FIVE TIPS

FOR VIDEO COMPOSITION

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INTRODUCTION:

WHAT IS COMPOSITION, ANYWAY?

FOR OUR PURPOSE, COMPOSITION IS THE PLACEMENT OF OBJECTS IN FRONT OF THE VIDEO CAMERA. HOW WE PLACE THINGS IS VERY IMPORTANT. FOR INSTANCE, IF I WANTED TO VIDEOTAPE MY FRIEND TALKING TO THE CAMERA, WHICH OF THESE IMAGES WOULD WORK BEST?

MOST PEOPLE WOULD SAY THE BOTTOM ONE – AND I’D AGREE.

THIS BOOKLET IS DESIGNED TO TEACH INTRODUCTORY COMPOSITION CONCEPTS IN A CLEAR AND SIMPLE WAY. IT HAS BEEN STRUCTURED TO HIGHLIGHT FIVE PARTICULAR “TIPS.” EACH TIP EXPLAINS A NEW IDEA IMPORTANT TO COMPOSING GREAT SHOTS WITH A VIDEO CAMERA.

AT THE END OF THE BOOKLET ARE TWO ACTIVITIES. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE EXCELLENT WAYS TO INCORPORATE THE FIVE TIPS YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN.

HAVE FUN!
TIP #1: ONE SIZE DOESN’T FIT ALL

THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF SHOTS USED BY FILMMAKERS AROUND THE WORLD, BUT THERE ARE THREE BASIC ONES THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW: WIDE, MEDIUM, AND CLOSE-UP.

WIDE:
- The subject or object is smaller in the frame.
- Useful when you are trying to capture all the action.

![Image of WIDE shot example]

MEDIUM:
- The subject or object is cut “in half” in the frame.
- Useful when you are trying to capture an interesting piece of the action.

![Image of MEDIUM shot example]

CLOSE-UP:
- The subject or object is larger in the frame.
- Useful when you are trying to capture a small detail of the action.

![Image of CLOSE-UP shot example]
Five Tips For Video Composition

WIDE, MEDIUM & CLOSE-UP SHOTS OF A PERSON:

- **WIDE**
- **MEDIUM**
- **CLOSE-UP**
**USING THESE THREE SHOTS TO CREATE A SEQUENCE:**

**A SEQUENCE:**
- A series of shots that create a particular scene.
- Makes use of all different types of shots, (ex. wide, medium, close up).

**Ex. CONVERSATION:**

*These different shots keep the audience interested.*

**Ex. PLACE:**

*NOTE:*
- Most sequences begin with a wide shot that “establishes” where you are.

*REMEMBER:*
- How you organize your shots should reflect the message you are trying to send. Don’t just randomly change shots for the sake of changing shots!
TIP #2: THE HEAD “NOSE” WHAT’S BEST

People are important. Knowing how to videotape them is too! Understanding headroom & noseroom can help.

HEADROOM:
- The amount of space between a person’s head and the top of the frame.

NOSEROOM:
- The amount of space between a person’s nose and the side of the frame.
EXAMPLES OF HEADROOM:

GOOD

BAD - TOO MUCH!

*NOTE:
- You will always have good headroom if you leave a small amount of space above a person’s head.

*REMEMBER:
- Make sure you don’t cut their head in half!
EXAMPLES OF NOSEROOM:

GOOD

BAD – TOO CRAMPED!

*NOTE:*
- You will always have good noseroom if you leave more space in the direction the person is looking.
TIP #3: TIC-TAC-TOE, PUT YOUR LINES IN A ROW

EVEN THOUGH THERE IS REALLY NO “WRONG” WAY TO COMPOSE A SHOT, IT CAN STILL BE ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT THINGS TO DO WELL. THE RULE OF THIRDS GIVES YOU A GREAT PLACE TO START!

RULE OF THIRDS:
- A cool rule that helps you compose shots in an interesting way by dividing the frame equally into “thirds” both horizontally and vertically.

HOW TO USE IT:
(1) Mentally put “tic-tac-toe” lines over the frame, making sure that they are spaced equally.

*Notice that the lines cross at four points.

(2) Place the “important stuff” in your shot along the lines, keeping in mind that the center of attention should be at one of the four crossing points.
EXAMPLES USING THE RULE OF THIRDS:
**TIP #4: SOMETIMES THREE LEGS ARE BETTER THAN TWO**

LET’S FACE IT, A CAMERA CAN GET HEAVY. USE A TRIPOD.

**THE TRIPOD:**
- Eliminates unwanted jiggles and shakes.
- Keeps your arms from getting tired!

**COOL SHOTS MADE EASY WITH A TRIPOD:**
- Both a PAN and a TILT follow an action or reveal more of an interesting object or scene.
- A ZOOM gives the illusion of moving closer to OR away from an object while the camera remains stationary.

*NOTE:*
- Even if you do not have a tripod, you can steady your shots by leaning against something sturdy, (such as a wall). And always make sure you brace the camera by holding it with both hands!
EXAMPLES OF A PAN, TILT & ZOOM:

PAN: (Left or Right)

TILT: (Up or Down)

ZOOM: (In or Out)

*NOTE:
- Camera movement can make your shots more interesting!
TIP #5: THE INTERVIEW DEPENDS ON YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW

SHOOTING AN INTERVIEW CAN BE TOUGH – ESPECIALLY IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CAMERA! IN THIS CASE, WHERE YOU PLACE THE CAMERA IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. BELOW ARE TWO POPULAR SET-UPS.

SIMPLE CAMERA SET-UPS FOR INTERVIEWS:

“TWO-SHOT:”
- The interviewer and interviewee sit/stand side by side (slightly angled toward each other).
- Both are in the frame.

“OVER-THE-SHOULDER, OR NOT:”
- The interviewer and interviewee sit/stand facing each other.
- The interviewer can choose to be in the frame or not.

TIPS FOR QUESTION ASKING:
- Avoid “yes” and “no” questions.
- Avoid obvious questions.
- Avoid two-part questions.

*NOTE:
- It is difficult for some people to be in front of the camera, so be nice!
ACTIVITIES:

“FINDERS KEEPERS”

DIRECTIONS:
- You must “find” (videotape) every type of shot listed below in order.
- Each shot must be at least 5 seconds long.
- When you start recording, first state the type of shot you are getting.
- You cannot videotape the same person or object twice.
- If there is more than one person, take turns videotaping.

*REMEMBER:
- Use the rule of thirds whenever you can!
- If you videotape a person, don’t forget proper headroom & noseroom!

SHOT LIST:

- 1. WIDE (of an object)
- 2. TILT UP
- 3. ZOOM OUT
- 4. EXTREME CLOSE-UP (object)
- 5. MEDIUM (of a person)
- 6. TILT DOWN
- 7. PAN RIGHT
- 8. WIDE (of a person)
- 9. PAN LEFT
- 10. CLOSE-UP (of a person)
- 11. MEDIUM (of an object)
- 12. ZOOM IN
- 13. EXTREME CLOSE-UP (person)
- 14. CLOSE-UP (of an object)
ACTIVITIES:

"MOCK INTERVIEW"

DIRECTIONS:
- Must have at least 3 people.
- Take 5 minutes to come up with 10 questions everyone will be answering.
- Set up the camera in one of the following ways:

☐ TWO-SHOT

☐ OVER-THE-SHOULDER, OR NOT

- One person works the camera, one person asks the questions, and one person gets interviewed.
- Rotate at each position.
- When finished, repeat with the other camera set-up.

*REMEMBER:
- Avoid “yes” and “no” questions.
- Avoid obvious questions.
- Avoid two-part questions.
NOTES: