



PRODUCTION GUIDE BOOK

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Welcome to the Production Guide Book.

Every creator has their style. Everyone is different. Through vlogs, animation, comedy sketches, how to's, documentaries, and short films; you are telling a story to an audience. We know creating videos can be challenging, so in order to help you make better content, we created this guide to provide you with a better understanding of the video-making process.

From Scripting to Lighting, this guide will give you a better understanding of what these processes are, and how they can improve your content.

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What is the Production Process?

Every piece of content that is created, in some way or another, goes through a universal process. Which is as follows...

Pre-Production

Scripting, Storyboarding, Shot lists, Scheduling

Production

Camera , Lighting , Sound

Post-Production

Editing; Visual and Sound design

This guide is broken down into these three sections, containing sub-sections in specific practices and disciplines. Creating engaging content can be done in many ways, and one of those ways could be with your production, and every production can be improved by practising certain disciplines and going through the Production process, starting with...

Pre-Production

What is pre-production?

Planning and Preparing for a shoot, creatively and logistically (i.e. the shots you are going to use, writing/changing your script, casting, scouting locations, selecting costumes and equipment, etc.) During pre-production, you should visualize your finished film and establish how you are going to execute the vision practically.

Pre-production is not only thinking about your content artistically, but logistically as well. Depending on what you are creating, your content can have a lot of different elements involved; equipment, locations, actors, crew, costumes, weather, etc. Spending time in pre-production is key to capturing the best footage.

“ I spent almost all day, five days a week working on either videos or youtube related things... ”

- JACKSGAP

Do not underestimate the importance of pre-production and planning before shooting content. Ultimately, spending time on pre-production will offer you more time doing what's most important -- the filming itself.

Below are the most important aspects of pre-production that you should consider before shooting your content.

- Scripting
- Storyboarding
- Budgeting/Scheduling/Optimization

Scripting

While filming, your script is like a compass. It will always be your point of reference. Spending time on your script during pre-production is crucial. Your script is your blueprint from which you construct your content. If you have other people working with you as well, the script is vital part of communicating the essential information they need to know. Depending on your content, there may be times when you think you don't need a script. For example, if you're a vlogger, you can simply turn on your camera and talk. However, a short script (even if it's just bullet points), could help with your vlog structure, limiting the time it takes to film and even improve your audience's engagement.

“ I write out a script before recording but I don't memorize it word-for-word or read it off a teleprompter. No matter how good you are, when you do that you almost always sound like you're reading instead of having a conversation with your audience. So I read little sections of my script at a time and then record myself repeating what I remember as it comes naturally. That way it sounds like I am merely having a conversation with someone, but everything is prepared. ”

- Michael Stevens - VSAUCE

Everyone has their own voice and story telling methods. By creating a script, you can:

- Organize and communicate what needs to be said or shown
- Aid in structuring your content and enhance the audience's engagement.
- Share the material with collaborators or people helping with the filming
- Increase your shooting efficiency as there will be less uncertainty and experimentation

There are three sections to a script that every screenwriter should know: headings, narrative and dialogue. Headings can be thought of as the title of each scene that usually includes the camera location ("EXTERIOR" or "INTERIOR"), scene location ("RACE TRACK") and time of day ("DAY" or "NIGHT"). Each scene can have a secondary heading and/or a special heading for things such as montages, dream sequences, flashbacks, or flash forwards. The narrative section is the description of each scene including action, character and settings (visual and sounds). The dialogue sections of a script are the actual lines that your characters will say during production. These sections should include the name of the person speaking appears at the top, in CAPS, the actor's direction (also known as parenthetical), and the actual speech. Here's an example script:

Sam walks into his room. Suddenly he stops. His body is completely rigid as he stares out of the window. CUT TO.

CU of Sam's eyes. His eyes begin to fill with fear. CUT TO.

OSS of Sam facing the window. Outside we can see a crow sitting on one of the branches.

SFX Telephone rings. Sam snaps his head to look at the telephone sitting on his desk. He walks over to it slowly and answers it.

SAM
Hello?

VOICE
Hey Sam. Hows it going man?

SAM
Danny?

VOICE
Yeah. I was calling to see if you had seen Dennis? My pet crow?

Sam goes to look out of the window, but the crow is no longer there.

DANNY (CONT.)
Sam? You still there?

Sam hangs up the phone and runs out the room.

CUT TO.

5. SAM'S GARDEN - EXT. DAY

Sam is walking towards the back of the garden. The sun is shining through the trees branches...

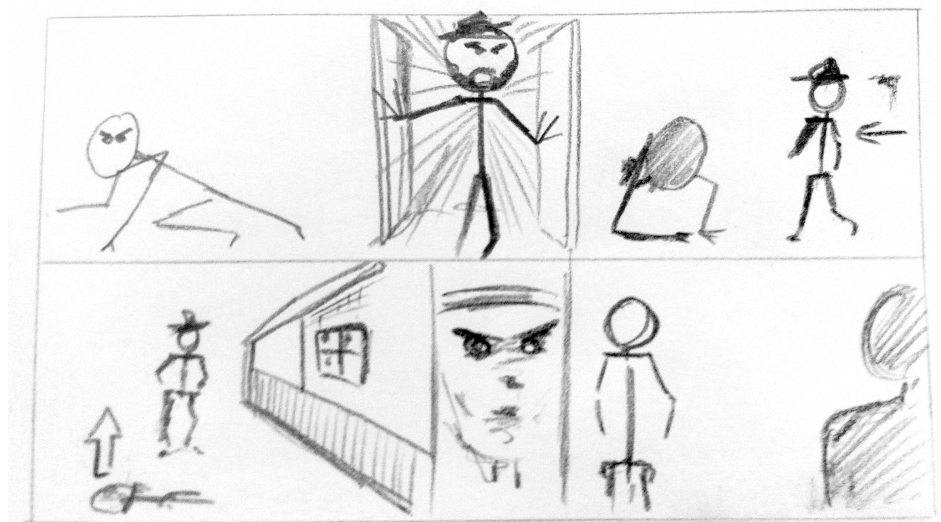
Storyboarding 101

Storyboarding is the act of drawing the visual composition of your shots and depicting how each shot will flow into the next.

Storyboarding is a great way of mapping out your content visually, before filming. There are no set rules on how to storyboard correctly or how they should be constructed. It is completely up to you as the filmmaker and whatever helps you remember your shots.

Storyboards are also a great way to help communicate your ideas visually to other people before the filming process (i.e. your camera man or actors). Your storyboards should be brought with you on set, as they will help you remember how you wanted to capture your shot.

Here are some varying styles and examples storyboards.



Your storyboards can be accompanied by notes, describing the shot type and the transition between the next shot.

You can draw arrows inside these pictures to represent camera movements and focus pulls.

You can make a note of when dialogue is the queue for the shot to change.

Make sure to include notes that should be communicated to your actors for the shot to work.

Storyboards are key in helping you map out your visual narrative. They help in locking down a shot idea so that it is not forgotten when you revisit your work later in time, and in helping communicating your idea to other people helping you in creating your content. Storyboarding will help save time during your production process when you might be under time pressure, and they will help you create a shot list and schedule.

Shot Lists

A shot list is very similar to a shopping list. Once you have completed your storyboard, and you know how you want to film your content, you then want to start writing down how many shots it will consist of.

The shot list is a great method of making sure that you capture everything you intend on getting during shoot, especially when you are surrounded by the chaos of filming.

A shot list can literally be as simply as...

