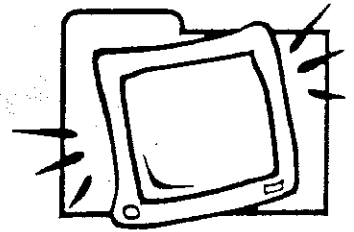


## SKILLSHEET:

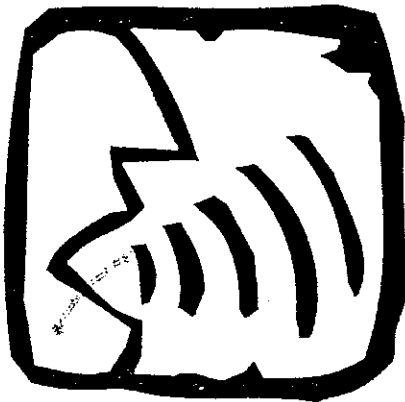
# Speaking Skills for Video



This sheet is designed to help young people adapt their speaking styles to video. See the "Vocal Expression and Public Speaking" section of the **Communications Resource Box** for more in-depth information about helping young people improve their verbal communication skills.

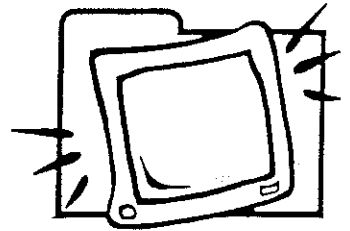
Most of the rules of good speaking and presentation skills apply to video as well. Here are a few tips to help you become a better on-camera presenter, or "talent":

- A strong, confident voice will make your message more believable. Speak up!
  - How do you make your voice sound strong and confident? Relax, breath deep, lower your voice and project from your diaphragm.
  - Vary your pitch, volume and pacing to hold viewers' interest.
  - Try to sound like yourself! Imagine that you're speaking to a friend rather than to a microphone. Try to avoid sounding like you're reading a book, monotonous or singsongy.
  - Enunciate and speak very clearly.
  - Find a comfortable, medium speed. Don't talk too fast or too slow.
  - Exaggerate your delivery and put strong emphasis on key words. Be dramatic!
  - Your facial expressions should be appropriate to your words. That is, don't smile or smirk if the message is serious. Smile and look joyful if the message is positive or heartwarming.
- Stand up straight, look people in the eye and don't fidget.
  - Eye contact is extremely important and powerful. If you want to look directly at your video audience, look at the camera lens as if it were the friendly eyes of your best friend. Don't let your eyes stray away from the camera lens while it's recording. Wandering eyes make you look shifty and insecure. Practice by saying your script as you look at an eye-level mark on the wall. As with most things in life, the more you practice, the better you will become at this.
  - Use hand gestures only if appropriate. Effective hand gestures come from being relaxed and spontaneous. (Playing with your hair, scratching and rubbing your knuckles are **not** effective hand gestures!)
  - If you're using a hand-held microphone, hold it about four inches away from your mouth.
  - *Just do it!* Almost everyone is nervous about speaking in front of groups. (And cameras!) The more you do it, the better and the easier it gets. Really!



## SKILL SHEET:

# Shooting Your Videos



Have you ever set down in front of the television to watch your own videos and been disappointed with the results? Most people new to a camcorder have. Here are several tips to help you improve the quality of the videotapes you shoot.

## Planning

Think through your goals and what you want to have on tape. Shoot only those scenes that you really want or need. Shooting reams of wild footage that no one will ever want to watch is a waste of time and money. Be selective and resist the temptation to turn the camera on and record *everything* that's happening.

## Lighting

The single most important thing you can do to improve the look of your videos is to improve your lighting. A video shot in poor light looks dark and grainy. Pay attention to the light source (Is it from overhead? Lamp? Sun?) and try to place your subject so that the light falls evenly across it. Never shoot into the sunlight or into a window unless you're trying to make a dark silhouette of your subject. Shoot so that your back or side is to the light source and your subject is facing the light. Use a lamp or other filler to shed more light on your subject, if possible.

