Film Opening Proposal

Completed model | After Closing

Teaching model. The project, dates and feedback are invented; the screenplay reference is real.

Planning | Initial proposal: November 20, 2026 (illustrative)

Fiction-film opening: no more than two minutes, including titles.

1 Opening and representation

My opening follows Mina, a 17-year-old student who volunteers in the school library. She is checking the returns list when she finds a note inside a book: 'Mina, leave the side door unlocked.' She checks the doorway, chooses to secure the door and returns to the desk. The handle moves. The opening ends on her reaction before the title, After Closing; the person outside stays unseen.

I want Mina to appear observant and capable. I will keep the camera at her eye level and show her checking the door, so her response is an action she chooses.

2 Genre and tone

This is a mystery thriller with restrained tension. I will hold a static medium shot as Mina reads the note, keeping the door outside the frame. Paper movement and room tone will continue until a handle clicks off screen. I will stay with her reaction before cutting towards the door. The delay gives viewers time to connect the sound with the instruction in the note.

For now, I plan to place the opening credits over the returns routine. Their timing and placement still need research.

3 Audience and information

My initial audience is older teenagers who enjoy mysteries in familiar settings. A school library gives them an ordinary place to recognize, while the personal message raises questions about who knows Mina's routine. By the end, viewers should understand what the note asks and that Mina has refused.

I will withhold the writer's identity, their reason and whether the person at the door is connected. That uncertainty sets up the story beyond these two minutes. I still need to check whether viewers can follow the information I have given them.

Feasibility and Development

Completed model | After Closing

4 Reason for the choice

I considered beginning with a corridor chase or with Mina explaining the note in voiceover. The chase would reveal a threat immediately and need more performers and locations. Voiceover would explain information viewers could discover through image and sound.

I am choosing the returns-desk version because viewers can notice the disturbance alongside Mina. The book and note give the camera something precise to show, rather than asking the performer to look worried without a clear cause.

5 People and resources

I can use a phone, tripod, one performer, a book, a handwritten note and a key. I will direct, film and edit; a classmate will play Mina. I still need permission for a quiet library session and confirmation of the performer's availability. A classroom dressed with books is the alternative if permission is refused.

Corridor noise could spoil the handle cue, so I will record that sound separately and keep matching room tone under the edit. Any locking action will be staged without actually locking the room.

6 Question for research

My first question is about editing: how can a short routine establish Mina's carefulness without delaying the note? I will examine Olive's introduction in Michael Arndt's Little Miss Sunshine screenplay, then compare the actions that reveal her priorities with my proposed book, checklist and key actions.

I will use that comparison to choose which actions carry meaning and which repeat information. This reference will inform character introduction; I still need research into mystery openings, sound and titles. My next step is a teacher direction check before I begin that research.

Later update after feedback and research

November 23, 2026 (illustrative)

Feedback pointed out that looking towards the door would not clearly show Mina refusing the request. I will add a close-up of her choosing the key and securing the door, before returning to the medium shot.

In the opening of the Little Miss Sunshine screenplay, Olive pauses and replays a pageant recording and imitates the winner's wave. I read these actions as showing an ambition she does not need to explain in dialogue. I will keep Mina's checklist action to establish her care, but remove a separate shot of her arranging books because it repeats that information. The note, off-screen handle sound and unresolved ending remain. I will next check the revised sequence's timing in a rough storyboard.

Source: Michael Arndt, Little Miss Sunshine, screenplay draft (2003), opening scene, PDF page 1.