1. Wide of entire scene
2. Close up of Character 1 for entire scene
3. Close up of Character 2 for entire scene
4. Shot of the city skyline
5. Tracking shot of Character 1 walking away
6. Close up of Character 2's eyes
7. Medium wide tracking shot, facing Character 2 during the walk ways
8. Cut aways of surrounding areas

A shot list will also give you a strong indication as well of how much or how little you have to film. Once you have completed your shot list, it might make sense to shuffle the order in which you film them, in order to save time. For example, the tracking shots 5 and 7 are you hardest to set up, so you will want to do them first. Shots 4 and 8 require no actors, so you could do them at the end of the day, or even another day, to give you more time. In order to create a good schedule you will have to take all these elements into account.

Scheduling

How to optimize your shooting time.

Planning your schedule is extremely important. If you schedule your time well when filming, it means that you will have optimized your time efficiently to capture a greater number of different shots and at better quality.

Scheduling a shoot is a hard skill to master, as you have to consider so many elements of film making, and harmonize these elements, so that little time is wasted. This is especially the case in low-budget content creation as you are probably limited in terms of your resources and only have a certain amount of time to achieve a lot.

Scheduling will have an impact on the creative side of filmmaking. For example, if you have a very complicated shot that you really want to get, and it's going to take a lot of time to set up and capture, then you have to account for this in your schedule. By spending x amount of time on one shot, you are compromising the amount of time you spend on others, and effectively deciding what is more important.

Scheduling is paramount in maximising the time you have with the resources you have. It helps your shoot run smoothly, which in turn helps with the morale of your cast and crew. Here is a list of some of the main elements you need to consider in order to create your schedule.

Sunrise and Sunset - If you are filming outdoors, or even in-doors, you should aim to start filming when the sun has fully risen. Early starts will help you fit more in the day. If the sun is set to rise at 7.45am, then make sure you and your crew are setting up at around 6.45am, ready to start shooting when the time comes.

Internal/External Locations - Are you filming indoors or outdoors? If you are filming indoors, you have a greater capability of controlling the natural light, by either adding more light to shot, or by blocking windows and completely controlling the light. It is always advisable to do your external shots first, if the weather allows it. By getting everything done outside first, you allow yourself time indoors when you can control the elements a little more.

Weather - You will never be able to control the weather, however you will be able to research the days your filming and get a vague idea what you can expect. You can spend a long time creating the perfect schedule, but you should always in your head have a contingency plan if uncontrollable elements change, like the weather.

Hero/Difficult shots - You need to be aware what shots are the most important, and prioritize them. These shots should be placed at the start of your schedule if it makes sense; therefore you have the least amount of time pressure. If you leave your most difficult shots to the end of the day, you could easily find yourself running out of time to capture them. Be clear in understanding what has to be captured and what could be expendable.

Advanced setup - If there is anything that can be done ahead of time, or before you come to a new location to film, then do it. For example, let's say you are filming in a living room. All the lights are set up and you are ready to roll. Once you have started filming, you could get your lighting guys to go to the next location and start setting that up if they have any more lights available. Even if there is no gear left, just checking out the next place you are filming is always a benefit, and if there is anyone available to start prepping the next set-up then it should be done.

Costume/hair/make-up – If an actor is not in the scene you are filming presently, then make sure he/she is in the right costume/hair/make-up for the next scene to save time.

Set dressing – You should have anyone free in 'dressing' the next scene if it's at all possible. Then, you are not wasting time waiting for the things to be moved around; like furniture, while you are at the same time setting up lights and camera.

Recce – Time should be taken in pre-production to see every location where you will be filming. This is really useful as you will be able to map out your set-ups, and the most effective way in creating the schedule of the day.

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In Conclusion

Pre-production is crucial in producing good content. You will find that the more time spent in pre-production, the greater the quality of your content. By following these simple processes and using these professional practices, your time spent in production will be spent more on being creative and getting the content you planned on getting, rather than the content you ended up getting.

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Production

What's the difference between a medium shot and a wide shot? What does 'depth of field' mean? What equipment should I be using to create my content?

In this section, we're going to explore the basics of best production practices, and give you a greater understanding of production process in camera, lighting and sound.

Camera Basics

Frame rate

Video is essentially an optical illusion. A high number of still images flash in front of our eyes to give the impression of movement. The frame rate of video refers to how many frames are displayed each second (fps).

Different parts of the world have different standard frame rates. In Europe (PAL); 25 frames per second is the standard for broadcast television. In America (NTSC); 30 fps is more common (it's actually 29.97 if you want to get techy!). Feature films are traditionally shot at 24fps.

If you bought your camera in the same part of the world where you'll be using it, you may never need to change these settings. There are, however, times when you might want to adjust it. Some cameras can record at higher frame rates, which allows you to slow down the footage when you edit it. For example, if you recorded something at 50fps on your camera, you could slow it down to 25fps and everything will play back at half the speed. It's the best way to get cool slow motion shots without your footage looking jerky or stuttery.



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Some specialist (and very expensive!) cameras are capable of shooting at hundreds or even thousands of frames per second. This lets you see the split second details of glass smashing, or a water balloon bursting. (YouTube Resource: [Check out the Slow Mo Guys](#))

NB: Increasing or decreasing the frame rate will also affect what shutter speed you should use, so make sure you check this if you decide to change your fps.

White balance and Colour Correction

Amazing as they are, cameras have a fundamental problem - they don't recognise the colour white. Ever seen a clip on YouTube of someone sitting in a room where everything looks yellow? Unless they have unusual taste in interior decorating it's likely they haven't set their white balance properly. Once the camera knows what white is, it can correctly calibrate the rest of the colour spectrum.

If possible, it's best to switch your camera's auto white balance off, and set it manually instead. Although some auto modes can be quite accurate, they have a tendency to shift midway through a shot, making everything and everyone change colour.

NB: White balancing should be done after every change in filming conditions i.e. camera location, lighting change etc.

There should be a button or an option in the menus which lets you control the white balance on your camera. Look out for this symbol.



If your camera has this option, simply hold a white sheet of paper or card in front of the lens in a well-lit area of your location. Zoom in so that the white sheet takes up the entirety of the frame, with no gaps at the sides or corners. Press the white balance button and hold for a few seconds, until the above logo flashes on your screen. Your white balance is now completed for this shot.

Some cameras might not offer a white balance option, but instead may allow you to select from a list of common lighting conditions, e.g. daylight, overcast, tungsten (for most light bulbs) etc.

If you are ever unsure, just remember you're trying to make things look natural. They should look as they do to your eye.

Here are a couple of examples of poor white balancing.



***NB:** You may make a creative decision to alter or pervert your white balance. If, for example, you want to suggest feelings of warmth or love, you might want to make your images appear redder and richer in colour. If, however, you wanted to visually represent isolation or depression, a blue tint would give a sense of cold sterility. Most films you've seen would have had their colours altered in some way to convey different feelings and relationships to the audience.*

Despite this, most film makers would advise shooting with a correct white balance during filming and altering colours later in post-production. If you apply colour enhancements while filming, you will not be able to change them in the edit. Best to shoot with a controlled neutral image, then alter however you want in the editing process.

Focus

Autofocus (AF)

Most cameras have an autofocus setting on them (AF). This means you don't have to worry about manually focusing on your subject, as the camera should do this for you automatically. Like automatic white balance however, there are downsides to AF. For example:

The camera makes the decision of what to focus on. It may bring the far wall into focus, rather than your subject standing in front of it.



It takes the creativity out of focusing. You may want to change the focus from foreground to background midway through a shot, or start a scene out of focus before bringing it into sharpness. These kinds of creative focusing techniques are not possible when using autofocus.



FreddieW

It's completely up to you whether you choose manual or autofocus, though it may depend on what you're shooting. If, for example, you're riding a bike with the camera strapped to you, then you won't have a free hand to focus with. But if you're filming a controlled scene that gives you time to set up and practice, manual focus might be the best option.

Manual Focus (MF)

Manual focus allows the camera operator to choose what part of the shot he/she wants to focus on. This is usually controlled by a focus ring on the lens.