## Sound

In most shooting situations, the audio (sound) is just as important as the video (picture). Most camcorders have built-in microphones that work fine for recording room or ambient sound. They're also acceptable for recording subjects if the subjects are no more than 9 to 12 feet away from the camera and if the room is very quiet. You can greatly improve your audio quality by using an external microphone. You can buy or lease hand-held (like news reporters use) or lavalier (clip-on) microphones from stores that sell video equipment. Remember, if you really want the sound on your tape to be good, you need to pay attention to where the microphone is in relation to your subject and to eliminate distracting room noise (such as blowers, voices and equipment).

## Camera Technique

The biggest mistakes people make when using camcorders are overusing the zoom function and moving the camera manically. Use the telephoto (zoom) lens only when you really want to get close and intimate with your subject and to create dramatic effect. But be careful. It's nearly impossible to get a stable shot without a tripod when you're zoomed in

close. If you have a tripod, use it. If not, you may want to stick with medium and wide shots. When shooting without a tripod, hold the camera with two hands and plant your feet firmly, shoulder-width apart. Keep the camera as steady as possible and turn your whole body with the camera when you want to "pan" or move the camera left or right.

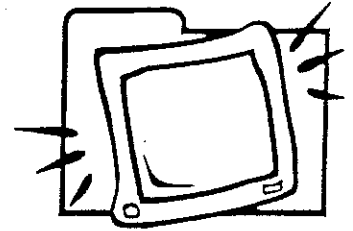
## Have Fun!

Now that you know some of the basics of video production, go out and play with your camera! It's the best way to learn. Shoot scenes in a variety of situations and then play back and critique your results. Experiment with some of the tips given here - and then try *breaking* the rules to see what you can learn from that experience. (For example, someone decided awhile back that shaky camera movement is "in," so now we see it all the time on national television advertisements and programs.)

**Note:** A book called *KIDVID: Fundamentals of Video Instruction* is included in this section of the *Communications Resource Box*. It has more information that may be useful to you as you begin planning and working on video projects with young people.

## SKILL SHEET:

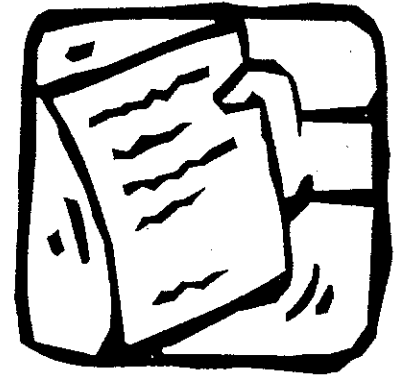
# Writing Skills for Video



*This sheet will help young people adapt their writing styles to the medium of video. See the "Written Communications" section of the **Communications Resource Box** for more in-depth information about helping young people improve their written communication skills.*

Most of the rules of good writing apply to video scriptwriting. The information written for a narrator to read on tape is called "copy." The copy can be read from off-camera, so that viewers see some other scene while they hear the narrator, or the copy can be memorized or read (using cue cards or a cuing device such as a TelePrompter) so that viewers see the "talent" on-camera as her or she talks. A few tips for adapting writing for video follow. (**Note:** The same rules apply if you're adapting activities for audiocassette recordings or radio production.)

- Write clearly and simply. Write to be heard.
- Write in a conversational tone.
- Keep your sentences short.
- Use first and second person (for example, "**You** can make a difference . . .").
- Use action verbs such as "join," "come," "write" and "buy."
- Use words that clearly communicate and conjure up powerful emotional images. Use comparisons and metaphors.
- Edit your copy. Take out unnecessary words and change verbs to communicate action and present tense.
- Use a stopwatch to time yourself or your narrator reading the copy. Limit the number of words so that the narrator can easily read the copy within the number of seconds you need. For example, for a 60-second spot or commercial, you'll probably need to limit the script to about 75 to 100 words. Eliminate words or sentences if the narrator cannot read the copy clearly within the amount of time you want.
- Read the script aloud and rehearse it before you do any taping. Listen to be sure it's clear and easy to understand. Read it aloud to someone else and ask if he or she can understand your message. Make any changes you need to keep the message clear, simple, understandable and as powerful as possible.



# Sample Video Script

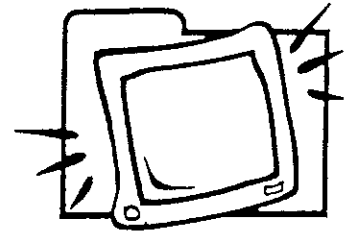
Video scripts typically are sheets of paper divided down the middle. The left column is "Video" (what you see) and the right column is "Audio" (what you hear).

