Handout 1:
Unit 2 Overview

Moving images are a powerful tool for telling stories—they draw us in, pull us along, and bring out our emotions. Think about a scene from your favorite movie. What was it about the scene that made it special? The acting, the framing of the shots, the lighting, the soundtrack? Chances are, a combination of all these factors, along with other ones you may not have thought about, made the scene memorable.

In this unit, you will learn the skills you need to successfully tell a story using moving images. You'll learn about the visual "language" used in movies and TV shows and the story arc that these shows typically follow. You'll also learn technical skills, such as how to use a camera and edit footage. For your unit project, you will create a documentary video that tells a story about "the best" or "the worst" of your community.

Your work in this unit will revolve around the following questions:

- *How can I tell a story effectively through moving images?*
- *What are the underlying elements of storytelling in movies and TV?*
- *How do music and sound effects support and enhance a story being told through moving images?*
- *How can I use editing techniques to create a powerful experience for the audience?*

Unit Project

Working in a team, you will identify "the best" or "the worst" of your community—something you especially like about your community (such as a teacher who inspired you) or something you think needs improvement (such as a lack of places for teens to hang out). Your team will create a documentary video on one specific vignette or angle of your story. You will shoot this story, focusing on images and action (although you can also do some voice-over narration and use short interview clips). Your team will edit the footage and add titles and a soundtrack. At the end of the unit, the class will present a showcase of the video and audio work you have made during the course.

What You Will Do in This Unit

Complete a video scavenger hunt. To get experience with the camera and learn about different shot types, you'll take part in a scavenger hunt to find and shoot specific kinds of images.

Analyze the effect of different shot types and camera angles. Look at movies, TV shows, and the footage you have created to determine the effect that different shot types (such as medium or close-up) and camera angles have on the viewer.

Learn about story arcs. Analyze movies and TV shows to determine how their stories are typically structured (and how filmmakers sometimes deviate from this structure).

Write a weekly critique. Write a weekly analysis of a clip from a movie, short, or TV show that you view outside of class.

Create a silent story. Develop a simple story with a story arc, and shoot footage of your teammates acting out the story—without dialogue. Edit the footage to create a short video.

Choose a community story to tell in a video documentary. With your team, choose a story that illustrates "the best" or "the worst" of your community.

Learn more about the stages of production. During work on your silent story and your video documentary, find out more about the three stages of video production:

- *Pre-production:* Identify potential stories, conduct research on your chosen story, write treatments, and create scripts, shot lists, and storyboards
- *Production:* Organize and prepare equipment, light the scene, and shoot footage
- *Post-production:* Import footage, organize digital files, edit footage, add titles and transitions, add a soundtrack and sound effects, and export the completed video

Shoot footage for your video documentary. Go out into the community with your teammates and shoot the footage you will use to tell your story.

Edit your documentary footage. Determine which clips from your footage will most effectively tell your story, use software to arrange the clips in an order that makes sense for your viewer, and add titles and transitions.

Add sound to your completed video. Learn how sound can be used to enhance a story and evoke emotions, and choose appropriate music (and, if you like, sound effects) to add to your video.

Showcase your work. Help put together a public screening of the audio and video work that you and your classmates have created during the course.

Keep a journal. In your journal, record your assignments, notes, and sketches on the development of your ideas, research, and reflections.

Vocabulary Used in This Unit

Angle: A way to refer to the height and location from which the camera is shooting.

Axis of action: An imaginary line running between two characters interacting in a scene.

Cinematography: The art of using a camera for motion picture photography.

Continuity: The consistency of characteristics of persons, objects, places, and events seen by the viewer.

Continuity editing: A style of putting together video or film clips in such a way that events seem to happen in a chronological, logical sequence.

Establishing shot: A shot that shows the setting in which a scene takes place. Usually a long (wide) shot.

Focus: The sharpness of an image. On a camera lens, the point where all the light hitting the lens converges.

Framing: The arrangement of space, people, and objects within the frame of the film or video.

Shot: The basic building block of movies and other works that use moving images; the continuous footage that appears between cuts, fades, or other transitions in a film or video.

Shot scale: A way to describe the distance between the camera and the objects and people being recorded, or the relative size of objects and people on the screen. (For example, close-up or wide are ways to describe the scale of a shot.)

Transition: The shift from one piece of footage (one shot) to another.

Treatment: A short synopsis of a media production's story.

Handout 2:
Video Scavenger Hunt

Work with your team to locate and shoot video footage for each shot described below:

1. An extreme close-up shot of a familiar object that looks different or unrecognizable when shot from close-up
2. A close-up shot of a facial expression showing an emotional shift (for example, from anger to sadness)
3. A long shot—found, rather than staged—of one or more people completing an action
4. An extreme long shot that could be used as an establishing shot for a movie about your school
5. A panning shot that follows a person or an animal, such as a bird
6. A hand-held tracking shot of a person walking from one place to another
7. A shot of a person from a high angle
8. A shot of an inanimate object from a low angle
9. A medium shot of two people interacting

Use *Video Production Handbook* **Part 1: The Language of Cinematography** to help you understand any unfamiliar terms (such as *close-up shot*). As you shoot, observe the following rules:

- Each shot's footage should be between 5 and 20 seconds long.
- Each team member should operate the camera for at least one shot.

Log Your Footage

As you complete the scavenger hunt, create a chart in a notebook to log your footage. This will make it easier to find different shots later on. The time code should be visible on your camera's display—ask your teacher for help if you can't find it. Your chart should look similar to this:

Time Code	Scavenger Hunt Shot Number	What Our Team Shot
00:01:25:00	*2*	*Close-up of Suzanne's face shifting from nervousness to relief as she reads her test results*

Handout 3:
Unit 2 Journal Assignments

Journal 1

Watch an episode of a scripted TV show (not a reality show) that you like.

- Choose one minute of footage during the show (any footage except the title sequence or credits) and identify at least three different shots. For each shot, describe what's in the shot, the shot scale, the angle, and any camera movement. Create a chart like the one below to record your notes. You can use Part 1 of the *Video Production Handbook* for help with the language of cinematography.

Shot Number	Shot Description (What's in the frame? What's the scale of the shot? What angle does the camera use? Is there any camera movement?)
Example	*Close-up shot of a man talking on his cell phone, shot from a low angle; camera pans to the left to follow the man as he walks*
1	
2	

- Write a brief description of the episode's plotline. What happened at the beginning of the show? What happened in the middle? What happened at the end?

Journal 2

Make a preliminary shot list for your silent story, based on the script your team created. You'll share this with your team and collaborate to create a final shot list for the silent story video. You can use Step 5 on **Handout 7: Silent Story Project Description** for guidance on creating your shot list.

Journal 3

Think about your community—either the community of your school or your wider community. Brainstorm a list of "the best" and "the worst" of your community.

List at least five things that you like and five things that you dislike. The items on your list can be specific—such as a teacher who has inspired you—or they can be general—such as the lack of places where teenagers can hang out in the community.

Choose two items from "the best" list and two from "the worst" list that you think might make an interesting video story.

Journal 4

Write three changes that you would like to make to the video of your silent story, based on the feedback you got from your classmates.

Journal 5

How was the process of shooting "real" subjects different from shooting a fictional scene in the silent story project? What, if anything, was challenging about shooting real subjects?

What, if anything, happened during your shoot(s) that was unexpected? How did your team respond to unexpected events?

How well did your team work together as a production team? What is one thing that you did to contribute to the success of your team?

Journal 6

Think about the footage you've taken for the community story video. Identify at least one clip—an interview clip or an action clip—that you definitely want to include in your video.

Describe why you want to include this clip. For example, does it illustrate a particularly funny or poignant moment in the story? Does it provide drama or present an alternative perspective on an issue?

Write a paragraph that describes the clip, why you want to include it, and in which part of the story arc it will best fit.

You'll share this paragraph with your teammates.

Journal 7

As you watch your community story rough cut, identify one or two places where you think a sound effect could be used to enhance the story, to draw the audience's attention to something in particular, or to influence the audience to feel a certain way.

Write the time code where you want to add the sound, the type of sound you would add, and how the added sound will enhance the story.

What is the mood (or moods) of the story? How do you think music could be used in your story to create or enhance this mood (or moods)? Write a paragraph about the kind of music you want to include and where you think music should be used in your story.

Journal 8

Describe one piece of valuable feedback that you got from the other team.
What is one change you would like to make to your community story video, based on this feedback?

Journal 9

- How did your knowledge of or feelings about your community change as a result of the work you did for this project?
- What did you learn about the power of video as a medium for telling stories?
- What do you think are the most important skills to have as a creator of video stories?
- What else did you learn while doing the unit project?
- What would you do differently if you were to do this project again?

Handout 4:
Analyzing a Movie Clip

How do movies make use of framing, shot scale, and other visual elements to tell a story? How is the viewer able to follow along, even when a movie has no dialogue?

You'll have two opportunities to watch a clip from a movie. After you've seen the clip twice, fill out Part 1. Reflect on your analysis, think about the clip some more, then complete Part 2.

Part 1: Shot Analysis

In the chart below, make a note of each separate shot that you notice. (Remember: Each time the film cuts from one image to another, a new shot begins.) You won't have much time to write, so be brief!

Shot Number	Shot Description (What's in the frame? What's the scale of the shot? What angle does the camera use? Is there any camera movement?)
Example	*Close-up shot of a man talking on his cell phone, shot from a low angle*
Sample shot analysis for car chase scene in *Bullitt*:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	

12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	

Part 2: Reflect on What You Saw

Answer the questions below.

1. What story do you think is being told in the clip?

2. Since there is no dialogue, what techniques are used to make the storyline clear?

3. What differences do you notice between this clip and the TV show you analyzed for Journal 1?

Handout 5:
The Elements of Art and Principles of Design

Just as artists who work in other visual art forms do, creators of movies and TV shows use the *elements of art*—the components used to create works of art, such as line, color, and shape—and *principles of design*—concepts relating to how the elements of art are arranged, such as balance, contrast, and rhythm.

You can use the definitions and descriptions given below as you analyze the use of art elements and design principles in movies and TV shows.

Elements of Art

Color: The visual sensation dependent on the reflection or absorption of light from a given surface. The three characteristics of color are hue, value, and intensity.

Form: A three-dimensional object (such as a sphere or cube) or the illusion of three dimensions.

Line: The path made by a point moving in space. Lines can vary in width, length, curvature, color, and direction.

Shape: A two-dimensional area or plane that may be open or closed, free-form or geometric.

Space: The emptiness or open area between, around, above, below, or within objects. *Shapes* and *forms* are defined by the space around and within them. Conversely, *spaces* are defined by the shapes and forms around and within them.

Texture: The surface quality of materials, either actual (felt/tactile) or implied (visual).

Value: The lightness or darkness of a hue or neutral color (such as gray).

Principles of Design

Balance: The arrangement of visual arts elements to create a feeling of stability or an equal distribution of visual "weight" in a work of art.

Contrast: The difference between two or more elements (e.g., value, color, texture) in a composition; the bringing together of dissimilar elements in a work of art; the degree of difference between the lightest and darkest parts of a picture.

Dominance: The emphasis of one aspect in relation to all other aspects of a design.

Emphasis: Special stress given to an element to make it stand out.

Movement: The principle of design dealing with the creation of action; a way of causing the eye of the viewer to travel within and across the boundary of a work of art.

Repetition: The recurrence of elements of art at regular intervals.

Rhythm: Intentional, regular repetition of design elements to achieve a specific effect or pattern.

Subordination: Making an element appear to hold secondary or lesser importance within a design or work of art.

Unity: The total visual effect of a composition, achieved by the careful blending of the elements of art and the principles of design.

Variety: A principle of design concerned with combining elements of art in different ways to create interest.

Vocabulary for Critiquing Use of the Elements of Art

Terms you can use to describe different elements of art are given below.

Line

- Descriptive (a line that depicts something in a drawing, helping viewers to understand what is shown)
- Expressive (a line that expresses a feeling)
- Implied (a line that is suggested but not explicitly drawn, such as the line created when one color ends and another begins)
- Curved, jagged, or straight
- Closed or open

You might also use descriptions such as *soft*, *hard*, or *smooth*.