Sometimes, it can be tricky to tell what's in focus, especially on a small LCD screen. When projected onto a big screen, you might find that what looked in focus and 'sharp' on your camera screen is actually 'soft', or out of focus. Fortunately there's a simple way to check that your subject is completely in focus.

Zoom in on your subject as far as you can. Once you're fully zoomed in, you can then adjust the focus ring. When you're sure your subject is in focus, you can then zoom out and everything will remain in focus. Some cameras may allow you to digitally zoom or 'punch in' to check the focus without having to adjust your lens.



Depth of Field

Depth of Field refers to how much or how little of your image is in focus. A shallow depth of field refers to an image where only a small portion of the subject is in focus. A deep depth of field refers to an image where most or all of the elements in the shot are in focus.

Typically, cheaper cameras can only achieve a relatively deep depth of field. Some more modern cameras, with interchangeable lenses, can achieve a much shallower depth of field if desired.



Deep Depth of Field



Shallow Depth of Field



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

There is no right or wrong depth of field. Choosing the depth of field is almost always a creative decision.

To watch our 'depth of field' video, please click [here](#).

Exposure; Shutter speed, Aperture, ND, Iris and ISO

Exposure refers to the amount of light in your image. An underexposed image is too dark; an overexposed image is too bright. If a piece of video is incorrectly exposed, the parts of the image that are too bright or too dark often cannot be restored, so it's important to get it right in-camera as you're filming. There are several different tools on a camera that can be used to control the exposure.

Shutter speed, Aperture, ND, Iris and ISO; these are all variable settings on your camera. You should try and think of each of them not as separate elements, but rather as constituent parts of a single process. Each will affect the other when altered, resulting in a different visual image. Changing your shutter speed, for example, may require a corresponding change of the aperture. Here is a brief definition of what each does.

Shutter Speed

Shutter speed refers to the length of time a camera's shutter is open. This is the mechanical gate that opens and closes to allow light through the lens.

As well as affecting the exposure of a picture, shutter speed also has an effect on appearance of movement. A short/fast shutter speed can capture fast moving objects, like someone running past the screen. A long/slow shutter speed will make objects appear blurry or streaky. This can be used for artistic effect.



Slow Shutter Speed

Fast Shutter Speed

Adjustment to the shutter speed will change the depth of field, the distance range over which objects are in focus. Following the adoption of a standardized way of representing aperture so that each major step exactly doubles or halves the amount of light entering the camera (f/2.8, f/4, f/5.6, f/8, f/11, f/16, etc.), a standardized 2:1 scale was adopted for shutter speed so that opening one aperture stop and reducing the shutter speed by one step resulted in the identical exposure.

The agreed standards for shutter speeds are:

1/1000 s
 1/500 s
 1/250 s
 1/125 s
 1/60 s
 1/30 s
 1/15 s
 1/8 s
 1/4 s



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please watch our quick video on Shutter Speed - [here](#)

Aperture

The aperture works alongside shutter speed to regulate the amount of light entering the camera lens. Like a human eye, the aperture relaxes to let in more light, and contracts to restrict light. Typically, a fast shutter speed will require a larger aperture to ensure sufficient light exposure, and a slow shutter speed will require a smaller aperture to avoid overexposure.

Aperture is measured in f-numbers, which can be set to a series of 'f-stops'. The higher the f-number, the lower the aperture (and exposure), and vice versa. These 'f-stops' help you find distinct points with which to monitor your aperture, much like how shutter speed is marked by standardised degrees. You can control the aperture on a device called the 'diaphragm', which is located by the zoom ring and alters the 'iris' within the lens.

ND Filter

The Neutral Density filter, or ND filter, is an additional piece of kit that you can add to your lens to help you manage exposure, aperture, shutter speed, and external atmospheric conditions. It works a bit like a pair of sunglasses - reducing glare, shifts in lighting conditions, and motion blur. If you're filming outside, an ND filter is highly recommended in order to keep shots looking more natural and consistent.



ISO

ISO measures the sensitivity of the image sensor. The lower the number, the less sensitive your camera is to light. Higher ISO settings are generally used in darker situations to get faster shutter speeds; for example an indoor sports event when you want to freeze the action in lower light. The result of this, however, is often 'noisier' shots with a higher grain, that lack clarity and sharpness, sort of similar to old films.



High ISO

Low ISO

100 ISO is generally accepted as 'normal' and will give you lovely crisp shots. Most people tend to keep their digital cameras in 'Auto Mode', where the camera selects the appropriate ISO setting depending upon the conditions you're shooting in (it will try to keep it as low as possible) but most cameras also give you the opportunity to select your own ISO manually.



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please watch our quick video on ISO - [here](#)

If you choose to do this, be aware that it will affect your shutter speed, aperture, and therefore your exposure. Ask yourself questions like:

Is the subject well lit?

Do I want a gritty, grainy shot or one without 'noise'?

Am I using a tripod or going handheld?

Is my subject moving or stationary?

It's important to try and get to grips with ISO if you want to get the most out of your camera.

Framing: Shots, Angles and Perspectives

Framing means deciding what to include in a shot. It includes where you place your camera, how zoomed in/out you are, how the camera moves, and much more. It's one of the most important aesthetic choices you'll make when filming. Framing your shot correctly is crucial to creating the footage that you want, and represents a main component of your visual style. What you choose to include or omit in each frame is a vital part of the storytelling process.

YouTube content naturally offers a huge variety of styles. Some people create vlogs on their own, others might direct dozens of crew members on a full set. Whatever type of content you create, it's worth familiarising yourself with a few basic shot types, and considering when you might want to use them. Below is a breakdown of the most commonly used shot types.

NB: The acronyms of shots are sometimes found in shot list or storyboards e.g. "CUT TO an ECU of John's eyes"

Shot Types

EWS - Extremely Wide Shot

This is where the camera is far away from the subject. It's good for showing off the location, or setting the scene. It can also be referred to as an establishing shot, due to the fact that it often establishes the location of a scene before the action takes place.



WS - Wide Shot - This is where the subject fits into the entire frame, usually from head to toe.



MS - Mid/Medium Shot - This is where the subject is framed from waist to head.



MCU - Medium Close Up - This is where you frame the subject from halfway up the chest to the top of the head.



CU - Close Up - This is where a certain feature takes up most of the frame; for example a car registration plate or a person's face.



ECU - Extreme Close Up - This is where a particular detail fills up the entire frame; for example a pair of eyes or a written word.



Two-Shot - This is where two subjects share the frame, usually in a mid shot. You might use a two-shot to show a mother telling off her son, or a couple enjoying a romantic dinner.



OTS - Over the Shoulder Shot

- This is where you look over someone's shoulder to see the person they're facing. You might use this to show the reaction of the listener in a conversation. This shot also helps convey a sense of space and eye-line.



Cut Away - This is when you capture an event happening during the action that does not have the subject in at all; for example, a bus pulling up or a cloud moving across the sky.



NB: A good habit to get into, especially if you are shooting digitally, is to capture as much footage as possible when you have some 'down time'. i.e. Waiting for an actor to get ready or someone to finish a phone call. Just have a look around for interesting images to capture, you never know when it will come in handy in the edit.

POV - Point of View - This is when the camera takes on the perspective of your subject. This is also referred to as the camera's eye. 99% of the time this is used, the camera should be handheld with a tiny bit of movement. Using a tripod here does not accurately represent the way people look at things.