## Teens Tell All

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Fade in to medium shot of Stephanie in front of school</p> <p>She walks out of shot toward front door of school.</p>	<p>STEPHANIE ON-CAMERA: Hello and welcome to our show, "Teens Tell All." I'm Stephanie and today I'll be taking you on a video tour of Hazelton Middle School. That's where I go, and I know a lot of kids who are anxious to tell you what it's like to go to school here. Well, it's 7:55 on a cold November morning, and our first class starts in 5 minutes. We better get inside.</p>
<p>Shot in the hallway with lots of kids milling around at lockers.</p> <p>Close-up of Mark, who's being interviewed by Stephanie</p>	<p>STEPHANIE VOICE-OVER: (MUST SPEAK LOUDLY DIRECTLY INTO MICROPHONE TO BE HEARD OVER BACKGROUND NOISE.)</p> <p>This is the craziest part of middle school. We call it "locker madness." We have to get our books and things before every class and it seems like there's never enough time.</p> <p>MARK: (Mark explains in his own words his feelings about the little time he has once he gets off the bus, gets in school and tries to get what he needs from his locker in time to get to his first class on time. He will try to make his answer about 30 seconds long.)</p>
<p>Stephanie on-camera outside her first class.</p>	<p>STEPHANIE ON-CAMERA: You know, a lot of kids feel that way. Our days start off feeling kind of crazy because we're rushing and worried about being late for our first class. I wonder if they could start school even five minutes later so we'd have time to slow down, say "hi" to our friends for a minute, and ease into our day...?</p> <p>Bell rings and she turns and hurriedly walks into the classroom.</p>

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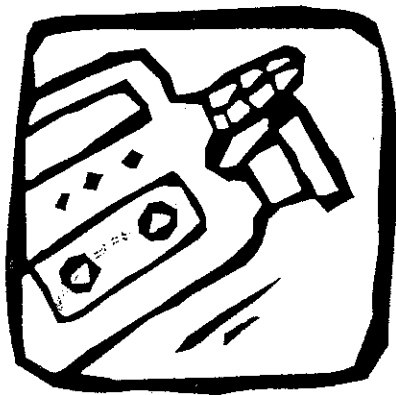
# Video Editing



Editing is the art of assembling scenes to create a meaningful story or message on film or video. In the "real world" of video production, editing is a complex process with unlimited creative possibilities. The process of video editing allows you to add elements like computer graphics and music.

When editing, you can arrange the scenes you've shot in any order you want with creative transitions and special effects. You may be surprised to learn that, unlike film editing, there is no splicing or touching the tape in video editing. The video editing process is completely electronic. It's accomplished through multiple tape machines, computers and an operator or "editor" who pushes buttons.

Today, the world of video editing is being completely transformed by new and changing technologies. "Nonlinear editing" has totally revolutionize the way people edit video projects. Nonlinear, computer-based editing allows you to edit high-end, broadcast quality, sophisticated video projects right



out of a computer! Video production is an extremely exciting and constantly changing profession!

## Getting Started: Editing in the Camera

If you are a beginner or don't have access to video editing equipment, you can shoot your program in a way that makes it seem edited. This technique is a little tricky because you can't change your mind once you've shot a scene. Preproduction planning and rehearsing are very important.

Editing in the camera means that, after carefully planning your entire video program, you shoot each scene in the order you want it to appear on the finished tape. Every scene is carefully set up so there is no extra or wild footage between shots. Here's what you do:

1. Carefully plan your video and write a script or storyboard that describes each scene, who will be featured, narration, props and other elements. (See *KIDVID: Fundamentals of Video Instruction*, 1989.)

2. Before you start taping, have the on-air talent and videographer rehearse each scene to make sure they all know exactly what will happen in every scene. You must begin taping from the beginning of your script and then add each scene in the order that you want it to appear.

- When you're ready to "roll tape," the director alerts everyone by calling out, "Quiet on the set!"

The videographer then puts the camera in standby mode so he or she only has to press the record/pause button to begin recording. Then the director says, "Standby," and counts down slowly, "Five, four, three . . ." The director should NOT say "two and one." Instead, he or she should hold up those fingers to cue the talent to begin. The camera operator pushes the record button after the director says "three" and begins taping. This ensures that you don't hear the director counting down on tape. It also ensures that you have the 2-second pause you need for the tape to thread properly before the talent begins to talk.

