**Spend some time researching exactly what it is an AD does. What are their responsibilities, why are they so vital to a production? Then write a 2 page paper on the duties of an Assistant Director.**

The assistant director AD is the right hand man/woman for the director. AD will have organizational skills as opposed to the creative skills that the director possesses. AD ensures that all the “below the line” crew shows up during production, on time, and have all the tools they require to complete the job for the day. AD is in charge of such day-to-day operations by being the liaison between the director and the crew. AD takes care of call sheets, time cards and tracking the daily progress of the production schedule. The AD will determine how long a particular scene will take to shoot. A particularly multi-page scene can be shot in half a day, while a small half-page emotional scene could take all day to shoot. Based on these requirements and foresight, the AD will have to organize all the resources in advance. Based on the level of AD, the particular duties of the AD might change. The first AD has overall aforementioned duties and supervises the second AD. The first AD runs the floor/set for the day. Along with the unit production manager, the AD is the highest “below the line” technical role in filmmaking. The second AD creates call sheets from the production schedule. Second AD will also coordinate with actors and put them through wardrobe and make up and also supervises any other lower rungs of assistant directors. At this stage, the second AD can also be called as the backstage manager. Second Second AD deals with the increased workload of a large and complicated production. The third AD works with the first AD and second AD to move the principals from base camp (where all the production is housed) to other locations required for the shoot. The third AD will also organize crowd scenes and additionally, supervise one or more Production Assistants. Lastly, the additional AD or the fourth AD is the “key production assistant” who might have a number of duties.

It is impossible to imagine a large scale production move forward without the AD. They provide continuous progress reports about the shoot. And they should prepare the storyboard, overseeing the hiring of locations, props and equipment and checking weather reports. They draw up shooting schedule and are astutely aware of the budget, cast availability and script coverage. They also take action to eliminate or minimize health risks and hazards on the set for everyone involved. To work in the role, the AD must be an authoritative team-leader and motivator, be an approachable team player, have exceptional organizational and time-management skills, plan ahead, trouble-shoot, pay close attention to detail, be a great communicator, have tact and diplomacy skills, routinely deal with problem or even crisis situations, prioritize tasks, multi-task, work long and hard hours, be flexible and have a positive approach. No wonder then, that the role of a production assistant is seen as a stepping stone to becoming an AD. The AD, however, is not considered a creative role: it is considered to be a technical role with great organizational skills. And yet, there are some good directors that started out as AD: Alfred Hitchcock and James McTeigue.

To sum up: the AD 1) schedules the shoot 2) scouts locations 3) gives instructions on set 4) accomplishes the day’s work 5) takes care of safety. The AD creates all types of report and hands them over to actors, technicians and other crew members so that they know how to be prepared for the next thing that will be shot. So in addition to all these organizational skills, the AD needs to have great technical skills so that he/she can talk to all the department heads and crew members in the language that they understand. Thus, the AD is vital to making the director’s vision come to life.

**Define in as much detail as possible what "below the line" means.**

“Below” the line” refers to the crew that is responsible for putting in to action, the vision of the Director of the film. These include roles such as the sound mixer (the smallest department in the production), the make-up artist (who can make elaborate special effects such as torn ligaments or simple touch-ups), script supervisor (who ensures that there is no break in continuity for the story/characters), unit production manager (who takes care of day-to-day budget and schedule), costume designer (who takes care of costumes), director of photography (who takes care of photography and lighting in a film), art director (whose department works closely with the production designer), location manager (who ensures the proper locations are secured for the shoot), line producer (who ensures that the production comes under budget), assistant director (who is in charge of all on-set, day-to-day operations, who also maintains a general sense of order) are all part of “below the line” crew. If the producer and the director are the head and the heart of the production, the “below the line” crew is the hands of the production. “Below the line” crew also refers to the crew that gets paid only if they get called to work for the day. This is in contrast to “Above the line” crew members who would get paid after signing the contract and will get paid regardless of whether the movie gets made. This includes the director, actors, producers and the writers. In financial and cost-related terms, such principals are called the fixed cost while the “Below the line” crew makes up the variable cost.

**What are the must-have qualities of a PA? Why are they so important on a film set?**

Punctuality, flexibility, clarity, calmness, attentiveness, professionalism, resourcefulness, vigilance, bravery and responsibility are the must-have qualities for a Production Assistant. They are important on the film set because one has to be early to work, adapt quickly and respond to change, not repeat mistakes, communicate verbally and/or in writing in a concise and explicit manner, be the source for reason and not panic, listen and follow directions precisely, have a cheerful attitude, respect others and dress appropriately, think on feet, say “yes” and find a way to make it happen, anticipate problems and keep eyes and ears open, not be afraid to ask questions and take the job seriously and own up to the mistakes. These are vital in any business. However, on a film set, if such qualities do not exist, the entire production will come to a halt. Therefore, these are essential qualities for a Production Assistant to have. The Production Assistants are extremely important to have on the set because they can serve as Right Hands to the Assistant Directors – depending on the hierarchy on the set. For example, in a huge production, the Production Assistant will be supervised by the additional AD. However, in many productions, the PA could directly report to the first AD or directly to the director. This is especially true in independent films. In other words, if the AD is the Right Hand to the director, then the PA is the Right Hand to the AD. The PA aids the AD in making the vision of the director come true. The duties of the PA are therefore, essential to any production, big or small.