Shape (2-D)

- Positive (figure) or negative (ground)
- Geometric (perfectly straight or round) or organic (irregular; not perfectly straight or round)
- Closed or open

You might also use descriptions such as *large*, *small*, *wide*, *narrow*, *long*, or *short*.

Form (3-D)

- Geometric or organic
- Closed or open

You might also use descriptions such as *large*, *small*, *wide*, *narrow*, *high*, *deep*, or *shallow*.

Color

- Intensity: Low (dull) or high (bright)
- Value: Tint (the lighter range of a color, such as the color mixed with white or lightened with water) and shade (the darker range, such as the color mixed with black or dark gray)
- Expression: Warm (such as yellow, orange, and red); cool (such as blue, green, and violet); or neutral (such as gray, brown, and black)

- Hue: Primary (yellow, red, and blue); secondary (orange, green, and violet); or intermediate (between primary and secondary, such as yellow-orange and blue-green)
- Arrangements: Complementary (contrasting colors, those that are opposites on the color wheel); analogous (colors that are close together); or monochromatic (different values of the same color)

Space

- Positive or negative
- Perspective in 2-D art: One-point, two-point, or three-point
- Placement in space to create depth in 2-D art: Low, high, or overlapping

Texture

- Real or simulated
- Glossy or matte

You might also use descriptions such as *coarse*, *smooth*, *sharp*, *shiny*, *bumpy*, or *fuzzy*.

Handout 6:
Weekly Critique

Each week, you'll choose a TV show or movie to watch and analyze on your own.

Choose Clips

Choose a brief clip (no longer than 10 minutes) from a movie, TV show, or short. You might want to watch a clip online or on DVD so that you can play it more than once. Your teacher can give you suggestions for where to find clips online.

Try to watch different styles and genres of movie and TV shows so that you get exposure to different perspectives and cinematography techniques. Try to also include works from different time periods, countries, and cultures. Here are some suggestions for the types of work to choose from:

- A documentary or documentary short
- A movie made in another country
- A montage sequence in a film
- A movie produced before 1950
- A video produced by a teenager
- A scripted TV drama
- A TV reality show
- A silent film
- A music video

Describe, Analyze, Critique

Fill out the charts below for each clip. You can include drawings as well as text—for example, you might sketch out how the filmmakers used an element of art or principle of design.

Title of TV show, movie, or video	
Length of the clip and where in the main piece it is found (e.g., "five-minute clip starting nine minutes into the movie")	
Date and time you watch the clip	
Date the movie or TV show was made	

DESCRIPTION	
What story is told?	
What action takes place during the clip?	
Describe three different shots you see in the clip. For each shot, describe the scale of shot, what's depicted in the frame, and the camera angle and movement (if any).	

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Besides dialogue, what techniques were used to make the storyline clear?	
How does the clip use the elements of art and principles of design? Describe at least one specific example.	

CRITIQUE	
Describe one thing that you liked about this clip and why.	
Describe one thing that you would change about this clip and why.	

Assessment Checklist 1:
Weekly Critique

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess each of your weekly critiques of clips from TV shows or movies. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Description		**Student Comments**	**Teacher Comments**
Clearly describes the story and action that takes place during the clip.	15%		
Clearly describes three different camera shots used in the clip.	20%		
Analysis and Interpretation			
Demonstrates understanding of the camera and editing techniques by pointing to their use in one or more specific examples.	20%		
Demonstrates understanding of the elements of art and principles of design by pointing to their use in one or more specific examples.	15%		
Critique			
Identifies convincing reasons that one element of the clip is successful.	15%		
Identifies convincing reasons that one element of the clip could use improvement.	15%		
Total	**100%**		

Handout 7:
Silent Story Project Description

The movie industry was telling stories with moving images long before it figured out how to include synchronized sound—motion pictures have been around since the late 1800s, but the "talkies" didn't come along until 1927. You may have seen at least part of a silent movie—for example, almost all of Charlie Chaplin's movies are silent.

In this project, you're going to make a silent movie yourself. Working with teammates, you'll create a short video of a silent story. Along the way, you'll learn more about writing scripts, getting ready for a shoot, working on a production set, editing footage, and telling stories without words.

Project Requirements

No Dialogue

You'll tell your story entirely without words. (Silent movies used title cards to help tell stories, but you won't use them.) You can choose to have some ambient sound in your video or you can make it *completely* silent—it's up to you.

No More Than Two Minutes Long

Your completed video should be no longer than two minutes, and it can even be shorter. Use only the length of time you need to tell the story—and be sure to choose a story that can be told in that amount of time!

Three-Act Structure

Your story arc should follow a three-act structure:

- In Act 1, the setup, the characters, their relationships, and the setting are introduced, along with the conflict the characters face. Traditionally, this act is about one-quarter of the production's length.
- In Act 2, the main characters face problems, challenges, conflicts, or obstacles that must be overcome. Traditionally, this act is about half the production's length.
- In Act 3, the characters' problem is solved or the challenge is overcome, and the story comes to a resolution. Traditionally, this act is about one-quarter of the production's length.

The rules aren't rigid, and if your video is engaging, your audience probably won't notice the transition from one "act" to another. The structure is just a way to help you think about telling a clear and compelling story.

Because your video is so short, remember that each "act" will also be short (as little as 15 seconds, if you're making a one-minute video).

Camera Shot Styles, Positioning, and Movement

- The video should incorporate footage taken with the camera in at least two different positions. (In other words, you shouldn't just place the camera on a tripod and leave it in place during the shoot—you need to move the camera around in the scene.)
- The video should incorporate at least one kind of camera movement, such as panning, tilting, or hand-held motion.
- The video should incorporate at least three different shot types (for example, long shots, medium shots, and close-ups).

The Elements of Art and Principles of Design

As you set up your shots, think about how you can use the elements of art or the principles of design. For example, you might use color to help evoke a mood or indicate character (a shy character may wear subdued colors, while a gregarious character may wear brighter colors), or you might use dominance and emphasis to indicate power dynamics between characters (placing a more powerful character in the forefront of a frame or shooting a subordinate character at a downward angle).

Pre-Production

Step 1: Brainstorm Story Ideas

As a team, brainstorm a list of possible stories to tell. Your story should:

- be simple—you won't have much time to tell it
- be easy to convey without words
- have a three-act structure
- be easy to make with the available resources (as you'll probably be shooting on your school's campus, you'll only have access to props you can find at home or in the classroom, and your actors will be your teammates)

Here is a brief description of a possible story that will be used as an example throughout this part of the unit:

> *A girl is taking a test in school, and she sees that she doesn't know any of the answers. She starts to panic, until she realizes that she is in the wrong classroom.*

Step 2: Choose a Story

Once you have a list of ideas, narrow down your list to the one story that the team is most interested in telling. Keep in mind the project requirements:

- Can you really tell this story without dialogue?
- Is the story short enough to tell in the timeframe you have?
- Can you find all the props you need and shoot the story with the actors you've got?

Also keep in mind whether the story will be fun or interesting for viewers to watch.

Step 3: Write a Treatment

A *treatment* is a short synopsis of your story that you can share with others. Because your story is short, your treatment should be short, too—no more than four or five sentences. (This is shorter than a typical treatment in the movie industry.) It should include enough information to make the story easy to visualize and to make clear why the story would be fun or interesting to watch.

Here is a sample treatment:

> *A girl sits down to take an exam. It is obvious from her body language that she has studied for this test and is confident that she will do well. She looks at the exam, and her confidence turns to panic. She can't answer any of the questions on the test. She is so distraught that she even contemplates cheating. Then she realizes that she is in the wrong classroom—she is taking a French test, instead of a Spanish test!*

Step 4: Write a Script

Even though your project won't have any dialogue, you still need to write a script, which will help you imagine each scene in your story. Your script will also help you create a list of shots you need to get during production. The crew will use the script during production—for example, your actors can use it as they prepare for the shoot.

Use *Video Production Handbook* **Part 3: Writing a Script** as a guide.

Step 5: Create a Shot List

A *shot list* is a list of all the shots that you imagine will be in your video. Think back to the list of shots you made while watching a movie clip. The shot list you'll make now is similar—except that you will make the list *before* starting production.

Each description of a shot on the shot list should include the following:

- What is shown in the shot
- The shot scale (long, medium, close-up, etc.)
- Any movement (for example, a tracking shot)

Here is a partial shot list for the video described in the sample treatment above:

> *Establishing shot of a girl walking through a school hallway, carrying a bag and several books*
>
> *Close-up shot of a Spanish textbook in her hands*
>
> *Long tracking shot of girl walking into classroom and sitting at a desk with a test on it*
>
> *Close-up shot of test lying face down on the desk*
>
> *Medium shot of girl taking out a pen and turning test over*

Close-up shot of girl's face turning from confident to panicked, staring at the test

Close-up shot of test in girl's hands

Medium shot of girl looking around anxiously, starting to write something on the test, and then stopping

Step 6: Choose Roles

Each teammate should take on one of the following roles: director, producer, cameraperson, or actor. Use *Video Production Handbook* **Part 4: Production Roles** as a guide for the responsibilities for each role.

Step 7: List Props and Costumes Needed

Make a list of the props and costumes you'll need to create each shot on your shot list, and assign team members to be responsible for them.

Here is a sample list of props and costumes for the story described above:

- *Books and bookbag*
- *Spanish textbook*
- *Classroom desk and chair*
- *Pen*
- *French exam mock-up*
- *Costume for student: school uniform made up of white button-down shirt and dark skirt*

The producer is responsible for making sure that all the props have been gathered and are ready for the shoot. Your actors should either wear their costumes to the shoot or be able to change into them before the shoot.

Production

Step 8: Action!

It's time to start shooting. Take your assigned role and shoot the footage for your story, following the set protocol on *Video Production Handbook* **Part 5: Production Tips and Tricks**.

Make sure that everyone has a copy of the script and the shot list. Remember that you need to include footage from at least two different camera positions and that at least one shot should involve camera movement. Use *Video Production Handbook* **Part 6: Lighting** as a guide for lighting on your shoot.

While you shoot, the producer should log your footage, and the director should keep an eye on the shot list to make sure that you get every shot you need.

Post-Production

Step 9: Sort Your Footage

Look through and organize the footage you've shot, so that you can select the clips to include in your story.

Log and capture your footage, and organize your clips in folders on your computer. You can organize clips by:

- the scene they correspond to
- character
- shot type (for example, separate folders for close-ups and for establishing shots)
- take number
- a combination of any of the above

Review your treatment and script as a reminder of your original story intentions and your story arc. Select the clips that you think best fit your story. Make an edit decision list. (When you edit your footage, you'll use this list as a guide and modify it as needed.)

Step 10: Make a Rough Cut

Use your editing software to assemble the clips you've selected. Use the editing techniques described in *Video Production Handbook* **Part 7: Editing Techniques** to create a seamless story.

Show your rough cut to another team and get feedback on the pacing, flow, and continuity of your story.

Step 11: Final Cut

Incorporate the feedback you've gotten, and restructure your piece as needed. When you are done, export your video project to a file that you can play for the whole class.

Assessment Checklist 2:
Silent Story Video

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the required components. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Technical Knowledge and Skills		**Student Comments**	**Teacher Comments**
Shows evidence of technical proficiency with camera (white balance is correctly set, exposure is correct, etc.).	**10%**		
Includes footage shot with the camera in at least two different positions.	**5%**		
Includes at least one shot in which the camera is moving.	**5%**		
Incorporates a variety of shot scales and/or angles.	**5%**		
Uses editing techniques to preserve continuity—for example, match cuts are used to create an illusion of continuous movement between shots.	**10%**		
Transitions between edits are smooth	**5%**		

Content

Uses a clear three-act structure, with an introductory beginning, a conflict or problem in the middle, and a resolution at the end.	**15%**		
Tells a story that is clear and easy to follow.	**10%**		

Creative Expression

Makes effective use of the elements of art and principles of design.	**5%**		
Uses effective framing strategies that create visual interest.	**10%**		
Uses edits to help pace the story—the story neither drags nor is rushed.	**10%**		
Tells a story that is engaging to watch.	**10%**		
Total	**100%**		

Handout 8:
Silent Story Prompts

Here are some prompts to help get you started thinking about ideas for your silent story project. However, you don't have to use these—feel free to come up with your own story!

- A boy who is invited to a friend's house for dinner accidentally breaks a plate when no one else is in the room . . .

- A new student at a school is trying to get noticed but is worried about drawing too much attention to himself . . .

- Two friends are arguing about who should get the last piece of cake . . .

- A student is rushing to get to class, when the bell rings . . .

- A girl tries to teach her friend the moves to a dance, but her friend keeps messing up . . .

- A boy arrives at school and forgets the combination to his locker . . .

- A girl is the only person in the class who didn't get an invitation to a party . . .

- Two friends are having lunch, when one of them accidentally spills a drink . . .

- A girl realizes that she pressed reply-all to an e-mail that she only meant to send to one person . . .

- Two athletes who are friendly rivals start a one-on-one basketball game after school . . .

Assessment Checklist 3:
Silent Story Script

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the required components. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Technical Knowledge and Skills		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Script follows the conventions of a screenplay format (for example, uses slug lines and stage directions).	**15%**		
Script is written clearly with no grammatical errors.	**10%**		
Story description provides opportunities to use different types of shots and camera movement.	**15%**		
Content			
Script's plot incorporates a clear three-act structure.	**25%**		
Creative Expression			
Script uses descriptive language that makes it easy for the reader to visualize what's happening in the story.	**20%**		
Story is original, engaging, and entertaining.	**15%**		
Total	**100%**		

Handout 9:
Unit 2 Project Description

Think about your community—either the community of your school or the community where you live. What makes it special? What about it bothers or frustrates you?

As part of a team, you'll choose a story that illustrates "the best" or "the worst" of your community and make a video documentary about that story. You'll work with your team on pre-production, production, and post-production. At the end of the unit, you'll share your work in a public screening.

Project Requirements

In 10 minutes or less, your video documentary should do the following:

- Focus on "the best" or "the worst" of your community—something you like about your community or something that needs improvement.
- Tell a specific story that illustrates "the best" or "the worst."
- Have a beginning, middle, and end.
- Tell the story visually. You can use voice-overs, interviews, and titles when you need to, but most of your video footage should show people in action.
- Include at least three different shot types (for example, long shots, medium shots, and close-ups) and some camera movement (such as panning).

Pre-Production Steps

Step 1: Brainstorm "the Best" and "the Worst"

On your own, brainstorm a list of "the best" and "the worst" of your community. Be specific. Below are some questions to get you started.

The Best

- What places do you love to go to in your community?
- What features of your town are especially beautiful or are good gathering places? (For example, public parks, a downtown plaza, a baseball field)
- Who in your community do you admire the most? Is there anyone who's inspired you?
- What local organizations and programs provide services in your area? (For example, the PTA, church groups, youth organizations, afterschool programs)
- Who are the people who have made a real contribution to your community? (For example, civic leaders, principals or teachers, students, public artists, athletes)

The Worst

- What bothers or frustrates you about your community?
- Is there something you wish your community had more of (such as restaurants, movie theaters, or parking spots)?

- Does your community have problems related to the economy (such as funding issues at the school, not enough money for public services, or lack of jobs)?
- Are there any problems related to the natural environment (such as endangered species, pollution, or littering)?
- Are there any problems related to the physical environment (such as graffiti, areas that are dangerous at night, or lack of access to services in certain parts of the community)?

When you're done, share your list with your team.

Step 2: Conduct Research

As a team, choose two ideas that you agree might make a good video. Work in pairs to research the ideas. Each pair should research one idea and identify a specific story as the focus of the video.

For example, if a community strength is a youth fitness program that promotes physical fitness and self-esteem, you might interview the organizers of the program to find kids whose confidence, health, or fitness dramatically changed as a result of the program. Then you might interview the kids and their parents to determine who might have a good story to tell and whether they would be willing to be subjects of your video.

Once you identify a specific story idea, write a brief description of the story. For example:

> Until a year ago, Jasmine couldn't run around the block without getting exhausted. Last month, she ran her first five-mile race. A newly confident Jasmine is now starting her own running program for younger children.

Think about how you would tell this story in a video. Make a list of the kind of footage you need, and scout the locations where you would need to shoot. Take notes on any issues or challenges related to the locations.

Step 3: Choose a Story

Share your research on the story idea. As a team, choose one idea for your project. Use the following questions to help you make your decision:

- Which story would be more interesting for viewers to watch?
- Which story would be the most interesting to work on?
- Which story is the most original?

Remember to keep in mind the project requirements. Can you really tell this story in a 10-minute video? Will you be able to shoot the footage you need to tell your story?

Once you make a decision, share with the class the community strength or challenge you've chosen and how your story illustrates it.

Step 4: Complete a Planning Document

Complete **Handout 11: Community Story Planning Document,** which will help you lay out the story arc for your video and identify footage you need to shoot.

Step 5: Draft a Shot List

Write a list of the video footage that you intend to shoot for your story, including interviews and footage of your subject "in action." For example, in a story about the fitness program, you may plan to shoot your subject at a race, leading a group of younger children in a workout, and having dinner at home with her family. You may also want to do a short interview with her about her experience in the program.

Create a shot list for your video documentary. Each description should include the following:

- What is shown in the shot
- The shot scale (long, medium, close-up, etc.)
- Any camera movement (for example, a tracking shot)

With documentaries, you aren't able to plan all your shots as precisely as you can for a fictional story because you don't know exactly what will happen when you capture your subject "in action." But you should still be able to plan some shots for your video.

Planning shots ahead of time allows you to better concentrate during production, even if you end up adjusting the shot list during your shoot.

Step 6: Choose Roles

Each teammate should take on one of the following roles: director, producer, cameraperson, and sound engineer. See Part 4 of the *Video Production Handbook* for a description of these roles.

Production Steps

Step 7: Shoot Footage

Take on your assigned role and shoot the footage for your story.

Post-Production Steps

Step 8: Sort Footage

Use editing software to capture your footage onto a computer. Organize your clips in folders on the computer.

Revisit your planning document and your story arc. When you shoot real subjects in action, you may get footage that you didn't expect, which may give you a different perspective on your story idea. Decide with your team whether to alter your story.

Select the clips that you think best fit your story, and make an *edit decision list*—a list of your chosen clips and the order in which you plan to assemble them—to use as an editing guide.

Step 9: Assemble Clips

Use the timeline in your editing software to insert your clips in the rough order that you want. If necessary, add transitions (such as fading out and fading in) between your clips.

Step 10: Add Sound and Titles

Decide how you want to incorporate music, sound effects, and/or ambient sound into your video to set a mood and enhance your story.

Find or record sound files and use your editing software to layer in the soundtrack. Be careful to use music and sound effects only to enhance your story—they can easily overpower it.

Insert titles and credits in your video to complete your rough cut.

Step 11: Get Feedback on Your Rough Cut

Show your video to your classmates, and get feedback on the pacing and flow of your story.

Step 12: Create a Final Cut

Modify your rough cut based on the feedback you received. Watch your cut once more with your team. Make any necessary adjustments to the picture, text, or sound. Finally, export your video to a file that you can play for your audience.

Assessment Checklist 4:
Community Story Video

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you meet all the requirements. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Technical Knowledge and Skills		**Student Comments**	**Teacher Comments**
Shows evidence of technical proficiency with cameras (e.g., white balance is correctly set, exposure is correct).	**10%**		
Demonstrates proficiency with microphones (i.e., interview dialogue and other sounds are audible).	**10%**		
Audio levels of different tracks are well-balanced.	**5%**		
Edits are smooth and preserve continuity.	**10%**		

Content			
Tells a specific story that illustrates a community strength or challenge.	10%		
Tells a story that has a clear beginning, middle, and end.	10%		
Uses a combination of action footage, b-roll, and interview clips (or other narration); does not rely on narration or interview clips to advance the story.	10%		
Creative Expression			
Tells an engaging story.	10%		
Uses effective framing strategies that create visual interest.	10%		
Uses edits to help pace the story—the story neither drags nor is rushed.	10%		
Uses a soundtrack creatively and effectively—music and/ or sound effects enhance the story and do not overpower or detract from the narrative.	5%		
Total	100%		

Assessment Checklist 5:
Teamwork Self-Assessment

Use this assessment to help you assess and improve your teamwork skills.

Criteria	Comments
My Individual Teamwork Skills: As a team member, I . . .	
Listen to my teammates' ideas	
Ask questions of my teammates to help them clarify their ideas	
Contribute my own ideas, or piggyback or build on my teammates' ideas	
Help my team evaluate information, and propose creative solutions	
Communicate my ideas clearly and defend my ideas and opinions, using specific evidence to back up my points	
Our Team's Teamwork Skills: As a team, we . . .	
All understood our team's goal	
Identified the tasks to accomplish	
Communicated clearly, listened, and resolved disagreements in a nonconfrontational manner	
Planned and scheduled our tasks	
Met our deadlines	

Handout 10:
The Critical Response Process

There are many different ways of giving and receiving feedback. One method that artists, performers, and other creators sometimes use is the Critical Response Process, which creates a safe and supportive environment in which to receive feedback on completed work or work in progress.

Steps in the Critical Response Process

The Critical Response Process includes three steps:

- The givers of feedback comment on something interesting they notice in the work. These comments should not judge or criticize the work. (For example, what was stimulating, surprising, memorable, touching, or meaningful for you?)
- The creator(s) asks the givers of feedback open-ended questions about something specific in the work. (For example, a creator wouldn't ask, "Did you like how I used cut-away shots to build dramatic tension?" but would ask instead, "What mood did the editing choices set for the story?")
- The audience asks neutral (i.e., judgment-free) questions of the creator. (For example, the audience doesn't ask, "Why didn't you shoot from different angles?" but rather, "What were you trying to achieve with your choice of camera positioning?")

As you provide feedback, try to start sentences with phrases such as the following:

- I notice . . .
- I'm curious about . . .
- I'm interested in . . .
- I wonder . . .

Handout 11:
Community Story Planning Document

Use this document to help you develop your community story video. Take notes on the different aspects of your story and come back to your notes as you work on your video.

Part 1: The Story

What community "best" or "worst" does the video address?

How does the specific story chosen illustrate the community problem or strength?

What do you want viewers to walk away from this story knowing, thinking, or feeling?

Why are you telling this story? What will make it interesting for viewers to watch?

Part 2: The Story Arc

Describe the arc of your story. What information or feelings will you convey in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of your story? Include descriptions of footage you might use to tell each part of the story.

Beginning	
Middle	
End	

Part 3: Footage

Interviews

List the people you intend to interview and key questions you plan to ask them. Avoid "yes or no" questions. Instead, ask open-ended questions to encourage your subject to talk and share his or her personal experiences and feelings.

Shot List

List all the shots that you think you need for your video, including action shots and b-roll. Each shot description should include the following:

- What is shown in the shot
- The shot scale (long, medium, close-up, etc.)
- Any camera movement (for example, tracking shot)

Keep in mind that you can't plan all your shots as precisely in a documentary as you can for a fictional story because you don't know exactly what might happen when you capture your subject "in action." You may decide to make changes or additions to your shot list during your shoot.

Handout 12:
Unit 2 Career Information

Range of Careers Related to Unit

Below are some of the AME careers that make use of the skills you are learning in Unit 2:

- **Assistant Location Manager**
- Boom Operator
- Costume Designer
- **Director**
- **Director of Photography/ Cinematographer**
- Editor

- Film/Color Timer (Colorist)
- First Assistant Director
- Foley Artist
- Lighting Technician
- Post-Production Assistant
- Producer
- **Prop (Property) Master**

Key Careers

Key AME careers that use some of the skills you are learning in Unit 2 include *assistant location manager*, *prop master*, *director of photography/cinematographer*, and *director*.

Assistant Location Manager

Job Description

Assistant location managers help location managers find and manage locations for film shoots. They are involved before, during, and after each shoot. Before the shoot, they may help managers find the most ideal location to film each scene, keeping in mind the overall look, the financial cost, and practical matters, such as parking, traffic patterns, and access to electricity.

Once locations are chosen, the assistant location manager is the key contact with the public, informing them of filming going on in their area. The assistant location manager also interacts with government and community groups to arrange for parking and traffic requirements, along with any needed permits. A chief responsibility is providing directions, maps, and signs to lead the film crew to various locations each day. Assistant location managers may also perform more mundane duties, such as handling mail.

Assistant location managers must be at all shoots to represent the location department and to handle any unexpected problems. They serve as the main contact with the public and help to handle crowd control. They may also interact with the landlord of a property, local police, and others. After a shoot, they are responsible for restoring a location to its previous state, for example, by tidying up and removing trash.

The assistant location manager works long hours and is often the first person on location and the last person to leave after filming. A driver's license is required. Assistant location managers may need to perform physical labor (though on larger productions, several location assistants help with the physical work). They must also have excellent communication skills and be able to solve problems that arise suddenly.

Pathway

On productions filmed in more than one location, there may be a location manager in multiple cities, and each manager would have an assistant location manager. There may also be multiple assistant location managers on very large productions.

Assistant location managers are union members. They belong to the Teamsters Union in Los Angeles and to the Directors Guild in New York.

There are no formal requirements to become an assistant location manager. Some gain background knowledge by majoring in broadcasting/video production or communications in college. The job itself requires practical skills that are best learned on the job.

Assistant location managers may break into the industry by working as runners, production assistants, or location assistants, learning about the details of filming on location. Building a reputation for good work and making connections as an assistant location manager is important to job advancement. Many assistant location managers work their way up to become location managers and, eventually, production directors.

Prop Master

Job Description

Prop or property masters are responsible for obtaining, organizing, and caring for all props in a film or TV series. *Props* are items that an actor picks up or wears, including accessories, such as sunglasses, jewelry, and handbags. Weapons are also considered props, as are decals on vehicles and even food! Props used frequently by a main character are called *hero props*.

A prop master is involved in all phases of film development: pre-production, production, and post-production. Prop masters receive a copy of the script in advance and work with the director, producer, art director, and others to envision the look and feel of all props for the film or show.

Prop masters conduct research on the time period and culture in the film or show, create a master list of props, and obtain every prop on their list. They may borrow or rent from large prop houses, buy from unique sources (such as flea markets or online auction sites), or design the props and have them built.

During production, prop masters are responsible for overseeing the storage, care, and placement of props on the set. They also must make sure that there is continuity between takes in terms of props. (For example, if an actor holds a glass filled with water in one shot, the glass shouldn't be empty in the next shot.) Prop masters may also instruct actors on the use and care of certain props, which gives them an opportunity to develop relationships with actors on the set.

When the production is over, prop masters are responsible for returning rented props and storing or selling items.

Prop masters must also be able to partner and work well with other professionals, from the director to prop designers and suppliers. They must be detail-oriented, with excellent organizational skills.

Prop masters need to be resourceful problem-solvers. Directors often make last-minute requests or scene changes that affect the props. These challenges give prop masters an opportunity to think creatively. Many prop masters have a story about a last-minute request or an impossible item they needed to track down for a production.

Prop masters often work long hours, as they are on the set during all filming. Their work schedule may vary because they are often hired for a specific project, such as a film, with a set start and end date, or a TV show, which might stop shooting for the summer.

Pathway

No formal degree is required for work as a prop master, but a background in design or art is often preferred. Some four-year colleges have specializations in their theater departments that emphasize set design, which includes prop management.

Prop masters may break into the industry by volunteering or working as a production assistant. Before progressing to prop master, they must have many years of experience working with set dressing and props. Often they work first as set decorators, dressers, or assistant prop masters.

As with many other jobs in the film industry, most prop masters secure jobs on a project through connections they have built during the course of their career; therefore, building relationships with others is important.

Director of Photography/Cinematographer

Job Description

The director of photography, also known as a *DP* or *cinematographer*, is responsible for developing the "look" of a film, TV show, commercial, or music video and bringing it to life through lighting and camera work.

During pre-production, the DP reads the script; meets with the director, producer, and special effects department to understand and contribute to the vision for the production; and makes decisions about the cameras, lenses, and other equipment.

During rehearsals and final shoots, the DP supervises the entire camera department, including the camera crew, lighting technicians (or *grips*), and the electrical crew (or *gaffers*). Much of the DP's time is spent *blocking a shot*—deciding on the movements of the actors and the cameras.

The DP is responsible for selecting camera lenses and filters, positioning cameras and lighting equipment, and attending to many other technical considerations. Some DPs operate cameras themselves, depending on their personal preference and the size of the production. DPs review the *dailies*—the footage shot that day.

In post-production, DPs ensure that the footage is processed properly and the "look" has been captured successfully.

A DP must be very creative, with a thorough understanding of lighting, color, and the composition of shots. DPs must also have detailed technical knowledge of the equipment used in shooting.

Camera equipment used on film sets is changing rapidly. While many DPs still prefer to shoot using film, more productions now use high-definition cameras. The creative concepts and use of light remain the same, but DPs must learn to use new equipment. The work process for DPs changes because they can now immediately see each shot on a monitor rather than waiting for film development.

DPs must be flexible—able to adapt rapidly and make quick decisions on the set. They also need managerial and interpersonal skills to manage the film crew and interact with the director and others. Since they are responsible for the filming budget, DPs must have financial management skills. DPs work long hours and may be required to travel.

Pathway

This position requires an undergraduate degree in a related major, such as communications or film, and additional technical training. Most receive this additional training in film school, but many film and TV studios also offer training, as does the International Cinematographers Guild. Some DPs first train as photographers and then move into film.

The position usually requires one to three years of experience shooting and editing film. Many DPs begin in the camera department, moving from first assistant camera to second assistant camera to camera operator.

Competition for DP jobs is intense. Directors usually request a particular DP for a film or TV series, so building relationships is important for getting a job. DPs rarely move on to become directors. A few DPs become production designers or producers, but many continue to work as DPs because they enjoy it.

Many DPs belong to the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

Director

Job Description

A director interprets a script, turning ideas into sounds and visual images that become a film, TV show, commercial, or music video. The director is a storyteller, whether the story is a 30-second commercial or a 2-hour feature film.

Directors control the structure and flow of a film to develop a theme and keep the audience's interest throughout. Directors are responsible for supervising large numbers of staff. Some directors perform multiple roles and serve as producers or writers as well.

Directors are involved in all phases of production, from pre-production to production to post-production. During pre-production, directors conduct auditions and cast the main roles. An assistant director may help cast non-speaking actors and extras. Directors work closely with the heads of all departments to approve the location, scenery, props and costumes, music, choreography, and camera choices.

During production, directors conduct rehearsals and review lines with actors. They direct the cast and all crew members during filming. Working with the director of photography, directors oversee camera shots and lighting and *block out* the movements of the actors. Directors constantly make changes to the script.

On large productions, an assistant director may help keep track of time, communicate with crew, arrange for food delivery, and assist the director with other tasks. During post-production, the director oversees all editing work, making important decisions that affect the story as it unfolds.

Directors must be excellent managers. They must be able to identify and hire an effective team, as well as motivate and bring people together. They have to be able to work collaboratively with a large number of people. Directors also must be able to work in a high-pressure environment and can expect to work long hours.

Most importantly, directors must have a strong artistic vision and be able to communicate it clearly to others in order to bring a story to life.

Pathway

Directors are usually expected to have an undergraduate degree in a related field, such as communications, film, radio/TV production, or theater. Many have also received a graduate degree, such as a Master of Fine Arts.

Some universities offer programs in directing and producing, and the Directors Guild of America and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers offer a joint Assistant Directors Training Program.

Experience is critical to landing a job as a director. Many directors move up the ranks, working first as assistant directors on big projects. Sometimes actors or screenwriters move into directing.

Many directors began making their own movies at a very early age. They often advise aspiring filmmakers to be involved in as many movie productions as possible, in college, in film school, and later. They suggest working on independent films or commercials to gain experience. Opportunities to get involved in low-budget films are increasing as digital technology lowers the cost of filmmaking for young filmmakers.

Some directors aspire to become producers. Advancement depends on success with current projects and developing a good reputation. As in other high-paying positions in the film industry, there is much competition for director positions.

Most film and television directors are members of the Directors Guild of America.

Handout 13:
Career Profile Presentation

Throughout the course, you've had the opportunity to learn more about an AME professional whose work and career you found interesting or inspiring. Now you'll have the chance to share what you've learned with your classmates and to learn about the AME professionals they've chosen to profile. Your presentation should:

- be short and to the point (about five minutes long)
- include information about the person you've profiled
- include information about the career field this person works in

At the end of the presentation, you'll also show a short clip from the media production that you analyzed and answer questions from your classmates.

As you design your presentation, be sure to include each of the following components.

Information about the AME Professional

Briefly describe the AME professional you've chosen:

- What is the professional's name and job title?
- What company does the person work at (or does the person freelance)?
- What kinds of productions does he or she work on?
- Why did you choose to profile this person?

Education and Training

Describe the professional's education and training, including information about the college this person attended and any other training he or she received.

Career Path

Show the timeline you've created with the professional's major career milestones and the productions he or she has worked on. Answer the following questions:

- How did the professional get started in the industry?
- What role does he or she play in the industry today?
- What different jobs has the professional had throughout his or her career?
- What major media productions has the professional worked on?

Short Clip of the Media Production

Play a one- to two-minute clip from the media production that you analyzed for the career profile. Answer the following questions:

- What role did the professional play in creating this work?
- What factors make this work successful? How do you think the professional you profiled contributed to the success of the work?
- If the professional has a particular style that he or she usually works in (such as an animation style), how is that style expressed in the work?

Handout 14:
Career Profile Peer Assessment

Complete the table below as you listen to your teammates' presentations. Keep in mind that you will share your assessment with the presenter.

Name of presenter	
Name of AME professional profiled	
Your question for the presenter	Question: Notes on the answer you received:
What was one interesting thing that you learned about the AME professional or his or her career during the presentation?	
What did the presenter do well during the presentation?	
What areas could the presenter improve on in future presentations?	

Appendix B:
Video Production Handbook

This handbook provides information to help you develop the technical, organizational, and creative skills necessary for creating successful videos. The handbook is divided into the following sections:

- Part 1: The Language of Cinematography
- Part 2: Camera Operation
- Part 3: Writing a Script
- Part 4: Production Roles
- Part 5: Production Tips and Tricks
- Part 6: Lighting
- Part 7: Editing Techniques
- Part 8: Making a Documentary
- Part 9: Shooting an Interview
- Part 10: Elements of a Soundtrack
- Part 11: Titles

Video Production Handbook
Part 1: The Language of Cinematography

Cinematography is the art of using a camera for motion-picture photography. As with all forms of art, it has a particular language that is used by people who create movies, TV shows, and related forms of media. Throughout the unit, you will need to know the following terms, many of which you'll use as you make your own videos.

The Shot

A *shot* is the basic building block of almost any work that uses moving images. It is made up of the images that are recorded from the time the camera is turned on until the camera is turned off—one continuous "take."

In finished movies and other works that use moving images, a shot is the continuous footage that appears between cuts, fades, or other transitions (you'll learn more about transitions during the unit). The shots you choose should always serve the story you tell.

Framing

Framing is the arrangement of space, people, and objects within the frame of the film or video. Successful framing creates shots that are interesting for the viewer and that keep the viewer engaged in the movie, TV show, or other production. Framing is used to bring focus to the subject and to communicate the story.

Types of Shots

The language used to talk about different kinds of shots is based on scale, position, or the number of people in the frame. *t* (the amount of information shown in a shot) is an important element in the framing of an image.

- **Long shot (also known as wide shot)**: A shot that is far enough away from objects and actors to show details. For example, a wide shot of an actor usually shows the actor's whole body.

- **Extreme long shot:** A shot that encompasses a large physical area (for example, a shot of a vast landscape).

- *Establishing shot:* A shot often shown at the beginning of a scene that shows the setting in which the scene takes place. It can be a long shot or an extreme long shot. Establishing shots orient the viewer to the scene.
- *Medium shot:* A shot that is closer to the subject than a wide shot, but still shows some of the environment around the subject. A medium shot of a couple might extend from their heads to their torsos.

- *Two-shot:* A shot showing two actors in the frame, often used during scenes that involve dialogue. In a two-shot, actors are often shown from the torso up. (Two-shots are often medium shots.)

- **_Close-up shot:_** A shot that gets very close to the subject(s). This type of shot can be used to show emotion on a person's face or to provide fine detail.
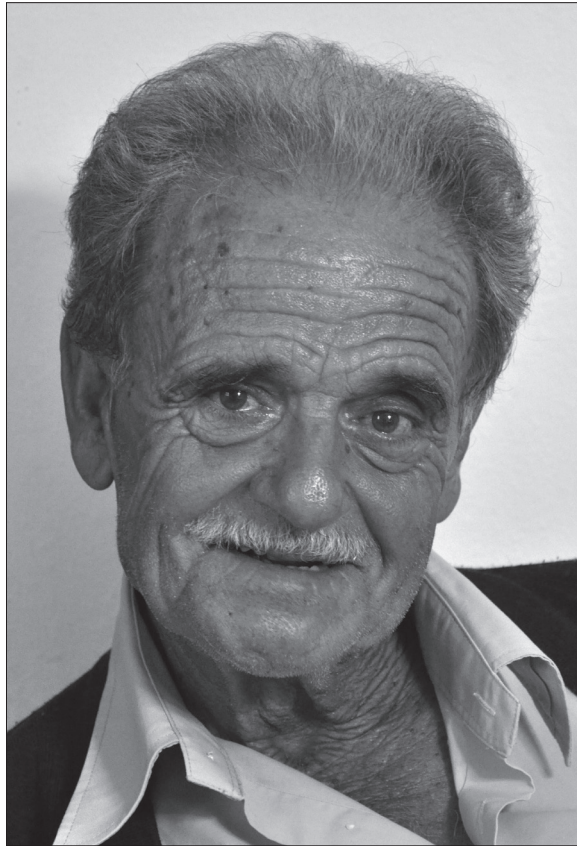
- **_Extreme close-up:_** A shot that gets even closer than a close-up, for example, a shot that shows only an actor's eyes.
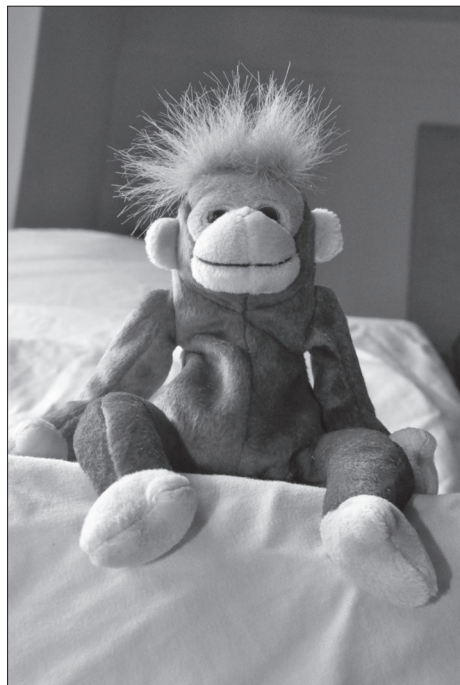
Angle

Another important element in framing is the angle from which the camera shoots the scene. The basic angles used in cinematography are as follows:

- **High:** Looking down on the subject

- **Low:** Looking up at the subject

- *Level:* Looking directly at the subject

- *Overhead:* Looking directly down on the subject from above the subject

Movement

Camera movement can help shape the viewers' understanding of what's happening in a scene, providing information and helping viewers feel like they are moving through the world of the movie or TV show. Cameras can move in several ways:
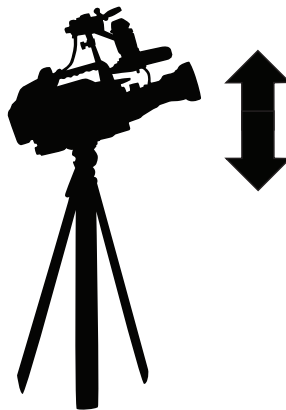
- *Hand-held:* The camera moves through space as it is hand-held by a camera operator. Hand-held shots can be shaky (sometimes causing motion sickness in the viewer!) unless the camera is supported (for example, with a brace on the camera operator's shoulder or a camera stabilizer, such as a "steadicam").
- *Panning:* The camera remains at a fixed point and moves from side to side (think about moving your head from side to side without moving the rest of your body). A tripod is used for panning shots

Panning movement (side to side)
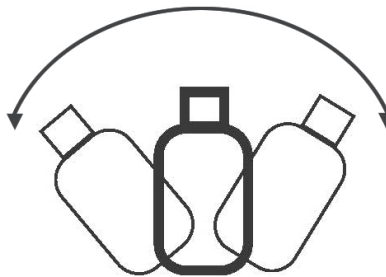
Camera (overhead view)

- *Tilting:* Similar to panning, the camera remains at a fixed point, but moves up and down (think about nodding your head). A tripod is also used for tilting shots.

- *Tracking:* The camera moves through space: forward or backward, left or right, diagonally, or even in a circle. A tracking shot is also know as a *dolly* shot because a support system known as a *dolly* is used to hold and move the camera.
- *Zoom:* The camera itself doesn't move. Instead, movement within the camera lens changes the magnification of the image, making the image appear closer or farther away. Zooms are used infrequently in movies because they don't mirror human movement and can look unnatural.

Focus

Focus, the sharpness of an image (also the point on a camera lens where light rays converge), can be used to direct the viewer's attention and, depending on the *depth of field* (see below), can reveal or obscure details. Two terms used with focus are *foreground*—the images closest to the camera—and *background*—the images farther away from the camera. Other terms associated with focus are as follows:

- **Depth of field:** The part of an image that is in sharp focus. Depth of field is controlled by the *aperture* (opening of the lens).
- **Deep focus:** A term used for images that have a large depth of field; the image is sharp from front to back (foreground to background). The smaller the aperture, the deeper the focus. However, a small aperture means that less light enters the camera, so bright lighting is needed for deep focus.
- **Shallow focus:** A term used for images that have a small depth of field; only a small part of the image is in focus, and the details in front of and behind the point of focus are blurry. The larger the aperture, the shallower the focus.

Look at the street signs in the two photographs.
Can you tell which one has a deep focus and which has a shallow focus?

Video Production Handbook
Part 2: Camera Operation

There are a number of steps involved in getting the camera ready for shooting. You may not do all of them, depending on the camera you're using.

Step 1: Put in a tape.

When you're shooting, pay attention to the *time code*—the numeric code used to log the information on the tape. Cameras use different time code formats. A common format is shown below:

00:00:00:00
(hours: minutes: seconds: frames)

Step 2: Put your camera on the tripod (unless you're hand-holding it) and frame your image.

Remember to think about shot scale, angle, and whether you plan to have any camera movement. Make sure that the lighting looks the way you want it to.

Step 3: Set the white balance.

All sources of light (the sun, light bulbs, etc.) have a different color "cast" that can show up on your video. To avoid this, you need to *set the white balance*—tell the camera what kind of lighting situation you are shooting in. (Cameras also have an automatic white balance feature, but using it can cause problems if the lighting changes while you're shooting.)

To set the white balance, you'll usually place something white (like a sheet of paper) in front of the camera and push the white balance button. *Remember to reset the white balance when you move to a new lighting situation!*

Step 4: Set the shutter speed.

In film cameras, shutter *speed refers* to the speed at which a mechanical shutter opens and closes, exposing the film to light. In digital video cameras, the term is still used to refer to how quickly the camera records images (even though there's no actual shutter).

Generally, you'll want to use a shutter speed of 1/60 of a second, though you can experiment with the effects of a slower shutter speed, such as 1/30 or 1/15. Faster shutter speeds can sometimes be useful in bright light if you are using a large aperture (See Step 5).

Step 5: Set the aperture.

The aperture, also know as the *iris*, is the opening in the lens that controls how much light is let into the camera. The combination of aperture size plus shutter speed controls the *exposure*—the amount of light recorded by the camera's sensor. The aperture also controls *depth of field*—the part of the image that is in sharp focus.

Use a large aperture for shallow focus, and a small aperture for deep focus. *Remember to reset your exposure when you move to a new lighting situation!*

Step 6: Focus the camera.

If you use your camera's autofocus feature, the camera may reset the focus in the middle of a shot—not good! To avoid this, set the focus manually. You can zoom in to your subject, set the focus, and then zoom back out.

Step 7: Check your audio.

If you are shooting a video with sound, check that your microphones are properly attached and placed at an appropriate distance and angle from the sound you want to record. Listen for any extra sounds that might drown out the main sound you are recording. Microphones can pick up all sorts of extra noises.

Here are some tips for achieving the best audio quality:

- If you are recording a person's voice, shoot in the quietest location possible.
- Keep the microphone pointed toward and close to the sound you're recording.
- If the microphone is too close to the speaker's mouth, you may hear a *popping* sound when the person speaks words that start with "p" or "b." To prevent this, hold the microphone at a slight angle and position it near one side of the speaker's mouth.
- Listen with headphones throughout the shoot. If the sound doesn't come through well, try a different microphone position and re-record.

Step 8: Shoot some test video.

Shoot several seconds of video and play it back to make sure that the equipment is working and that the video footage looks and sounds the way you want it to.

Video Production Handbook
Part 3: Writing a Script

When you think about a movie or TV script, you probably imagine pages of dialogue for the actors to follow. While it's true that scripts usually include dialogue, that's not the only information they contain—they also describe the setting where the scene takes place and what happens in each scene. Scripts are used by the actors, the director, and everyone else working on a production as a guide to what's going on in the scene.

Scripts written for movies and TV are called *screenplays*, and they are usually written in screenplay format. The components of the format are described below. (You'll notice that this format uses a particular font, which is 12 point Courier. This is the standard font for screenplays, and you should use it for your script.)

Slug Line

These are titles that are used at the top of each new scene. (A new scene usually begins when there's a new location or sequence of events.) Slug lines are written in capital letters.

The beginning of a slug line is usually INT. (for interior [indoor] scenes) or EXT. (for exterior [outdoor] scenes). The slug line then briefly describes the setting and often ends with NIGHT or DAY, depending on when the scene takes place. For example:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM — DAY

Stage Directions

These describe what is happening in the scene. Stage directions should provide enough information for everyone involved in a production to visualize what's going on, but they should also be short and to the point. For example:

A girl dressed neatly in a school uniform enters a classroom and walks directly to a chair with a desk attached to it. On the desk is a test lying face down.

Dialogue

Dialogue is indented from the margins of the pages and labeled with the name of the character speaking. For example:

```
                    GIRL
      I don't know about you, but I am going to ace this test.
```

Putting It All Together

Put these elements together and you've got a screenplay!

If you are writing a scene that runs over multiple pages, put "CONTINUED" in the bottom right-hand corner (in parentheses) and at the top left-hand corner of the next page.

Here's a sample of a script with no dialogue in screenplay format:

INT. A GIRL'S BEDROOM — NIGHT

A teenage girl wearing pajamas is sitting at her desk, which is covered with several textbooks and papers. She is writing words on index cards. She looks at one index card that says "listo." She turns the card over. It says "ready." She smiles, closes her textbook, and turns off her lamp.

INT. A HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY AND CLASSROOM — DAY

The same girl is neatly dressed in a school uniform, carrying a Spanish textbook, a shoulder bag, and a coat. She is walking quickly and confidently through a school hallway.

She opens the door to a classroom and walks directly to a chair with a desk attached to it. She walks quickly, seemingly in a rush, and without looking up at anyone in the room. On the desk is a test lying face down. The girl sits down in the chair. She reaches down to take a pen out of her bag and turns the test over.

Her expression quickly turns from confidence to confusion. She stares at the test in disbelief. She starts to write something and then stops, looking more and more panicked. She puts her head in her hands.

She looks at her bag on the floor, and she sees her flashcards poking out. She uses her foot to slowly drag the bag closer to her.

She drops a pen on the floor and bends down to pick it up. With her hand shaking, she begins to slowly reach for the flashcard in her bag, but then changes her mind and stops.

She sits back up in her chair and stares at the test again. She sighs deeply and looks defeated.

Suddenly she does a double take and looks at the test. A close-up of the test shows that on it is written _Examen de Francais_. The girl looks surprised and relieved. She realizes that she is in the wrong classroom!

Smiling, the girl quickly puts her pen back in her bag, grabs her bag and coat, and runs out of the classroom.

INT. A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM — DAY

The same girl is sitting in a similar desk and chair but in a different classroom. She is writing answers on a test, quickly and surely, with a confident smile on her face.

Fade out.

Credits.

Video Production Handbook
Part 4: Production Roles

The following roles are commonly used when shooting videos, though not all of the roles are applicable to every kind of shoot. (For example, in a documentary shoot, there would be no actors.)

Director

- Is the lead coordinator on the set and the final decision-maker about the creative aspects—the camera position and lighting for each shot, what the framing looks like, the actors' positions and actions
- Decides when shooting begins and ends
- Works with actors (or subjects, in a documentary video) to make sure that they understand what each scene should look like
- Makes sure that the script and shot list are followed and that the team gets the necessary footage; may ask the cameraperson to take additional shots

Producer

- Makes sure that everyone is present at the shoot and knows what to do
- Is in charge of planning and maintaining the schedule for the shoot
- Is in charge of checking out video equipment and keeping track of props, costumes, scripts, and other materials needed for the set; makes sure that everyone cleans up and properly puts away the equipment at the end of a shoot
- Keeps a log of the footage being shot; for interviews shot in a documentary, the producer keeps a log sheet listing the general topics or ideas discussed and makes note of "gem" moments that occur during the interview

Cameraperson

- Makes sure that the camera is operating properly, that all of the settings are correct, and that the tapes are properly labeled
- Operates the camera during the shooting of the scene, making sure to get the framing, angle, and scale that the director wants
- Is in charge of lighting (in consultation with the director)

Sound Engineer

- Sets up and operates the microphones and other sound equipment
- Listens with headphones during the shoot and makes sure that the sound is audible; adjusts microphones and other equipment as necessary

Actor(s)

- Acts out the scenes in the script
- Works with the director to get the right tone and look for the scene

Video Production Handbook
Part 5: Production Tips and Tricks

As you shoot footage, here are some things to keep in mind.

Frame Your Subject

Generally speaking, try to follow these principles:

- Don't always put your subject in the middle of the frame. It's usually not a very interesting composition and can get boring to look at, especially if you do it too often.

Try framing your subject off-center once in a while to keep it interesting.

- Don't include too much extra information in the scene. Unimportant details (such as cars passing by in the background) can distract viewers.
- Pay attention to "headroom"—the amount of space above the actor's head. Too much can be distracting.

## Maintain Continuity in the Scene

In movies and TV shows, directors use specific techniques to preserve *continuity*—the feeling that events occur in a logical sequence. Here are some things to keep in mind to help you maintain continuity:

- If you're shooting two characters in conversation with or looking at each other and you're using close-ups of each of their faces, make sure that their eyelines match—in other words, they should face each other, rather than face the same direction. (See also "The 180° Rule," below.)
- If you're shooting two characters in conversation or looking at each other and you shoot the scene from two different camera angles (for example, a close-up of one character and then a close-up of the other character), it's a good idea to use similar framing and to shoot from a similar distance, so the shots match up and don't seem jarring.
- Make sure that the status of people and objects in a scene remains the same between shots. People and objects should not be added, removed, or moved to a different position.

The 180° Rule

When you are shooting action or dialogue involving two characters, picture an imaginary line connecting the characters. This line is sometimes called the *axis of action*. When you set up your camera on one side of the axis, it's usually a good idea to keep it there and not cross the axis. This is called *The 180° Rule*.

Crossing the axis can be confusing for viewers. For example, if you shoot one character and then cross the axis to shoot the other character, it will seem like their heads are facing the same direction (which is definitely not how people have a conversation!), and their eyelines won't match.
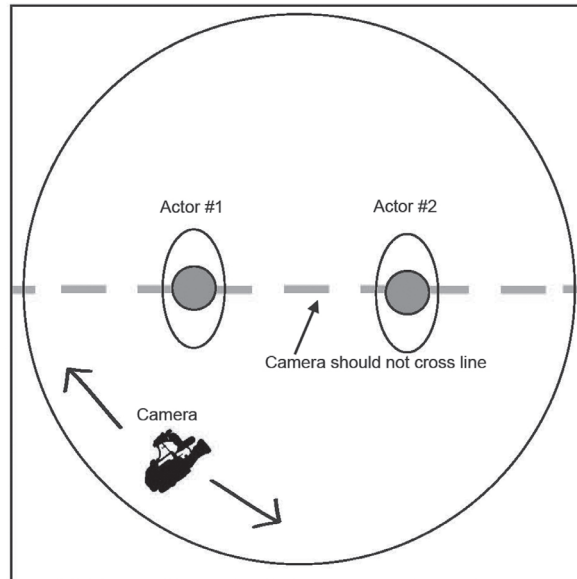
Shoot Multiple Takes

If you have the time, it's a good idea to shoot multiple *takes*—versions of the same shot. You'll need to shoot a second take if something goes wrong on the first try. Even if you think it's perfect the first time, the actors might do something on a second take that is more interesting or better in some way.
Use a Slate

Slates are used at the beginning of each take to record important information about the particular shot. Slates can help you in post-production to quickly locate the takes that you want to use. Traditionally, slates in movies are black clapboards with an arm that moves up and down (clapped together when the director yells "action"). However, you can just use a sheet of paper. On each slate, write the following:

- The scene number
- The take number
- The date

At the beginning of the shot, have the producer hold the slate in front of the camera and say the scene number and the take number (for example, "Scene 2, Take 3"). The producer can then clap his or her hands in front of the camera (this indicates that action is about to begin).

Log Your Footage

As you shoot, you should log your footage. This will make the editing easier later on, and you can also check the log against the shot list to make sure that you got all your shots. The director can also circle the takes that he or she thinks are the best, so the clips can be found more easily in post-production. Here is a sample log:

Time Code	Scene	Shot	Take
00:00:00:00	Inside School	Establishing shot of girl in hallway	1
00:00:30:01	Inside School	Establishing shot of girl in hallway	2
00:01:00:01	Inside School	Tracking shot of girl walking into classroom	1

Use a Set Protocol

Because there can be a lot of action and confusion on a production set, movie and TV industry professionals follow a traditional protocol during the shooting process. You can practice a shortened version of this protocol on your own shoot, using some or all of the following terms:

- *"Lock it up!"* What the director yells when shooting is about to begin. This tells everyone on the set to be quiet and in position for shooting.
- *"Rolling."* What the camera operator says when the camera is ready to go.
- *"Action!"* What the director calls out immediately before the actors begin to act the scene.
- *"Cut!"* What the director yells at the end of the scene, or whenever the action needs to be stopped.
- *"Back to one."* What the director says if he or she wants to shoot the same part of a scene again.
- *"That's a wrap."* What the director says at the end of the day.

## Video Production Handbook
Part 6: Lighting

Light is essential to capturing an image. It controls your ability to focus and set exposure. Even if you don't have lighting equipment, there are steps you can take to control your light and capture the best image possible.

Take Control of the Room Light

Turn off any light in the room that isn't lighting your subject. Use curtains or a dark cloth to block out any unwanted sunlight. Many people think they don't need light during daylight hours. However, daylight can result in subjects being backlit, having extreme shadows on their faces, and/or being overexposed.

Use a Three-Point Lighting System

A three-point lighting system is a standard method used in visual media to light subjects. As its name suggests, it uses three lights, called the *key light*, *fill light*, and *back light*. Even if you only have one light available, you can use reflectors to mimic a three-point lighting system.
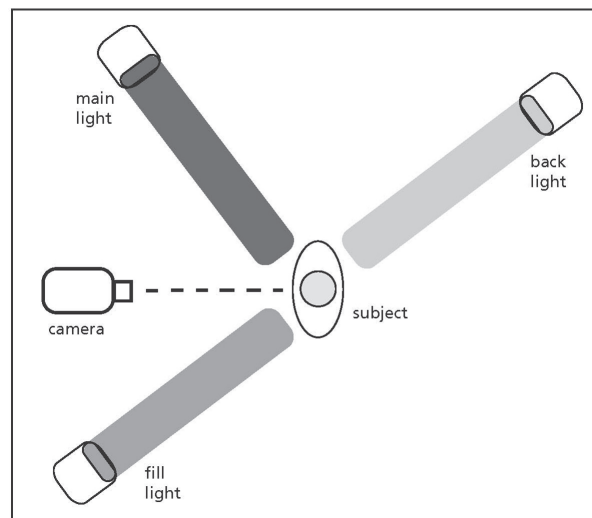
Set Your Key Light

If you don't have professional lighting equipment, you should still have some light on your subject. A *practical light* is any everyday light, such as a desk lamp that you can position so it's lighting your subject. This will be your *key* (main) *light*. You generally want to place your key light at roughly a 45-degree angle from your subject.

Set Your Back Light

After you set your key light, set a second light behind the subject. This *back light* separates the subject from the background and makes him or her stand out better.

Set Your Fill Light

You can use a third light to "fill in" the shadows created by the key light.

Improvise, When Necessary

If you don't have lighting equipment, use the light you do have (sunlight and practical light) to direct light onto your subject. You can also use a *reflector*—a shiny material that bounces light where you want it. For example, you can use a reflector to get rid of deep shadows or to add more light to an actor's face.

Video Production Handbook
Part 7: Editing Techniques

Editing means making choices about how to assemble your footage to create one seamless work. Editing allows you to use only your best shots, control the pace of your story, convey a particular mood and tempo, and draw the viewer's attention to something in particular.

As video editors, you'll decide the following:

- Which clips to include in the piece
- Which parts of each clip are extraneous and can be deleted
- In which sequence to arrange the clips
- How to transition from one clip to another

Continuity Editing

Continuity editing is a style of sequencing shots that makes it seem as if events are progressing logically. Sometimes editing is called the "invisible art" because with good continuity editing, the sequence of events is so smooth that the viewer doesn't even notice the different cuts.

Continuity Editing Techniques

Match Cuts
The "invisibility" of continuity editing is achieved mostly with *match cuts*—where the editor cuts from one shot to a different shot, but has objects or people in the two scenes "matched" so that they occupy the same place in the shot's frame, or have moved in a logical progression.

In an *action match cut*, the movement of a character or object begins in one shot and appears to continue in the next shot. For example, the first shot may show a man opening the door to a room, and the next shot shows him stepping into the room. The viewers' eyes follow the movement and don't notice the cut, as long as the screen position, timing, and direction of the action are matched from the first shot to the second.

THE LANGUAGE OF EDITING

- *Action match cut*—the movement of a character or object begins in one shot and appears to continue in the next shot

- *Continuity editing*—sequencing shots to suggest a logical progression of events

- *Match cut*—one scene cuts to a totally different one, but objects in the two scenes occupy the same place in the shot's frame

- *Eyeline match cut*—a shot of a character looking at something off-screen, which cuts to what the character is looking at

- *Shot/reverse shot*—an eyeline match cut used to show two characters in conversation

- *Insert shot*—a close-up of something that exists within another shot

- *Cut-away*—a shot that cuts from the main action to show related events

- *Transitions*—ways to connect each shot in a sequence

- *Cut*—one shot ends, the next one begins

- *Dissolve*—an image gradually fades out and is replaced by another image, which fades in over it

- *Fade*—an image fades out entirely to black before the next image fades in

- *Jump cut*—two sequential shots of the same subject vary in position, causing the viewers' eyes to dart from one part of the frame to another

Another type of match cut is an *eyeline match cut*. It starts with a shot of a character looking at something off-screen and then cuts to the object or person that the character is looking at. Eyeline matches are based on the premise that the viewer is drawn to the face of a character and wants to see what the character sees.

A *shot/reverse shot* is a type of eyeline match cut used to show two characters in conversation. One character is shown looking at the other character, who is then shown from the reverse angle, so it appears as if the characters are looking at each other.

Insert Shots and Cut-Aways

Inserting close-up shots or cutting away from the main action are ways to add drama to your story or to draw the viewers' attention to something in particular.

An *insert shot* is a close-up of something that exists within another shot. Insert shots often add needed information that wouldn't otherwise be immediately clear from the wider shot.

A *cut-away* is a shot that cuts away from the main action to show parallel or related events occurring. For example, a scene of a baseball game might show a batter at the plate and then cut away to the player's parents watching nervously in the stands. This might make the at-bat seem even more dramatic than if the audience sees only the shot in the batter's box.

Transitions

Transitions are ways to connect each shot in a sequence. Types of transitions include the following:

- *Cut:* The simplest of all transitions—one shot ends and the next one begins.
- *Dissolve:* An image gradually dissolves or fades out and is replaced by another image, which fades in over it. Dissolves signify the passage of time.
- *Fade:* The first image fades out entirely to black before the next image fades in (as opposed to a dissolve, in which the second image gradually appears before the first image totally disappears). Fades signify major beginnings and endings and should be used sparingly.

Editing Tips

Keep the following tips in mind when editing:

- **"Arrive late and leave early."** Trim your clips carefully so that the viewer enters the scene at the latest possible moment and leaves the scene at the earliest possible moment. Get rid of anything you don't absolutely need in your clip. Keep only the good stuff!
- **Avoid jump cuts.** In a *jump cut*, two shots of the same subject vary in position, causing the viewers' eyes to dart from one part of the frame to a different part. In an otherwise continuous story, jump cuts are jarring and may look like mistakes.

This cut from the first shot to the second shot makes the monkey appear to "jump" in an abrupt way.

- **Keep it simple.** Your editing software probably has many types of transitions available—your first shot could spiral out, for example, and the next shot could come in as an explosion. But while they're fun to play with, be careful about going overboard with such effects and transitions, which can look amateurish. Instead, stick to transitions that don't draw so much attention to themselves. You want viewers focused on your shots, not the transition between them.

Video Production Handbook
Part 8: Making a Documentary

A *documentary* is a nonfiction story told through moving images and sound. While some parts of a documentary may be scripted (such as voice-over narration), documentaries generally tell a story through a combination of different types of reality footage of your subject.

Types of Footage Used

You might include the following types of footage in your documentary video.

Characters "in Action"

Capture footage of your subject doing activities that your story is based on. Make sure to get lots of different types of shots, for example:

- Establishing shots that provide context for where and when the action is taking place
- Point-of-view shots that show the action from the perspective of your subject and possibly from other characters in your story
- Close-ups of your subject
- Reaction shots of other people

Interviews

Interview your primary subject or subjects to get personal accounts of the story and your character's perspective, opinions, and feelings. You might use whole video clips from the interview in your story or just the sound from the interview as narration.

B-Roll

B-roll is a term used to describe secondary footage that can be used to add meaning to or break up the monotony of an interview or other video sequence. B-roll is often just visual images without sound. During the editing process, you might choose to use the audio of an interview you conducted with the visuals of b-roll.

B-roll can include the following:

- Shots of examples of what the subject is talking about in an interview
- Any activity that shows your subject in action in his or her environment
- Establishing shots to provide time and location context

You should plan your b-roll shots ahead of time, but you may come up with additional ideas for b-roll shots, based on what your subject talks about during your interview.

Optional Footage

Still images: You may want to take photographs of your subject to edit into the video.

Archival footage: Footage that you do not originally shoot yourself is considered archival footage. For example, you may want to incorporate your subject's own still photos or home movies into your video, or you might use newspaper articles or clips from an existing TV show or film. Make sure that you get the required permission to use any copyrighted material in your video.

Production Task List

Some typical tasks that you need to complete to produce a successful documentary video are listed below. You can adapt this list to meet the needs of your specific project.

- Identify a person or group of people whose story you can tell
- Conduct research on the story, and draft a story arc
- Prepare interview questions
- Schedule interviews and other shoots
- Get permission from subjects and from a contact person at each location to shoot
- Draft a preliminary shot list
- Shoot footage
- Log and capture footage
- Write transcripts of interviews
- Organize clips
- Select clips to include in the story—create an edit decision list
- Assemble a rough cut of selected clips
- Write the script for the narration (if using third-person narration)
- Record voice-over (if using narration)
- Upload or record music and other sounds for the soundtrack
- Layer in the soundtrack
- Add titles

SAMPLE FOOTAGE LIST

Story: Until a year ago, Jasmine couldn't run around the block without getting exhausted. Last month, she ran her first five-mile race. A newly confident Jasmine is now starting her own running program for younger children.

ACTION FOOTAGE

Shots of Jasmine leading a group workout, for example:

- Establishing shot of Jasmine arriving at the track for the workout
- Close-up shot of Jasmine giving instructions for the workout
- Reaction shots of different kids while Jasmine is talking
- Wide shot of the whole group running
- Shots of Jasmine running

INTERVIEWS

- Interview with Jasmine about her experience in the running program.
- Interview with Jasmine's coach and her parents about how Jasmine's attitude has changed as a result of the program.
- Short interviews with a few of the children for whom she is now a mentor.

B-ROLL

- Medium shot of Jasmine lacing up her shoes
- Close-up shot of Jasmine taking off her warm-up jacket
- Wide shot of Jasmine arriving at the track
- Wide shot of Jasmine walking down the school hallway

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Still photos of Jasmine as a child

Video Production Handbook
Part 9: Shooting an Interview

The following guidelines and tips can help you shoot successful interviews.

Getting Good Visuals

Make Clothing Suggestions to Your Subject

Some types of clothing and accessories don't work well for the camera. When you prep your subject ahead of time about the interview, you may want to suggest that he or she avoid wearing any of the following:

- *Logos:* Brand names and logos can distract viewers' attention from the story. They can also present copyright issues, especially if you plan to show the video to the public. (However, if the text on the shirt is directly related to the story content—for example, the name of the organization or club that the story is about—then it's probably okay to include it.)
- *Bright white clothing:* It can make the subject's face look underexposed.
- *Bright red clothing:* It can create an unwanted glow.
- *Clothing with thin stripes:* It can cause a "moiré" effect, which appears as a vibrating, moving pattern and can be distracting to viewers.
- *Hats:* These can put your subject's eyes in a shadow.
- *Glasses:* These can obscure your subject's eyes and reflect lights and the camera.

Choose a Background

Choose where you want your subject to sit (or stand), and set up what you want the interview shot to look like.

Try to choose a background that's related to your story. For example, if you're doing a story on the girl in the youth running program, shoot the interview at the track or the park. If you have to shoot somewhere else, try to find some element of the background space that helps to visually tell your story. For example, there might be trophies or a running poster in the girl's bedroom that you can use as background props. Avoid having too busy a background or props that are not relevant, as they distract from the scene.

Positioning and Eyeline

The precise angle and position of your interview subject is up to you and depends on the mood you want to convey. In general, having your subject at a slight angle appears more natural than shooting at a straight, dead-on angle right in the middle of your frame.

Pay attention to your subject's *eyeline*—where your subject appears to be looking. You should instruct your subject to look at the interviewer and not the camera (unless he or she is directly addressing the audience).

You should also try to have the interviewer's eyes at the same level as the camera. If they're at different levels, it will appear that the subject is looking awkwardly down or up.

Correct camera position

In this shot, the camera was placed at too high a level. Note how it appears that the subject is looking up awkwardly.

Getting Good Sound

Getting good sound is one of the most important aspects of making a good video. Your audience might excuse a blurry picture—and you can always cut to a different clip—but if they can't hear any of the dialogue, that will be very hard to fix in editing.

Pick a Quiet Location

When you scout locations for shooting your interview, don't just *look* at the location, but also listen for anything that may cause sound problems when shooting. Is there a refrigerator or air conditioner making a constant humming sound? If you can, unplug it. Is there a lot of traffic noise outside the room where you're shooting? Close the windows!

Position the Microphone

Get the microphone as close as you can to the person talking, without it being noticeable in the frame.

Use Headphones

There are a lot of sounds you won't notice unless you are wearing headphones, so make sure that your sound engineer has headphones on throughout the shoot to listen for unwanted noises.

Record Room Tone

After you finish the shoot, record a full minute of the natural sound at your location. You'll be able to use this sound to smooth out audio inconsistencies during editing.

Video Production Handbook
Part 10: Elements of a Soundtrack

Sound—whether it's sound effects, music, or even silence—can be used to establish a mood, evoke emotions in your audience, and move a story along.

Types of Sounds in TV and Movies

In TV and movies, the term *diegesis* refers to the world of the characters in the story. Everything that happens in that world—including sounds that the characters hear—is considered *diegetic*. Any sound *not* heard by the characters and *not* part of their world is considered *non-diegetic*. Examples of non-diagetic sounds are narration and incidental or background music. A soundtrack can have both diegetic and non-diegetic sounds.

Sound Effects

Sound effects are artificially created sounds that are added to a movie, video, or TV show after production. Explosions and laser blasts are sound effects, as are footsteps and a door slamming.

You can create your own sound effects by recreating a real activity (for example, slamming a door to get the sound of a door slamming) or by using props to simulate the sounds of the activity.

Music

Music is used to set a tone and create an atmosphere. It can influence how an audience interprets events. It can also cue the audience to something that is about to happen.

The irony of having a good musical score is that it is not meant to be consciously heard—it guides the audience toward a particular feeling. It shouldn't be the primary focus of a scene, nor should it distract from the scene. For that reason, you should consider using only music without lyrics.

FOLEY SOUNDS

In movies, some sound effects, such as footsteps, breathing, and the rustling of clothes, are created on a Foley stage. The stage is named for Jack Foley, who pioneered the technique of recording live sound effects in synchronization with a movie. While watching the projected film, Foley artists use different props to replace or enhance the live sound of the movie.

For example, to make the sound of . . .

- . . . footsteps in snow, squeeze a pouch full of cornstarch
- . . . thunder, flap an aluminum sheet
- . . . a bird flapping its wings, flap a pair of leather gloves
- . . . galloping horses, bang empty coconut shells together

Silence

Don't underestimate the value of silence as a tool in your video, especially if it is used in contrast with a sound-filled scene. For example, suppose you show a scene of a baseball player hitting a home run and the crowd cheering. In the next scene, you show the player sitting alone in the empty stadium. The silence of the second scene will feel dramatic in contrast to the roar of the crowd in the first scene.

Video Production Handbook
Part 11: Titles

Titles are traditionally used in three places in documentary videos: in the main title at the beginning, in the credits at the beginning and end, and in the lower third of the screen throughout the video.

Main Title

If you haven't already done so, you need to pick a title for your video! The title often appears at the very beginning of the video—sometimes after an opening fade-in.

Credits

The cast, crew, and anyone who helped with the production are often credited on screen. With movies and TV shows, some big-name credits appear at the beginning, often in the following order: stars (lead actor first), producer, writer, director. Other cast and crew appear at the end.

Lower Thirds

Mr. Lawrence Jones

Freelance Graphic Designer
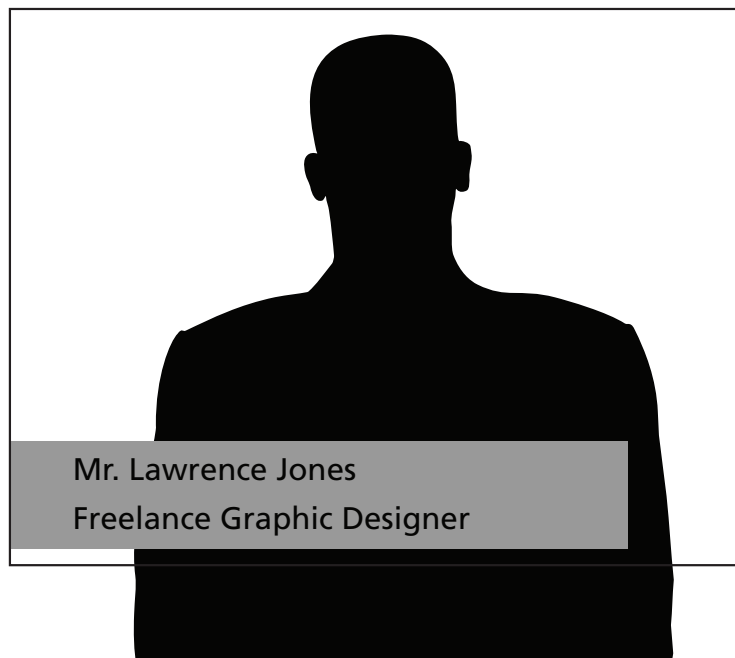
In documentaries, the names and titles of interview subjects often appear in the *lower third* of the screen. You'll generally see the image of the person first, and then, after a second or two, the person's title appears.

In general, show the person's name and identification or title the first time he or she appears in the video. If the person reappears later and you think the audience needs a reminder, you can show the person's name again briefly.

Tips for Using Titles

- **Make them readable but not distracting.** Show your main title and credits on a plain background (often a black screen), or superimpose them on a scene. The lower thirds are usually superimposed. With superimposed titles, it's important to make sure that the titles are readable and that they don't distract from the scene. If titles appear on black, choose white for the text color, unless there are bright lights in the background. Yellow-orange is frequently used for superimposed text because it shows up well (you'll see it often in the lower thirds of TV news clips).
- **Use animation sparingly.** Most editing programs give you the option to animate your titles. But just as with fancy transitions, you'll want to use these features sparingly, if at all, in order to avoid distracting viewers and looking amateurish. If you do choose to animate titles and credits, the traditional method is called a *vertical crawl*, in which the credits roll from the bottom of the screen to the top.

Appendix D:
Career Profile Project Handouts

What is it really like to work in the arts, media, and entertainment (AME) industry? What education and training do you need? What does the work of a talented AME professional look like?

For this project, you'll answer these questions by focusing on a successful professional who works in audio, video, animation, or gaming. You'll research the professional's career, education, and training, and analyze a clip from a production that she or he has worked on. When you've completed your research, you'll present what you've learned to your classmates.

Step 1: Choose an AME professional.

Pick an AME field that you are interested in, such as audio, video, animation, or gaming. Select a professional working in the field, for example:

- Someone who worked on a media production (e.g., a movie or game) that you like—a director, animator, lead artist, cinematographer, level designer, or producer
- A professional whose work you admire (be sure to choose someone who works on media *production*, rather than a performer)
- Someone you know personally or someone in the community who works in this field

Start with two or three professionals and conduct research to see how much information you can find— such as work samples, education and career paths, and interviews. Check to see if there are Web sites with clips of their work. (This is especially important for gaming and animation, since it can be hard to pick out an individual's contribution to finished games and animated movies.)

Narrow your choice to one professional by asking yourself the following questions:

- Does this professional work on media productions that I admire and want to watch, play, or listen to?
- Is there enough information available about this professional's career for me to complete the project?
- Has the professional had an interesting or instructive career path?

Step 2: Find out about the professional's education and training.

Look online or in books or magazines to find out the following:

- What college did this person attend?
- What other training has this person pursued (e.g., technical training)?

Write a short paragraph about your professional's education and training.

Step 3: Find out about the professional's career path.

Conduct research to learn about the path your professional has taken:

- How did your professional begin his or her career?
- What jobs or education did your professional take or complete to get to his or her current position? Does your professional have further work or career goals?
- What media productions has your professional worked on, and what role did he or she play on each? List them in chronological order.
- Has your professional been interviewed or written about what it's like to work in his or her field? If so, what has your professional said?

Write a paragraph describing your professional's career path. Include a timeline, making sure to note the following:

- Major career milestones
- Media productions worked on

Step 4: Analyze a clip from a media production.

Choose a successful media production that your professional has worked on. Try to find a good example of your professional's contribution—for example, an animator or gaming professional's reel or a scene with a character designed by your professional.

Prepare to analyze a short (10-minute or less) clip from the production by answering the following questions:

- What makes this production successful? What visual and/or audio elements work well? What principles (such as the principles of animation or cinematography) are used effectively?
- How does the production make effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design? (Disregard this question if you are analyzing an audio production.)
- What role did your professional play in contributing to the success of the production?
- Is there a particular style that can be attributed to your professional? (Some animators, for example, have a clearly identifiable style.) How is that style expressed in this work?

Write a one-paragraph analysis of your selected clip.

Step 5: Share your profile with classmates.

Share what you've learned with your classmates, and learn about the professionals they profiled.

Career Profile Project

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the required components. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Written Career Profile		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Describes AME professional's education and training background.	**20%**		
Describes how the professional's career began and the career path that led to the current position.	**20%**		
Lists the media productions the professional has worked on and the role that she or he played on each.	**10%**		
Includes a timeline of major career milestones and media productions.	**15%**		
Includes an analysis of a clip from one of the professional's media productions, pointing to visual and/or audio elements that contribute to the work's success.	**20%**		
Describes the role the professional played in making the media production successful.	**15%**		
Total	**100%**		

Requirements

Percentage of Total Grade

Comments

Career Profile Presentation		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Clearly outlines the AME professional's education and training.	**30%**		
Succinctly describes the professional's career path.	**30%**		
Describes and analyzes a media production and explains the professional's role in its creation.	**30%**		
Successfully addresses the audience's questions.	**10%**		
Total	**100%**		

Appendix E:
Interviewing Resources

Interviewing Tips

Fifty Questions for Family History Interviews: What to Ask the Relatives by Kimberly Powell

genealogy.about.com/cs/oralhistory/a/interview.htm

How to Interview for a Documentary Film by Kevin Lindenmuth (video)

www.ehow.com/video_2384816_interview-documentary-film.html

Interview Tips from Youth Radio's Newsroom

dropthatknowledge.wordpress.com/2008/03/03/interview-tips-from-youth-radios-newsroom-2/

Making Documentary Videos: The Interview

www.videomaker.com/article/12551/

Mobilizing Youth: Audio/Podcasting

blog.mobilevoter.org/audiopodcasting/

The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide by Marjorie Hunt

www.folklife.si.edu/education_exhibits/resources/guide/introduction.aspx

Sample On-Camera Interviews

Inside the Actor's Studio: Johnny Depp (Part 1)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt0eqVAwhP8

Interviews 50 Cents by Alex Chadwick

www.slatev.com/li_50cents.html

News story: *"Interviews 50 Cents" Documents Stories from the Everyperson* by Alex Crowley

www.tilzy.tv/interviews-50-cents-documents-stories-from-the-everyperson.htm

Life in a Wheelchair by Brian Beckwith and Robert Perry, at Listen Up!

http://listenup.org/screeningroom/index.php?view=6d501d8ec0b8f89bf8557716408ff813#

Maria Hinojosa: One-on-One

www.wgbh.org/programs/programDetail.cfm?programid=12

PBS Sunday Arts: Yo-Yo Ma

http://watch.thirteen.org/video/1164040432/search/interview

PBS Sunday Arts: Frank McCourt

http://watch.thirteen.org/video/1197793287/search/interview

Handout:
Interviewing Techniques

Whenever you research a topic, whether for school, career, a newsletter, or any project of personal interest, you may need to interview someone. The purpose of your research will shape <u>what</u> you ask in the interview, but there are tips and techniques for <u>how</u> you conduct an interview that help you get the information you want.

Whether you conduct your interviews in person, over the telephone, or using e-mail, it's important to prepare. Know what you plan to do during the interview and be prepared for any follow-up.

Preparing for the Interview

- Contact the interviewee. Get in touch with the person you'd like to interview and ask them if they are interested. Describe the purpose of your interview, how long it will take, and how you will use the information.
- Arrange a time for the interview. If you plan to record your interview, ask for permission to do so in advance. For e-mail interviews, let the person know when you will send your questions and when you would like the answers.
- Conduct research. An interview is to find out information that is NOT available on the Web or in other sources. If you're interviewing an AME professional, look online for information about the kind of work he or she does or the company where he or she works. This background information will help you focus your questions and may prompt you to ask questions you hadn't thought of before.
- Think about topics. Decide what information you want to get out of the interview and list the important points or topics you want to cover.
- Prepare your questions. Write the questions ahead of time and ask your teacher to review them. Ask open-ended rather than yes-or-no questions. For example, instead of asking "Do you like your job?" you could ask, "What aspects of your job do you like the most?"
- Order your questions. Begin with basic, introductory questions (for example, "Can you tell me about your experiences in the civil rights movement?") and move to more specific questions (for example, "What was it like to participate in the March on Washington?").

During the Interview

- Dress appropriately. If you're interviewing someone in business, wear business-like attire (such as a nice pair of pants or slacks and a button-down shirt or blouse). If your interviewee is someone in the community, you can be less formal, but you should still dress neatly.
- Arrive or call on time. Don't keep your interviewee waiting. If you are using e-mail, send the questions on the day you said you would.
- Have the right gear. Be prepared with a notebook and a pen or a pencil. If you are using a tape recorder or video camera, learn how all the controls work before you arrive, and give yourself a few extra minutes to set up the equipment.

- Warm up. For phone or in-person interviews, spend a few minutes making casual conversation to break the ice and get acquainted before you launch into your questions. For example, you might start by thanking the person for the interview, asking "How are you?", asking whether the person has been interviewed by a high school student before, and so on. However, in an e-mail, after thanking the person for his or her time, it's best to get right to the point.

- Let the interviewee do the talking. Don't interrupt, and be sure to give the person time to answer each question. Use pauses as a chance to write notes, rather than moving straight to the next question. Be an active listener—make eye contact and show that you are interested by nodding your head and making appropriate comments, such as "Uh-huh" and "I see."

- Ask follow-up questions. If an answer makes you think of another question, go ahead and ask it. You may also ask questions to clarify an answer or to get more information, such as "Can you give me an example?" or "Could you tell me more about that?" If you conduct your interview through e-mail, you may send a second e-mail message with follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses.

- Record the interview, or take good notes. Record interviews whenever you can, even if it means bringing someone else to operate the equipment while you ask questions. If you're not recording, take detailed notes. You won't be able to write every word, but you can write phrases, use abbreviations, or even arrows, stars or other symbols to help you remember the ideas.

Storyboard

Feedback
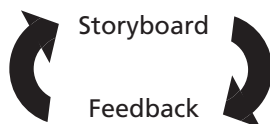
Be sure to write down important or interesting phrases that you may want to quote. It's a good idea to practice taking notes quickly before you conduct your interview.

- Wrap up. At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee again for his or her time. Ask if it would be OK to call or e-mail if you have any further questions, and tell the interviewee that you will provide him or her with a copy of your final product (for example, a copy of your AME Career Research project or a photograph of the completed artwork).

After the Interview

- Thank your interviewee. Send an e-mail or card thanking the person for the time and information he or she shared with you.

- Review your notes. As soon as possible after the interview, read your notes and add any additional information that you remember from the interview that you didn't write down at the time. (The sooner you do this the better, as your memory of the conversation will help you make sense of your notes.) You may want to type them and organize them. Write down any additional questions that you have after looking over your notes.

- If necessary, follow up. If your interviewee has agreed that it's OK, ask any follow-up questions that you have, in either a phone call or an e-mail message. Be sure to thank the interviewee for this additional time.

- Evaluate the interview. Reflect on the interview process. What went well? What didn't go well? What will you change the next time you conduct an interview? Write down your reflections in your journal.