



## Video Preproduction

A great video starts with a plan. Start with the general idea or topic for your message. Remember some key points as you decide how to communicate your topic. These points will influence the choices you make.

- Who is your audience? Who is the message for?
- What is your message? What do you want them to know?
- When and Where did/will this happen?
- Why would the audience be interested? Why is the topic important?
- How can the audience become involved or do something?

Make a plan and continue to add more and more details until you have all the directions for shooting each scene, recording the sound, and putting it all together. This is called the storyboard.

1. Outline the beginning, middle and end of your story.
2. Break the story down into scenes  
Describe exactly what each scene in the video will show. What kind of visual image best shows your idea?
3. For **each scene**, think through more details.  
Scene \_\_\_\_: (describe the video action)
  - Setting: Where is the scene being shot? inside, outside, specific event, surroundings
  - Actors: Who is in the shot? 1 person, 2 people, group, animal, reporter, narrator
  - Lighting: What kind of light is available or needed? natural outdoor light, indoor light, 1, 2, or 3 point spotlights, back light for silhouettes
  - Camera: What kind of camera shot will best capture the scene? long shot, medium shot, close-up, action shot, panorama, sky view, cut away
  - Audio: What kinds of sounds will be in the scene? voice, background music, primary music, sound effects
  - If there are voice recordings, will they be captured with the filming as an interview or will they be recorded later as a voice-over?
  - Write the script &/or interview questions that will be included in the scene.
  - Transitions: How will one scene move to the next scene? Will it be filmed or done in an editing program? Fade to white or black, dissolve, page turn, blur

4. Revise!! Are there parts that you don't need to communicate your message? Would a different type of shot make it better? Are the words clear?

Here's an example of developing an idea. We'll choose the topic of promoting the 4-H dog project. Our audience is youth who have an interest in dogs. We want them to see what they could learn and how they could train their dog if they joined 4-H. The beginning of our video could establish a need for help with a scene of a dog walking away instead of coming to the person calling them. The middle could show 4-H meetings and work sessions for training the dog. The end could show success by having the dog respond when called and then give information for joining 4-H.

We now have the beginning of a storyboard. It can be done in several ways but the important thing to remember is that it will keep changing and expanding. It can be a piece of paper with a line down the middle. One side of the line is used to describe the video scene and the other describes the sound to be captured or the script to be recorded. This can be done on a computer so it is easy to insert scenes or rearrange the order by cutting and pasting. If a group is working on the project, using a piece of paper for each scene might help give everyone room to add or rearrange the scenes. They could be arranged on a table or posted to a wall.

The next step is to break down each section to a series of individual scenes and add detail. The middle section probably has the most scenes and we need to think through all the possible activities we might show. Are there some that would be better for our purpose than others? A scene showing people sitting around a table at a meeting might not be nearly as inviting as a work session where the dog, the member, and a leader are working together. Perhaps some scenes showing the increasing ability of the dog when on a leash to working without a leash would show the sequence of progress.

For each scene, what will the sound be like? When might it be useful to hear the person talking to the dog? We certainly might need that at the beginning to establish that the dog is being called rather than being scolded as it walks away. Adding off-camera or voiceover sound asking the audience if they need help working with their dog would also be useful to establish the theme of the video. But that could also be done by a second person approaching the dog owner within the video scene and recording their conversation.

Now the storyboard is gathering detail. As each scene is described, add where it is being shot, whether lighting will be needed, specifically what actors are included in the scene, and whether the shot is a close-up, mid range shot, or a distance. This is especially important if the person actually shooting the video wasn't as involved in planning the shots.

Sample Storyboard section for one scene

Subject /title \_\_\_\_\_ Scene # \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Video</b>	<b>Sound</b>
Scene Description	Description or actual script
Setting Actors Type of shot Lighting	Captured: During video recording On-camera actors Off-camera narrator Recorded later as voice-over sound Music added
Transitions between scenes	

**Writing and Speaking for Video**

The material written for videography is called “copy.” The recorded message needs to be clear and easy to understand. That includes using good grammar. Some types of video include interviews. In this case the copy might include the questions to be asked by the interviewer but might not include the responses. Some sound is recorded as the person is also seen in the video scene (on-camera) but sometimes a different video is viewed as the person is speaking (off-camera). A third alternative is to record the sound at a separate time from the video. This sound can be added during editing as voice-over sound.

When writing a script or copy for video, there are some things to keep in mind:

- Keep it clear and simple
- Use a conversational tone, like you were talking to your friend
- Keep sentences short
- Use first and second person (I, we, you, etc)
- Use action verbs (run, come, buy, pour, etc)

Finally, edit the copy to take out unnecessary words and phrases. Read the copy out loud to see how it sounds and how much time it takes. Keep making changes to be sure the message is easy to understand.

If you are the on-camera “talent” that will be speaking during the video, here are some tips to help:

- Use a strong confident voice
  - ✓ Relax and try to sound like yourself; pretend you are speaking to a friend
  - ✓ Enunciate and speak very clearly
  - ✓ Use a comfortable medium speed, not too fast or too slow
  - ✓ Vary your pitch, volume, and pacing to hold viewers’ interest
- Match your facial expressions to the message
- Use good comfortable posture
- Maintain eye contact with the video audience or with an interviewee
- Use hand gestures only when appropriate. Avoid other distracting body language such as moving your hair, rubbing or scratching an itch, or moving jewelry.

Creating a good plan, writing good copy and practicing speaking skills will save you much time later during actual filming and editing. Now you are ready for action.

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