Claude తో live breakdown చేద్దాం.

In the practice phase, we'll break down the best loglines live with Claude.

GLOSSARY & RECAP

Idea

A situation or concept with no person, goal or conflict driving it yet.

Story

A specific person who wants something and faces an obstacle, which forces choices and creates drama.

Protagonist

The main character whose want drives the story (the WHO).

Want (goal)

The concrete thing the protagonist is chasing, something we can see on screen.

Obstacle

Whatever stands between the protagonist and the want: a person, a force, society or themselves.

Conflict

The struggle created when the want meets the obstacle. It's the engine of drama.

Stakes

What the protagonist stands to lose if they fail.

Logline

A one or two-sentence summary of a film containing WHO, WANT and OBSTACLE.

EPISODE 1 IN FIVE POINTS

1. An idea is a situation. A story is a struggle.
2. Every story answers three questions: **WHO? WANT? OBSTACLE?**
3. A logline captures your whole film in one sentence. Write it before the script.
4. Claude helps you explore options and stress-test them quickly and honestly.
5. Choosing the story that's yours is the director's job, and that job is yours.

NEXT EPISODE

EP 02 - STORY STRUCTURE

How to shape your logline into a beginning, middle and end, even for a 4-minute short.

మళ్ళీ next part లో కలుద్దాం.

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