

Tips on Directing, Shooting, Lighting and Sound for Making Videos

Planning

Create a script to follow. You can use a film style script or a simple 2 column table with one for the narration and one for the shot you want showing during the narration.

In either case, the action could be written something like this:

Marcie walks down an aisle of shelves, looking at book spines, pausing at some, then moving on. Half-way along, she spots something she's interested in.

Surprised, she takes it from the shelf.

Plan where each shot will take place and who will be in it. If you don't have a lot of choice about who will act in your video, write the parts so it will be realistic with who you have available. If you use narration, choose someone who has a good voice and can project the feel and tone of your project. You don't want your library tour sounding like the twilight zone ;)

Students or theater groups can be a good source of help for acting or technical assistance.

Shooting

Shot types

For video that shows examples see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuGvRu5N9v4>

- Long shot – establishing shot. Shows talent within surroundings. Not close up of talent. i.e., people in front of the library where you can see most of the building or something that establishes location.
- Medium Long shot – people interacting where they are the focus more than the location. i.e., two people at a computer where you see all of them and a bit of what is around them
- Medium – talent from waist up
- Medium Close up – also called a 2 shot, often has 2 subjects
- Close up –one person from chest up. Often used to show emotion and leave us alone with the person or thing. Could be a piece of equipment.
- Extreme close-up – eyes, book title

Composing Shots

- **The Rule of Thirds:** The "Rule of Thirds" is possibly the most crucial lesson you can learn in composition. It asks that you divide the frame into nine equal rectangles (draw a tic-tac-toe board on it) and that you place your area of interest at the intersection of two of those lines. Next time you're looking at still images or watching a movie, see how often this is used.
- **Leading lines:** Leading lines draw a viewer's eyes in a particular direction—railroad tracks, rivers, fallen trees, are all things that can be used to funnel the viewer's eyes across the screen to a particular object.
- **Juxtaposition:** To "juxtapose" something is to place two things together for comparison. Sometimes this can be literal, like the millionaires in *Trading Places* juxtaposed next to Eddie Murphy playing a panhandler, or it can be symbolic, like the scene in *Star Wars: A New Hope*, where Obi Wan Kenobi and Darth Vader

first meet. They are shown on the opposite sides of the screen, one good, and the other evil, representing the breadth of the human condition.

- **Headroom:** Headroom is the space above a person's head. Too much or too little headroom and the image will look unbalanced or cramped.
- **Nose Room:** For some reason, it bothers us when we see someone looking into space with no room in front of them. When shooting a 3/4 or profile shot, leave space in front of the subject's nose.
- **Lead Room:** Lead room is nose room for moving objects, like a moving horse or a car—leave space for the horse or the car to move into rather than crowding the side of the screen.

Beware of what is going on in the background and foreground of your shots. (Watch for signs with arrows pointing to your talent or things growing out of their heads.)

Transitions

You can cut from scene to scene or create transitions. Instead of using a cut between a woman leaving her own office and entering the office of her co-worker, direct the woman to do the following:

1. Get up from her desk.
2. Walk directly at the camera until she completely blocks the lens with her body.
3. The frame goes to black.
4. Starting with her back against the camera, walks away.
5. Walks into the office of her co-worker.

You can also cut away to something besides the talent to show a transition and then go back to the talent showing them in a different state. i.e., a shot of someone neat and tidy, then a group of rowdy customers, then a shot of the tidy person looking a bit bedraggled.

Lighting

You can use whatever natural light is available with current equipment. If you want to learn more about lighting with special lights and reflectors – check

http://www.youtube.com/video_toolbox_lighting

Audio

Microphone on camera works but an external microphone will always make the sound better. Even with a cheap one. To learn about different kinds of microphones, try this:

http://www.youtube.com/t/studio_article_10

Post Production

Mostly depends on your time, money and expertise. Learn more at:

http://www.youtube.com/video_toolbox_postproduction

Tons more tips at Videomaker - http://www.videomaker.com/learn/
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