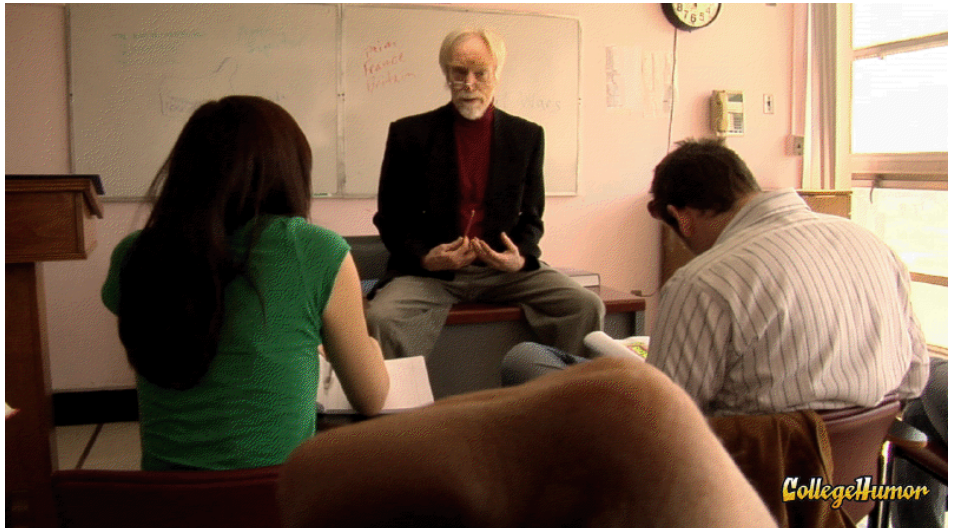


Image: College Humor



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please click on the link to see what these shot look like visually in our short 'Types of shot' Video - [here](#)

Angles

As well as choosing the type of shot you want to use, whether it's a CU or an EWS, you also have to decide on the angle of the shot. Will it be eye level? Low angle? High angle? This is very important, as it will affect the feeling of the shot and imbue it with meaning, whether you intend it to or not.

Low angle - Shooting a subject from a low angle usually empowers the subject, as the audience is effectively put in a lower position, looking up at them. Think of a child looking up at a parent, or someone in a crowd watching a politician onstage.



Image: Tom Ska

High angle - The same works in the opposite way. If you frame your subject from a high angle, it reverses the power dynamic. The audience is now the parent and the subject the child.



Image: Khyan1

Eye level - Eye level is a neutral/natural way to shoot your subject, as it is the way that we naturally look at things as humans.



Image: Charlie

The way you choose the type and angle of your shot will add to its meaning and style. Think carefully about your framing, and do not rush it. You should take time during pre-production to storyboard each shot you want to shoot. At the end of pre-production you should be able to see roughly what your film will look like, and how the framing will affect the manner in which your story and characters are portrayed.

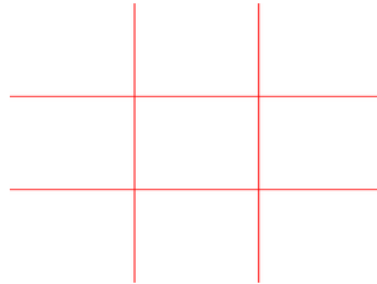


Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please click on the link to see what angles look like visually in our short 'Types of shot' Video - [Shot types and angles](#)

Rule of Thirds

Applying the rule of thirds to your framing is a good guide when you're unsure how to frame a shot. As a guide; it can be extremely useful in helping compose a good image. Imagine your frame is broken up into a grid, like a naughts and crosses board.



These lines (particularly the four points at which they meet) can be the best place to position your composition/subject/action. Here are some examples

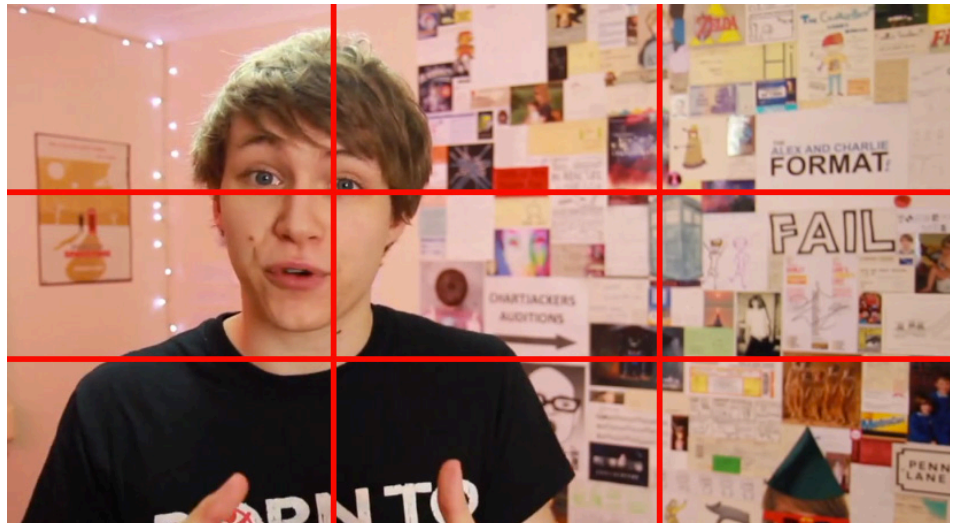


Image: Charlie

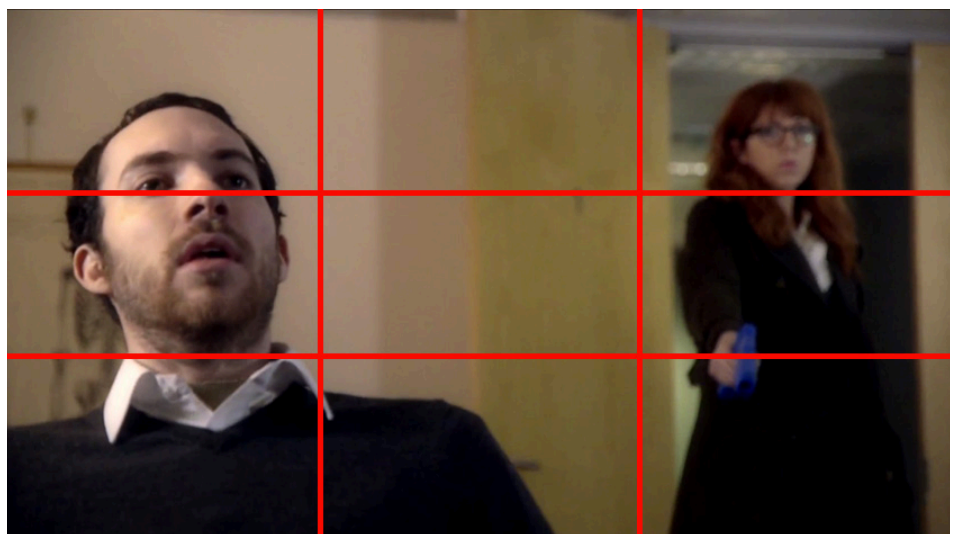


Image: JackVSLife

The rules of thirds are merely guidelines. It's completely up to you, as a content creator, how you want to film a subject.

Composition - Fore, Mid and Background



Image: FreddieW

There are typically three 'fields' to every shot.

Foreground - This consists of what is closest spatially to the camera.

Background - This is what we see in the distance of the shot, behind the subject.

Midground - This represents the field between the background and foreground.

These three fields should be taken into account when planning your shots. There aren't always three available fields. For example if you shoot a man leaning against a wall in CU, everything would be effectively be in the foreground. However, if you were shooting something in a WS or a EWS, then you would have to take into consideration what is going on in the mid and background as well as the foreground.

***NB:** Do not underestimate the power of three fields, and consider how you can use them to create something more meaningful or visually stimulating.*



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

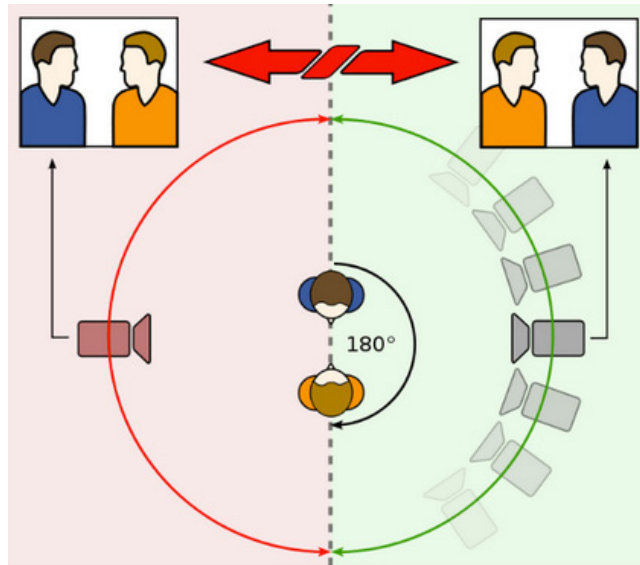
Please click on the link to see our short video on '[Shot composition](#)'

Distraction

When composing a shot, make sure there's nothing in your frame that might distract or draw the audience's attention away from what you want them to see.

There are often various elements that could potentially pull attention away from the main focus of action, depending on where and what you are filming. Anything from road workers drilling in the background, to a supporting artist wearing a bright yellow jacket in the midground, to a flashing light in the reflection of a window. Be particularly careful to avoid unnecessary distractions in a shot, as most people will naturally try to look at it.

Crossing the line



This is a really easy mistake to make in filmmaking. 'Crossing the line' involves shooting a moving subject from a juxtaposing angle, which will create a spatial confusion, and risk alienating your audience from the sequence.

Imagine walking down a garden path in the middle of a back yards, someone on your left is filming you in profile (side on). As long as the camera remains on the left side of the path, it can film you from any angle and you'll always appear to be walking from right to left. If, however, the camera moves beyond the 180 degree mark, it will now appear that you're walking from left to right. Editing these two shots together will give the illusion that you've abruptly changed direction, leading to a confusion of the space. Hence why this is called crossing the line.

Just remember to bear in mind how your footage is going to be edited together, and you'll easily avoid making mistakes like this.



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please click on the link to see our video on ['Crossing the Line'](#)

Lenses



Depending on what camera you're shooting with, you may have the option of changing lenses.

NB: Changing lenses between shots is a great way of overusing zoom, and can also add to your visual and stylistic choices.

Deciding which lens to use is the director's prerogative. Lens size varies from 12mm all the way up to 180mm, in a standard lens package, however they can go a lot higher than this.

When it comes to lenses, just remember that the shorter the measurement, the smaller the focal range and the wider you can shoot.

There are two main types of lenses, Prime and Zoom. Each has its own pros and cons.

Prime lenses - These are lenses with a fixed focal length; i.e. they can't zoom.

Advantages

- They produce a sharper image
- They let in more light, which means you can get a shallower depth field
- Better in low light situations
- A prime will typically be optically more refined.

Disadvantages

- Take more time to use while filming
- You have to change the lenses often
- You would generally need more than one when filming.
- Typically more expensive.

Zoom Lenses - These are lenses with a variable focal length.

Advantages

- They are very versatile
- Quicker to work with
- You can perform a zoom in/out shot
- Typically zoom lenses can have 'image stabilisation' technology built in, which is useful when shooting hand held images.

Disadvantages

- Typically they are optically inferior to prime lenses

- The maximum aperture will be lower than a prime lens.
 - The image will tend to be softer.
 - Some zoom lenses do not let in a consistent amount of light, at different focal lengths.
-

Troubleshooting checklist

This may all be a little overwhelming to take in at first, but practice is the key. Below is a checklist you can go through every time you are about to shoot.

Are you happy with the angle and framing?

Have you set the right frame rate you want to use?

Is the frame exposed the amount you want?

Have you white balanced?

Are you using the right lens?

Are you in focus?

Will you need to adjust focus while the action is taking place?

Is everything you want in the frame?

Are you happy with everything in the back, mid and foreground?

Is there anything in the background that might distract the audience?

Once you're happy with all of these points, you're ready to shoot!

Lighting Basics

The practice of photography and filmmaking is not just about using a camera, but equally about lighting what you shoot.

This section will talk about how to use basic lighting practices. It takes a long time to master these practices, so it's up to you to experiment and learn. This is very important to remember. Lighting a shot often takes the most amount of time, and getting it right is key.

For some content creators, using any lighting may not be on their agenda as they may be shooting a documentary only using ambient light (light that is already present). Even if this is the case, you certainly still need to take into consideration the available light around you. For example, if you're shooting outdoors, consider where the sun is; is it a strong light? Is it behind clouds? Is it setting? Will the light remain constant during filming or will it fluctuate? Light always has to be taken into account. This section outlines the core principles of lighting for film and what you can do to light correctly.

Types of lights/equipment/terms

Before we begin, here are some of the commonly used words you will hear when talking about lighting. It is a list of equipment, techniques and terminology.

Ambient Light

The light already present in a scene, before any additional lighting is added.

Incident Light

Light seen directly from a light source (lamp, sun, etc).

Reflected Light

Light seen that has bounced off a surface.

Colour Temperature

A standard of measuring the characteristics of light, measured in kelvins.

Contrast Ratio

The difference in brightness between the brightest white and the darkest black within an image.

Key Light

The main light on the subject, providing most of the illumination and contrast.

Fill Light

A light placed to the side of the subject to fill out shadows and balance the key light.

BackLight

A light placed at the rear of a subject to light from behind.

Hard Light

Light directly from a source such as the sun, traveling undisturbed onto the subject being lit.

Soft Light

Light which appears to “wrap around” the subject to some degree. Produces less shadows or softer shadows.

Spot

A controlled, narrowly-focused beam of light.

Flood

A broad beam of light, less directional and intense than a spot.

Tungsten

Light from an ordinary light bulb containing a thin coiled tungsten wire that becomes incandescent (emits light) when an electric current is passed along it. Tungsten colour temperature is around 2800K to 3400K. Also known as incandescent light.

Halogen

Type of lamp in which a tungsten filament is sealed in a clear capsule filled with a halogen gas.

Fresnel

A light which has a lens with raised circular ridges on its outer surface. The fresnel lens is used to focus the light beam.

Incandescent

Incandescent lamps produce heat by heating a wire filament until it glows. The glow is caused by the filament’s resistance to the current and is called incandescence.

Reflector Board

A specially-designed reflective surface used to act as a secondary light source. The board is lightweight and flexible, and is normally folded up for transport in a small carry-case.

Gels

Materials which are placed in front of a light source to alter it’s characteristics, e.g. colour, temperature or dispersion.

Three Point lighting

The Three Point Lighting Technique is a standard method used when creating video. It is a simple but versatile system which forms the basis of most lighting. Once you understand three point lighting you are well on the way to understanding all lighting.

The technique uses three lights called the key light, fill light and backlight. Naturally, you'll need all three lights to utilise the technique fully, but the principles are still important even if you only use one or two lights. As a rule:

If you only have one light, it becomes the key. If you have 2 lights, one is the key and the other is either the fill or the backlight.

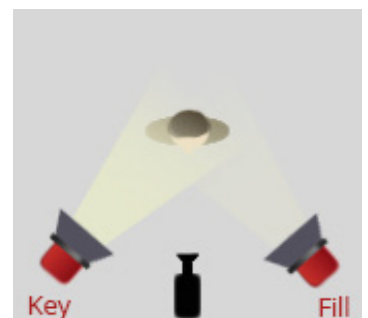
Key Light

This is the main light. It's usually the strongest and has the most influence on the look of the scene. It's placed to one side of the camera/subject so that this side is well lit and the other side has some shadow.



