



The Multimedia Project  
 Project-Based Learning  
 with  
 Multimedia

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## PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS:

### Things to think about before, during, and after a video shoot

#### Before the Shoot

##### The Production Team

- Review your project plans as a team. Everyone should be familiar with the overall production plan and the shots that are needed.
- All team members should be sure of their roles and responsibilities.
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##### The Equipment - do you have it all?

- Make a list of all the equipment you will need. For suggestions, see the [Equipment Checklist](#).

##### The Equipment - is it working?

- Check the tapes. Make sure you have the correct tape, and that it is rewound and labeled. Always take a back-up tape in case the first one is damaged or breaks. Generally, the better the quality of the tape, and the newer it is (hasn't been used over and over again) the higher quality video you will get.
- Check the camera. Do a test recording and play it back to make sure the camera is working.
- Check the audio - this requires earphones, which are plugged into the earphone jack. When you do your test recording, test the mics you plan to use.
- Be sure you are using the right microphones for your shoot and see that they are placed close enough to your sound source to get good clear audio (4 - 6 inches away). Remember, for interviews, hand- held mics and lavalier mics are ideal.
- Check the battery: For a remote shoot (away from electrical outlets), be sure to check your battery to see that it has a full charge.
- Remember to bring your tripod, and to check that it works. The locking parts should lock in place (and also release from being locked). The tilt and pan should operate smoothly.
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##### Other preparation

- If you'll be recording narration over the video while you shoot, you may want to practice what you'll say before the shoot. If you'll be conducting an interview, make a list of the questions and order them in a way that makes sense to you.
- When you first arrive at the site, check for background noise and electrical outlets (where you can plug the camera in). Listen carefully to the sound around you because that is what your mics will hear. If you hear loud fans or traffic noise or voices, you may want to find a new location.

## At the shoot

### Setting up the camera

- Set the camera up on the tripod (if you are using a tripod).
- Check the White balance: use "auto" for most situations. Use the "indoor" setting when the source of light is entirely artificial. The outdoor setting should be used when shooting outdoors under natural sunlight. Re-white balance if your lighting conditions change - that is, if you start video taping outside and then go inside.
- Check camera focus: Use auto focus for most situations. Use manual setting when there are objects in the foreground or background of your frame that will cause the camera to change focus. On auto focus remember that the camera will focus on whatever is dominant in the viewfinder.
- Select the appropriate shutter speed (usually select normal).
- Run a test record. Check the sound and video again.
- Put the gain control on normal.
- Be sure there's a tape in the camera.
- Fast forward 30 seconds into the tape, and then start recording.

### Shooting

- Consider whether or not you will need a release form - this form is written authorization signed by the person you video tape that says you can use the video tape of them, their business, their school project, etc. If you are video taping for any reason other than personal use (for example, showing a tape to your class, putting material on the internet) you will probably need one. If you will need a form, click [here](#) for a printable form.
- For each scene you are shooting, you may want to create and use a shot list. This will list all or most of the shots you need to tell your story.
- Allow the camera to record for five seconds before and after your shots (if you plan to edit later). This will give you areas to edit. Also, when you stop the camera, it may rewind a few seconds and tape over what you have just recorded.
- Start with an establishing shot, then vary your shots. If it is appropriate, use some wide shots, some medium shots, some close ups.
- Visualize your shots before you shoot them. Think about your composition and purpose. (Where is my main subject in the frame? What am I trying to show? If I pan, do I have a reason?)
- Periodically put on the headphones (if you don't wear them all the time) to check to make sure the audio is good.
- Keep the length of the shot appropriate to the scene and your goal. The average visual attention span for a shot is about 3-5 seconds. However, if you're interviewing someone, your shot may last as long as the interview does.
- Think about the angle you are shooting from. Most shots are recorded at eye level, however low and high angles may be right for your situation. See [Camera Shots](#) and [Camera Angles](#).
- Think about the backgrounds in your shots. Does the background add to the picture? Is it distracting?
- Observe the lighting in your shots. Generally you want the light to be coming from behind you, so that it shines on the person's face or on the action. Do not shoot directly into the sun - it may damage the camera.
- If your shoot will last longer than one day, you want to be sure that your "talent" or interviewer wears the same clothes if s/he is going to be on camera again. Also, make sure you use the same equipment, so your shots and video quality will look the same.
- If you are shooting an interview, see [Advice on: Videotaping Interviews](#) for more tips.
- Keep in mind that you are gathering shots to tell a story.

### Clean Up

- Be sure to label all your tapes as soon as you take them out of the camera. Remove the record tabs if you want to make sure no one accidentally records over this tape.
- Put the equipment away. If you ran down the batteries, charge them for the next shoot. You want to do as much as you can to make sure the equipment is ready for the next crew to check out - it might be you.
- If you'll edit the tape, the next step is to log your tape. See [Advice on Content Logging Your Tapes](#), and [Content Logging Your Tape Activity](#)

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