

Teaching video production from home

Filming with high-end equipment in a purposefully-designed studio operated by trained professionals will always produce beautiful video. However, this document is intended to help you produce the best quality video that you can while filming in your own home.

Below we will explain best practices for optimising your lighting, framing shots, getting the top camera angles and improving your audio to help you produce the best possible footage.

Video style tips

There are two typical ways to create teaching videos. One is to **script** the entire video, the other is to prepare a series of questions that you answer naturally (**freestyle**). Here are some specific tips depending on what approach you choose.

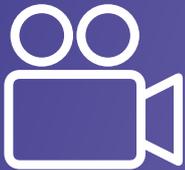
Scripted	Freestyle
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We write differently to how we speak and converse so it is essential to practice your script at least a few times out aloud. This ensures that you pick up on any word traps!• We recommend that you write your script on a program like Google Slides so you can use your laptop as a teleprompter.• Place the screen that you will read from as close as possible to the camera lens recording your footage. During filming, read from the screen while being sure not to move your eyes to the camera. This will give it away that you are reading!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask a friend to stand behind the camera and ask you the prepared questions. This will make it feel more like a casual interview.• Give your friend permission to ask any follow up questions that may arise after something you have said.• Say the question back as you start your answer, for example if the question is "What are the top 3 trends you see in higher education?" you would say, "The top 3 trends I see in higher education are..."• Try to keep each answer to under 1 minute.

Other general advice

- If you make a mistake or stumble: stop, breathe, clap (this helps the editor as there is a sound spike), and start your sentence over again.
- Pause for one at least one second before and after you answer your prepared question.
- Finish your idea with a SMILE!
- Don't worry about being perfect! The idea is to capture real people with real life experience saying real things that matter!

Filming tips

Camera



The first consideration for best practice home filming lies in deciding what camera to use. It's 2021, so you probably have quite a few recording devices around home; whether it's a smartphone, an iPad, your laptop, a webcam, or even an old DSLR.

Realistically, if you have a smartphone from any major company—Apple, Samsung, Huawei, Google—that was released in the last few years, it's likely going to be your best option in terms of home filming. Smartphones typically record significantly clearer and sharper footage than any laptop or webcam.

Lighting is (arguably) the most important factor in producing beautiful footage. The most important thing in terms of lighting is to *make sure that the brightest light is in front of you, not behind you*. If you are sitting in a dark room with a bright window behind you, your camera will automatically darken the video to try and compensate for the window, and make you look like a silhouette.

Try to get as much light as possible into the room (but not from behind!), and find a spot to film where your face will receive more light than the background. You can do this by setting up desk or floor lamps, and adjusting blinds or curtains into different positions to alter light intensity and the direction of any illumination from lamps. If you want to get fancy, you can set up a side light as well.

Lighting



Audio

Clear audio is also absolutely crucial; these are teaching videos after all. You could have footage that looks like it was filmed in Hollywood, but if your audience can't hear what you're saying then the video isn't much use. Most importantly, make sure you're filming in the quietest space possible.

Try to film yourself talking for a few seconds as a sample, and listen back to it to see if the sound is clear—if there's too much echo, try moving to a smaller space, or putting some couch cushions, blankets and pillows around yourself (but out of the shot) to dampen the echo. If the microphone itself is giving you poor-quality sound, try to use some earphones or headphones that have a microphone built-in to them while you record, or even a dedicated external microphone if you have one.



When positioning the camera, it's important to take **image composition** into account. Your camera should sit approximately eye-level with you—if the camera is looking up at you, it might make you seem intimidating and overbearing, and if the camera is looking down at you it might make you seem meek.

It's also a good idea to keep the background of your shot as plain, simple, and relevant as possible—a plain-coloured or light pastel wall is great, perhaps with a tidy bookshelf visible, or something else relevant to what you're discussing.

Position your head slightly closer to the top of the frame, so that your face is not dead-center. If possible, try to avoid wearing glasses that could make for disruptive reflections. It is very important that you are clearly visible and that the background isn't too messy—this can be very distracting! If you can find a good clear spot in your home, then invest in a greenscreen to place behind you in any room! That way, the editor can choose an appropriate background for your video.

Positioning



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