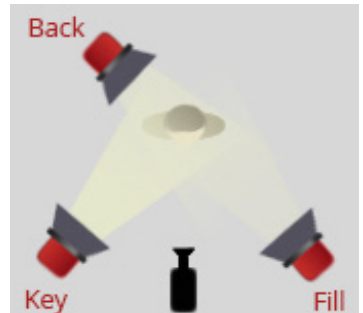
Fill Light

This is the secondary light and is placed on the opposite side of the key light. It's used to fill the shadows created by the key. The fill will usually be softer and less bright than the key. To achieve this, you could move the light further away or use some spun. You might also want to set the fill light to more of a flood than the key.



Back Light

The back light is placed behind the subject and lights it from the rear. Rather than providing direct lighting (like the key and fill), its purpose is to provide definition and subtle highlights around the subject's outlines. This helps separate the subject from the background and provide a three-dimensional look.



If you have a fourth light, you could use it to light the background of the entire scene.



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.

Please click on the link to see our video on ['Three Point Lighting'](#)

Direction of the light

When it comes to the direction of light, there are 360 degrees of possibilities. When the light isn't working for you, change it by moving your position, your subject's position, or the light itself, if possible.

Here are the directions of light you can use, what they mean and how they will affect the lighting of a shot.

High front light (sunlight)

We are trained early on that high front light is the best type of light, and often it is.



Image: FreddieW

Pros:

- Most of the scene is well lit.
- Bright sunny days bring out the colors of a scene.

Cons:

- Sunlight may cause your subjects to squint.
- Very high sunlight (seen at noon) will create deep shadows under eyes and chins, unless you use fill flash.

Front light

Front lighting illuminates the portion of the subject facing the photographer. Your camera's flash is the most common type of front lighting.



Image: JacksGap

Pros:

- Provides the most information to the camera by lighting the entire

scene.

- Easiest type of light to deal with photographically because there are fewer shadows to confuse the camera's light meter.

Cons:

- Can be a bit boring—pictures lack volume and depth.
- Textures and details are minimized. Scenes appear flat with few shadows.
- Flash pictures may result in very bright subject areas and very dark backgrounds, if the background is beyond flash range.

Side light

Side lighting is perfect when you want to emphasize texture, dimension, shapes, or patterns. Side lighting sculpts a subject, revealing contours and textures. Use side lighting to exaggerate dimension and depth. At a 45-degree angle to the side, it's one of the most flattering types of portrait lighting.



Image: JackVSLife

Pros:

- Can separate the subject from the background.
- Conveys depth, as in a landscape at sunset.
- Conveys texture, as in a weathered tree, fence, or ploughed field.

Cons:

- May be too severe for some subjects, creating some areas that are too bright, and some that are too dark. (See Fill flash to compensate.)

Back light

Light that comes from behind your subject is by far the trickiest to use, but the dramatic results may be worth the effort.



Pros:

- Provides a flattering halo of light in portraits.

- Simplifies a complicated scene by emphasizing the subject, as in silhouette.
- Adds strong shadows in landscapes.

Cons:

- Lack of detail in a dark subject.
- Causes lens flare resulting in low contrast and strange light spots across the picture.
- Using exposure compensation to overcome backlighting results in too-bright background.

Direct vs Diffused Light

When lighting a subject or area, you may want to use either direct light, diffused light, or a mixture of both.

Direct light simply refers to when the light being used is directly hitting the subject without any interference from a gel, ND filter, or some form of reflector. In other words, the light is shining directly onto the subject. This will often create a very harsh or 'hard' light, depending on the strength and wattage of the light you are using. You could use this to great stylistic effect, but you'll generally find that it's too harsh when not necessary to the scene.



Image: NineBrassMonkeys

Diffused light refers to when light hitting the subject has been interfered with in some way. This could be by bouncing it off a reflector, or using filters or gels. The process leads to softer, warmer light that is usually more favourable for general shooting conditions, as it reduces harsh contrasts, deep shadows, and the risk of overexposure. It also looks more natural than hard light.



Image: BertieBertG

“ Light is crucial to the look and feel of a video. Most lights work fine, but I've found that using a diffuser really helps to create soft light, which is great for vlogs. ”

- JACKSGAP

Magic Hour

Magic hour refers to the time in the day when the sun is setting in the sky, creating a strong yet soft warm light. It only lasts for a short period of time, but the lighting conditions create a lovely 'feel' to a shot, that is hard to emulate with artificial light. Next time you're outdoors with a camera, try shooting at magic hour before the daylight fades, and have a look at the results.



Image: FreddieW

Sound Basics

Intro to Sound: Sound is key.

Although this is the last section of production, it is by no means the least important. When it comes to creating content, audio is just as important as your visuals. Do not underestimate the negative effect poor sound can have on your audience.

When a viewer is watching your content, you want them to be fully engaged with what you have to share with them. However if there is a moment when your audio dips in quality, or volume, or clarity, this will instantly distract your audience, and it's likely they'll disengage with the viewing experience.

If you are creating content with a limited amount of time, you will always be chasing the clock. Often, when you are in rush, and camera and lighting have taken longer than planned to set up, the audio element will not be given the same attention.

This is a sure-fire way to capture poor quality content. If your audio needs more time, you should give it more time. There are plenty of tools in post-production that can help correct lighting discrepancies and camera 'blemishes', but audio is very hard to remedy if you have not recorded it well.

Most low budget filmmakers will stress the point that sound is usually what lets content down. In this section, we will explain how to capture sound correctly, and what to look out for.

Levels - Don't turn it up to 11

Once you're ready to start filming your content, whether it's a vlog at your computer, or a large scale shoot outdoors, you should always check your audio levels. 'Levels' simply refers to the different volumes that are going to be used during your recording.

Checking your levels is vital to make sure that your audio is not too quiet, or too loud when you record your sound and it's easy to do.

Firstly, be aware of the different volumes you might be recording. A whisper will require different audio levels to an explosion. You should check...

Constant level: This refers to the volume at which most of your scene/dialogue is going to be captured. If two people are having a conversation, the volume at which they talk would be the constant.

Low Level: What is the quietest sound we are going to hear? And do you have to adjust the microphone to pick up the sound?

Peak Level: What is the loudest sound you are going to pick up in the scene?

By running through these levels before you start your recording, it will save time and ensure that the sound can be captured correctly.

Failing to alter your mic levels may result in:

Distortion: also known as 'peaking'. This is when the sound you have recorded was too loud, and has overloaded the microphone. You'll have real problems trying to get rid of distortion in the edit. Always check that you never 'max' out your microphone with loud noises, like shouting, vehicle engines, traffic, sirens etc.

Low volume: If you've recorded your audio at too low a level, the opposite effect will occur. When you come to your edit, you'll be able to turn up the volume, but it will also increase the volume of all the other sound that the microphone picked up, including atmospheric hiss. This can lead to very inconsistent audio quality.

When you come to capturing your sound, just always try and capture sound that is:

- Clear
- Crisp
- At the right level

Wind and Weather

Wind can be a sound technician's worst enemy. If you're recording outdoors, you should always be aware of wind and other noisy weather conditions like rain and thunder.

Wind can blow onto microphones and create distortion, or make dialogue unclear and muffled. Rain can also create extremely loud noises when falling on hard surfaces and windows. There are a few ways to combat wind and rain when you come to record sound.

Fluffies/dead cat: Sure it's a funny name, but a fluffy is the technical name for a cover that can be placed over a microphone to break up the wind noise. They're usually made out of animal fur or a fake equivalent. By placing a fluffy on the end of a microphone, you can filter out low noise frequencies and stop wind hitting the microphone directly. This will greatly improve the sound quality of recordings.

Location and Noise pollution

When filming outdoors, try and find some wind cover. Even when filming in a field, for example, coverage provided by a tree or a hedge is better than none at all. If you have a large crew, consider creating a human windshield with any extra bodies. When preparing for a shoot, it helps to pay attention to where you are filming and what noise problems might occur. It's often an area of pre-production that gets overlooked.

You may decide to shoot a Vlog in your local park for example, but, when you get there, it's windy, cars may be driving past, or children are playing nearby. Before arriving at a location, it's worth asking yourself questions like

What noises can you hear when everyone is silent?

If you are indoors, can you hear the heating pipes or air conditioning?

Or the traffic outside?

Is the noise constant, or does it fluctuate in volume?

Is there a school nearby?

Are you under a flight path?

Is there noise coming from the house next door?

Can any of these be controlled?

Asking questions such as these will help you decide whether the location in which you're filming is good for recording sound. There will always be external atmospheric sounds, but it's important to consider all the ways in which you could control or avoid them.

Clapper and Queuing Sound

Have you ever wondered why someone slaps some wooden sticks together before someone shouts "action"? Well, this is to help sync the sound recording with the visual recording during the editing process.

This is only necessary when your sound is being recorded on a separate device to your camera. The clap is a short sharp sound that is used as a marker from which the editor can line up the audio and visual components accurately. If this starting point is aligned correctly, then you can be sure that the rest of the clip will be too.



Image: TomLaw

Remember, you can always clap your hand if you don't have a clapper board.

NB - The clapper board will also contain important written information that the editor needs to know, such as scene number, take number, and camera position.

Clean dialogue

Imagine you're recording a piece of content in which two people are sitting talking on a park bench. You start off by filming the person on the right delivering their side of the conversation. Then you go for the reverse shot, and film the other person delivering their dialogue. You're happy with what you've filmed, so you head home. To edit this scene together, you will simply splice the visual and audio footage from both shots together to create the scene. However, when you come to use the audio from the second person's dialogue, the sound has changed, for example there's the noise of a plane passing overhead. This could render the audio completely unuseable. To cut between the clean dialogue track and the dialogue track marred by the passing plane would be extremely distracting for an audience, and could easily ruin their enjoyment of the scene.

This scenario demonstrates the dangers of not getting clean dialogue.

It is vitally important to make sure that when you or an actor is talking, there's no sound in the background to 'dirty' the recording. Just like if an actor messes up his lines and you have to go for another take, the same discipline should be applied to clean dialogue. If a car starts its engine, or people walk past chatting, you should cut the take, wait for the sound to pass, and start again.



Clean Dialogue

Image: TimH078

Wild track

A wild track is a recording of atmospheric sound in the environment you're shooting in.

Once you've finished recording your content in a particular location, you should take a minute or two to capture a 'wild track' or 'Buzz Track'. This will require everyone around to stop what they're doing and be quiet.

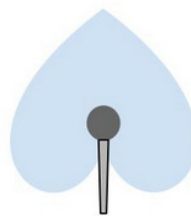
The reason for capturing the wild track is so that when you come to editing your film, you will have some of the 'natural' sound of the environment you were in. This can be used to fill in gaps during dialogue, or added underneath the dialogue track to give the audio a more natural sound.

Types of Mics

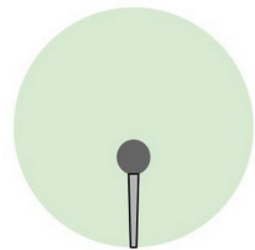
Choosing which microphone/s to use when creating your content is very important to make sure you're capturing your sound clearly and practically. Here's a rundown of the different types of microphone you can use and their technical names for their pick up patterns.



i. Hyper-cardioid mic pick-up pattern



ii. Cardioid Pick-Up Pattern



iii. Omni-Directional Pick-Up Pattern

Directional/Shotgun Mic

Directional microphones allow you to capture sound from a specific area by pointing it towards the sound you want to record. This is usually the weapon of choice for audio recording, as it will concentrate on capturing the particular sound you want, instead of capturing all the noise occurring around you. It's ideal for capturing clear crisp dialogue. This is a Hyper-Cardioid Mic pick-up pattern (i).



Directional mics can be handheld, attached to a boom pole or placed on your camera as an on-board mic.



Clip-on Mics.

Clip-on mics, or lapel mics, are small microphones that you literally clip on to your subject, usually hidden underneath clothing like a lapel. These microphones will be connected to a transmitter somewhere hidden on the subject. This will send a signal to a receiver, connected to your camera or sound mixer. Clip on mics are great for giving your subject freedom to move around, or for filming your subject if they are far away from the camera. Their pick-up pattern can vary depending on the make and type of mic, a Hyper-cardioid (i) or an Omni-Directional (ii)



Built-in Microphones

Your camera will have a built-in microphone. This will usually be a omni-directional (ii) pick up mic or a cardioid (iii) pick-up mic. This means that they will pick up all the sound in the immediate area, rather than a specific sound like the directional microphone. This is fine if you're shooting on the go, or in a quiet space. But be wary of using your built in mic if you want clean audio at a high quality.



Hand-held Mics.

Also known as 'presenter mics', these are the classic hand-held mics used by interviewers and street reporters. These mics are good for capturing local sound around the microphone in an omni direction or cardioid pick-up pattern. The main difference between the omni-direction and cardioid pick-up patterns is strength of microphone range to the rear of the mic, near where the grip is. The hand-held mic helps to concentrate the sound recording to the front of the microphone, usually where your subject will be speaking.



Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the video.



Please see our video on types of [Microphones here](#).

ADR

Sometimes, you have done everything in your power to capture great audio, but there are places where it's just not good enough, and you want to do something about it. This is where ADR comes in.

ADR stands for automated dialogue replacement.

The usual process for ADR involves looping a section that needs attention over and over in a studio, until the actor can match the visuals with an appropriate delivery of the dialogue. This can take a very long time to sync correctly, and even longer to make new audio sound as if it was recorded on the day (this is where a wild track can really come in handy by helping the recording feel more authentic). If possible, it may be a good idea to record the new dialogue at the location of the original filming.

Remember, you should always try to capture sound as best you can, and never rely on ADR, as the process can take a long time to get right, and is rarely a perfect substitute for location-based sound recording.

Post-Production

Intro to Post Production

Post Production is where everything begins to take shape. Through the various processes of Post Production, you'll begin to craft the narrative of your content, the psychology, look, feel, and emotions. Every cut, sound, and colour will create new meaning that will help enhance the emotional impact of your content. But what is Post Production?

Post Production is a generic term used to encompass all processes that occur after shooting and recording of the project have occurred. Post Production typically consists of the following:

Editing

Composing, recording, and editing the soundtrack/score.

Creating and adding visual effects

Compositing visual effects and other sequences into an edit

Adding Sound design, Sound Effects, ADR, Foley and Music all together (known as sound mixing or sound re-recording.)

Finishing - Conforming of the original footage to full resolution and Colour correction

Editing creates meaning

Through editing, we're able to change genre, tone, and reaction. You can think of Editing in the same way as writing a story. Every action in the story can be written in many ways. It is up to you, as the author/content creator, how you write your story. For example, you have filmed a scene where a character walks into room. He looks around whilst in the doorway. He sees another character, their eyes meet, he then walks in to the room. In your edit, you could have your character look around the room for a long period of time, or a short period of time. What difference or feeling will that have on your audience? Is the character scared because it takes him more time to walk into the room? Or is he confident and in your edit, he spends very little time looking around and then walking in? When the characters' eyes meet, and hold their gaze for longer, is more tension is created? These choices can also be helped with the sound design and music.

As a content creator it is your choice how you tell your story through the power of editing.

Importing File Formats and settings

It's important to know the format you're working in. Everything that's brought into your editing software is compressed, then decompressed, giving us the term codec. So, we need to know the codec of what we're working in. Check your camera settings to find out what format your files are in. Keep in mind, different companies use different types of file compressions (Sony uses XDCam, Panasonic uses AVCHD, etc.). Some media imports require you to download drivers and plug-ins (the way some printers make you do before you can use them with your computer).

Logging Correctly

Media management is essential in this day and age where everything is an electronic file. Make sure that you are storing your clips in a way that you are able to access the data without having to click on every single clip to see what you're using. You can organize your media by placing clips into bins based on scenes, takes, content, days you filmed, whatever method that will help you know where things are. Don't have one giant folder with hundreds of pieces of media. Separate your different music tracks, stills, photoshopped files, titles, footage, and other media to know where things are. Continue to create new folders to organize your cameras, clips, and merged clips with good audio. Media management makes troubleshooting

issues easy and finding materials even easier.

Backing Up

“Back in the day” you had a physical copy of your media, whether it was an emulsion-based negative or a miniDV tape. Now everything is more or less electronic; you copy your material from a card to a drive, then wipe it and start filming again. So if your drive crashes or your card is lost, there really isn't anything you can do to resurrect it. In an ideal scenario, you have the following system:

Local Storage: Conforming locally makes your edit much faster. It is often best to transfer your files to an organized folder on your local hard drive if you have the available space. If you have a system with multiple hard drives, you should store your saved files on your desktop and dedicate a secondary drive to store all previews, footage, renders, and other related files. This drive is often labelled the “scratch” drive.

Work drive: this drive is what you'll be working off of exclusively if you cannot utilize local storage. Your connection should be fast and either USB 3.0, Fire-wire 800, or Thunderbolt based. Your drive should also have a dedicated power source as opposed to drawing power from the data connection. If time and cost permit, you'll want to have a separate drive for projects. If you're working on a webseries and a documentary, keep all of the webisodes on one drive and the doc on another. If the drive fails, you'll only lose data for one project. It'll also make things easier if you have to transport drives (fewer drives to carry if they're not spread out over a series of external drives).

Back Up Drive: This is a copy of your media that you can't afford to lose. You can re-render your sequence so don't copy render files, but you'll need all of your original footage, any quicktime movies, audio files, still images, and other pieces of media that you are using. You may not have the time to do a daily backup, but, at the very least, one every other session. It is best to actually copy all of the material over when you start your project and then merge new data over to the drive to limit the time copying files. Do not work off of your back up drive; this is a doomsday drive you use in case your work drive crashes.

Tertiary redundancy: A third copy? Isn't that a bit much? Potentially, but if your livelihood depends on you not losing media, can you afford to lose it? Plenty of filmmakers and photographers, if they can afford it, have a third drive that they back up to that's not in the immediate vicinity of where they live. So, if you have relatives that are out of town that you visit once a month, ask to leave a drive with them that you'll update with footage from your back up drive every visit.

Rough Cutting

The very first thing you should do is an ASSEMBLY to confirm that all of your footage is there. The last thing you want to do is make fine cuts of your media only to find out days before it's due that you're missing a shot. The assembly literally puts your shots in order to make sure you can edit your piece. Don't do any fine cuts (and certainly don't do any color correction!) or special effects. You can even insert multiple takes to make certain that your sequence can be crafted. The rough cut comes next.

A rough cut is done to start building the drama in the scene and develop character. Whenever you are asking yourself if a cut may or may not work, you should do it! Duplicate your sequence and see if it works. You should be able to answer your own question. Make sure you're labeling your sequences; having “Rough cut 12 copy copy copy” doesn't really help anyone.

One of the things that takes away from your editing is rendering. Plan accordingly and always try to render at the end of your session to save time later. Many modern editing software programs pre-render in the background, allowing you to see your transitions and changes without a full render saving time. These improvements help to streamline your workflow and allow you to save any major rendering for when you take a break or when you end your session. Editing is often not about finishing your film, but about running out of time, so when you're scrambling to get things done, think about all the time spent rendering out sequences that could have been spent developing story and character. If you need to do effects, such as transitions, or make footage black and white then you might as well wait until the fine cut stage, so that you can stay focused on what counts (making your story emotionally engaging).

Your story will have its own pace and rhythm and you may be tempted to cut to music, but that's like asking a painter to paint by numbers. Cutting to music may give you a beat to go to, but you may sacrifice organic timing to satisfy the previously laid out timing of the music. You can always use a temporary music track to cut to and swap out songs in the fine cut stage.

Fixing errors in post production is something many people believe when they begin shooting but that isn't always an easy thing to do. Always remember that it is best to resolve any issues you have in Production to make your time better spent in post production crafting your story.

Garbage in Garbage out (GIGO)

While tapeless may be cheap and post production software is powerful, the fact of the matter is the idea that anything can be fixed in post isn't correct. You can only do so much with a given shot and no amount of visual effects or clever editing can improve a performance. If you shot garbage, you will end up with very nice looking garbage.

Chroma key

Chroma keying is a compositing technique that allows you to replace a hue (colour) with something else. The most common chroma keys are blue and green although the technique can be applied to just about any uniform and distinct background colour. A blue screen or green screen is typically used in favour of other hues because they most distinctly differ from human flesh tones. Using a green screen allows you to isolate the object shot against it, opening up possibilities that are only limited to your imagination.

Compositing

Assembling multiple images (shots) together to create a final image. Typically, compositing is used to assemble shots together with visual effects to create a final image. Programs such as Adobe After Effects, Autodesk Smoke, and The Foundry Nuke are often used to accomplish this.

Fine Cutting

You're almost done! Once you determine that your content has character development, genre-specific actions, pace, and plot development, you can now do tweaks in the fine cut stage, such as colour correction, transitions, special effect filters, and other "bells and whistles" that will smooth out the sharp edges of your media. Once you are done, label your sequence "LOCKED" so that, if you ever have to revisit your project months or possibly years from now, you'll know where to go, without having to open every single sequence.

Title cards

You can use the titling software in your chosen edit suite to create title cards. But for more flexibility you can use Adobe Photoshop or Adobe After Effects to create titles that are more visually pleasing.

Colour correction

Colour correction is something that you'll want to do after your film is done. To do colour correction early on means that you might be making colour adjustments to clips that may not even make it into the final cut of your film. Colour correction can be done within your editing software, with plugins, or you can use other programs, to make adjustments. To make sure that your media is properly calibrated, it would be a good idea to check it on various machines (and not limited to just the machine you've been working on). So, once you've made your colour corrections, upload it to YouTube and then check it on multiple platforms (someone else's computer, a smart phone, etc.).

Sound Levels

Make sure that your sound levels aren't solely decided by the volume that you hear through either your headphones or speakers. Editing programs, have audio volume levels that don't show you the levels that you're listening to, but your actual levels. For example, muting the playback volume doesn't actually mute the volume of the media playing. If your volume peaks in the red, you may find it distorting when you listen to your final output. Make sure that you keep the volume averaged at about -12db and not peak past -6db. Any louder and the audio may distort. Also audio files in general are compressed; when you put them in FCP they can get compressed even further which makes them sound poor. Before you bring in a compressed file, like an mp3; you'll want to convert it into a more stable file format, like .aiff (audio integer file format).

Audio is key

Sound design is what makes great film and video. The audience will forgive bad video, they won't forgive bad audio. Make sure your levels are strong (without clipping) and record the cleanest sound possible (silence cell phones and try to eliminate as much background noise as you can).

Use of Third Party Music

Remember, if you want to use music in your video, then you will need to obtain all required licences and clearances from all record labels, publishers and other rights owners in respect of that music before using it. This is a must! Of course, the other option is to create some original music yourself, or to convince a musician friend to do it for you in return for a credit in your video. Either way, do not use music (or any other content or materials, for that matter) that was created by (or is owned by) someone else, without getting necessary licenses.

In Conclusion.

Now that you've read this guide, you will hopefully understand more about the processes that go into creating videos. But nobody is expecting you to become an expert overnight! Even the world's best directors, filmmakers and content creators are still trying new things and learning new things as they go.

So go, pick up a camera and get started. It's the first step on the road to great content creation!