Be sure the camera operator and talent know what the ending statement or action is for the scene. The camera operator presses the pause button at that point to stop taping and end the scene. This is called an "out-cue."

- Now you're ready to shoot the next scene. Leave the camera off until everyone is in place and ready for the next shot. (This works best if it's within just a few minutes so that the camera stays in **pause** mode.) When you press the record/pause button again to start recording, the next scene will be added on to the last one seamlessly. (If you take a lot of time between scenes, the camera will shut off. Then when you play back your tape, you may see flashes or glitches between scenes.)

- Don't shoot anything you don't want in the final program. Repeat the process of rehearsing and rolling tape only when everyone is prepared and ready to do his or her part. If people make mistakes, try to keep going because you can't go back and retape scenes when you're editing in the camera. Use your group's mistakes or "out-takes" as learning tools so you can all do better next time!

## Shooting Techniques

- Shoot only as much of each scene as you really need to get your point across - no more, no less.
- "Match action" between shots or scenes. This means that if you are shooting a wide shot of a scene and then you shoot a close-up or medium shot of the same scene, the positioning of people or props must be the same. For example, if you're shooting a wide shot of a group of people and then the next scene you want to shoot is a close-up of one of those people, be sure that the person's body positioning is exactly the same for the close-up as it was in the wide shot. Have you ever noticed mismatched shots in television programs or movies? Just for fun, watch carefully when

viewing television programs to see if the director or "continuity" person made sure that the action from one scene to the next is carefully matched. For example, you might see an actor's arm on the table in one shot, then in the next shot it's in his or her lap. This looks quite humorous in dialogue sequences where there are several cuts back and forth between angles.

- Cutaways are another option for adding visual appeal and interest to your tape. A cutaway is a shot that is very different than what was in the previous scene. For example, in one scene the viewer sees a young person on-camera talking about his or her pet. In the next scene, the viewer sees a close-up of the animal and hears the voice of the young person talking about the pet. (To accomplish this, the young person would need to stay off camera but very close to the microphone.)

- Remember that the sound or background noise will cut off every time you press the pause button on the camera to end a scene. If you're in a noisy environment for one scene and then a quiet one for the next, your tape will sound abrupt at those points. Also, if you have music in one scene and pause the camera while you move into another scene (with or without music), the

sound will be choppy and clipped. If you want to have music playing in a scene, have someone slowly fade the music out as part of the scene *before* you pause the camera to end the scene. It will sound more natural and appealing.

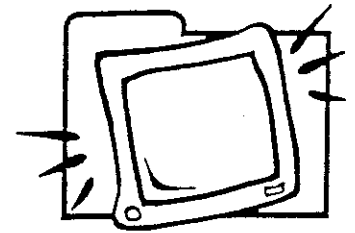
- You can create simple transitions between scenes while editing in the camera. For example, use the fade in and out function on your camera when you want a softer in or out point to a scene.

You can also use the manual focus knob to "rack focus" in or out of a scene. A rack focus is when the scene either goes from being clear and in-focus to being blurred - or from blurred to in-focus.

Another transition is a "swish pan." This is a very quick side-to-side movement of the camera either away from the on-camera action or from the pan to the on-camera action. A slower pan from one person or object to the on-camera action also works as a softer transition between scenes. All of these transition effects can help create a sense of change or of time passing.

(See the "Shooting Your Videos" skill sheet for more information on lighting, camera movement and sound.)

# Video Production Glossary



**“Action”** – The director's cue to begin taping

**Audience** – Everyone who will view a particular videotape

**Audio** – The sound portion of a videotape

**Camcorder** – A small one-piece video camera

**Close-up (CU)** – A camera shot in which a person or object is seen very close and fills the frame

**Director** – The person who gives leadership to the location video shooting by giving directions and calling out cues to on-camera talent, camera operators, props people and others

**Documentary** – A type of film or video that illustrates a real situation or issue, or tells the story of real people; a nonfiction story that is shot with the real people involved in the situation or story, no actors are used

**Edit** – To select and electronically assemble two or more audio and video segments

**Edit in the Camera** – To create an illusion of an edited program by carefully planning an overall tape and then shooting the segments in the order in which they are to appear in the final program

**Extreme close-up (ECU)** – A very close shot of a portion of an object or person

**Fade in or out** – Audio: To gradually increase or decrease the volume of the sound; Video:

To push a button on the camera that makes the picture slowly appear from black or disappear to black

**Focus** – The sharpness and clarity of the picture

**Monitor** – A television set that can transmit audio and video signals from videotape

**Pan** – To move the camera from left to right or from right to left while shooting

**Postproduction** – The process of editing, adding graphics, music and special effects to a tape after all the footage has been shot

**Pre-production** – The planning stages of video production; usually involves identifying message, audience, outlining and script writing, research, scheduling, rehearsing and budget planning

**Producer** – The person who gives overall leadership to the production of a tape, including message, audience, content, scheduling, budget and making sure deadlines are met

**Special effects** – Transitional effects such as fades, wipes, dissolves; digital effects such as flips or flying video scenes

**“Standby”** – The director's cue that everyone should ready themselves to begin shooting video

**Talent** – The people whose voices or faces appear in front of the camera

**Teamwork** – In a video production, crew members working together effectively to complete a tape

**Theme** – The overall idea for a program

**Tilt** – To move the camera up and down while shooting

**Time cues “5, 4, 3, 2, 1”** – The director's cues that the action and taping will begin in five counts

**Titles** – Any graphic material or words that are shown on camera

**Two-shot** – Framing two people or objects with the camera lens

**Video** – The picture portion of the videotape

**Videotape** – Magnetic tape that can record a television signal

**Zoom in or out** – The gradual getting closer or widening of the camera shot accomplished by using the camera's toggle button to zoom in (get closer) or zoom out (get farther away)





# Video Production Scoring Sheet

All scores will be based on the *Video Production Planning Form* and the completed video segment.

Name of Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

The scores for each criteria will only be used as a basis for determining the overall grade, and the youth will only receive a premium and ribbon based on the OVERALL GRADE.

1. The goal of the video is adequately met..... **a b c**

2. The target audience is clearly identified and appropriately addressed... **a b c**

Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Objective of the completed video is clear and understandable..... **a b c**

4. The length of the video was appropriate for  
the identified goal, objective, and audience..... **a b c**

5. The overall pre-planning process was complete and well thought out..... **a b c**

6. The final video considered most of the pre-planning ideas..... **a b c**

7. The project idea was original and creative in design..... **a b c**

8. The youth understands the concepts of video production..... **a b c**

OTHER COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OVERALL GRADE: A B C**

# Video Production Planning Form

All video projects require careful planning. To produce a segment or program that has meaning for viewers, the following questions must be asked and answered before you get started.

1. What is our goal? What are we trying to say or accomplish with the video? (For example: inform, entertain, demonstrate, sell a product or program, create awareness of an issue)

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2. Who is our audience? Who will see the video that we really want to reach with our message? Be as specific as possible. (For example: young people aged 5 to 9 or 14 to 19; all adults, parents, teachers, community leaders)

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3. What is our specific message or objective? What exactly are we trying to communicate through this video and what do we hope people learn from it?

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4. How long should this video be? (For example: Many television commercials last 30 seconds, news stories no more than 2 minutes, interviews or profiles no more than 5 minutes, and television sitcoms 30 minutes [with commercials].)

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5. What are the possibilities for how this tape could look (such as, like a news program, commercial, funny skit, powerful drama, interview with interesting people)? Use the space below (and on the back of this sheet, if necessary) to brainstorm as many ways as you can to create a video that fits with your answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 above.

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6. Determine what your budget and timeline are. What costs will you incur in the development of the tape? (Think about the cost of videotapes, renting equipment, making or buying props, creating or commissioning graphics and any other expenses you might incur.) What is your targeted goal for completion of this tape?

Budget: \_\_\_\_\_ Deadline for completion: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Decide how you'll proceed and get started! Decide on the elements your tape will feature (such as on-air talent, a narrator, live action, interviews, location shooting, props, music, graphics). Decide who will do what in your group. Write a script, pull it all together and create your videotape. See the skill sheets, activities and project ideas in this section of the *Communications Resource Box* for more information.

This form must accompany all video production projects, or a premium and ribbon cannot be issued.