Course 2, Lesson 5: The Solopreneur's Simple Studio

1. Core Concept & Learning Objective

Concept: You don't need a $10,000 studio. You need a $100 setup. For 2025's short-form video, "relatable" beats "professional" every time. Your audience trusts a clear, well-lit video from a smartphone more than a slick, over-produced studio ad. We are building a "Simple Studio" based on 3 principles: Good Light, Good Sound, Good Phone.

Learning Objective: By the end of this lesson, you will **identify** the 3 core components of a "Simple Studio." You will **audit** your own environment to **design** a dedicated, low-cost recording space and **optimize** your smartphone camera settings for high-quality video capture.

2. Interactive Content Activities (3 Activities)

Activity 1: The "Good Light" Audit (Tool Exploration)

- **Description:** Good lighting is 80% of video quality. It's non-negotiable. We're going to find the *best light* in your house, for free.

- **Instructions:**

  1. **Find the "Free" Light:** Open your phone's camera (selfie mode).

  2. Walk to the *largest window* in your home.

  3. Face the window. This is "soft, natural light." Notice how clear your face is.

  4. Now, turn 180 degrees, so your *back* is to the window. This is "backlight." Notice how you are a dark, grainy silhouette.

  5. **This is your #1 Rule:** *Always face your light source.*

  6. **Find the "Cheap" Light:** If you don't have a good window, your "Simple Studio" needs *one* "ring light" or "softbox" (approx. $50).

- **Expected Outcome:** You have identified your primary "filming spot" (facing your best window) or you have added a ring light to your shopping cart.

Activity 2: The "Good Sound" 10-Second Test (Strategic Exercise)

- **Description:** Bad lighting is annoying. Bad *sound* is unwatchable. People will forgive a grainy video, but they will *not* tolerate "echo" or "buzz."

- **Instructions:**

  1. Go to your "filming spot" from Activity 1.

  2. Record a 10-second test video.

  3. Listen back *with headphones*.

  4. Do you hear an "echo" (from an empty room)?

     - *Fix:* Add soft things. A rug, a curtain, a pillow.

  5. Do you hear a "hum" (from a fan, AC, or fridge)?

     - *Fix:* Turn it off before you film.

  6. **The $20 Fix:** A simple "lavalier mic" that clips to your shirt is the #1 way to get crisp, clear audio.

- **Expected Outcome:** You have "sound-proofed" your filming spot by adding a rug or turning off a fan, and you understand the value of a cheap lav mic.

Activity 3: The "Pro-Mode" Phone Settings (Tool Exploration)

- **Description:** Your smartphone is a $1,000 camera. It's time to *use it* like one. We're changing 3 settings to dramatically improve your quality.

- **Instructions:**

  1. **Wipe Your Lens.** (This is the most important step.)

  2. **Go to Settings > Camera > Record Video:**

     - Set it to **4K at 30 fps** (frames per second). (4K gives you "room" to crop, 30fps is standard).

  3. **Go to Settings > Camera > Formats:**

     - Choose "High Efficiency" (if available) for smaller file sizes.

  4. **Turn ON the "Grid":** In your camera settings, turn on the "Grid." This helps you frame your shot (Rule of Thirds).

5. **Lock Focus/Exposure:** When you're in your camera app, *tap and hold* on your face until you see the "AE/AF LOCK" box. This stops your camera from "hunting" for focus while you're talking.

- **Expected Outcome:** Your phone is now optimized for high-quality, professional-looking video capture.

3. Assignment & Project Milestone (Portfolio Deliverable)

Assignment: The "Simple Studio" Setup Guide (1-Page Doc)

- **Description:** This is your 1-page "go-live" checklist. It documents your new "Simple Studio" so you can get set up and start recording in 60 seconds, every time.

- **Step-by-Step Instructions:**

  1. Create a new document titled "[Your Name] - Simple Studio Guide."

  2. **Section 1: The "Shot"**

     - Take a picture of your "filming spot" (your desk, facing the window). Paste it here.

  3. **Section 2: The "Tech"**

     - **Light:** (e.g., "Natural light from 5' window" or "18" Ring Light").

     - **Sound:** (e.g., "Rode lav mic" or "iPhone 15 internal mic").

     - **Camera:** (e.g., "iPhone 15 Pro").

  4. **Section 3: The "Go-Live" Checklist (Pre-Flight)**

     - [ ] Wipe lens.

     - [ ] Turn off AC/fan.

     - [ ] Set to 4K at 30fps.

     - [ ] Face the light.

     - [ ] Tap-and-hold to "Lock Focus."

     - [ ] Record.

- **Evaluation Criteria:**

- *Excellent:* The guide is complete. The "Shot" is well-lit. The "Tech" list is specific. The "Go-Live" checklist is actionable.

- *Adequate:* The guide is missing sections. The "Shot" is backlit or messy. The checklist is incomplete.

- **Connection to Final Project:** This **"Simple Studio" Guide** is **Section 5: The "No-Excuses" Production Plan** of your **Viral Velocity Strategy & Portfolio.** This proves you have a *system* for high-quality production, which you'll use in L6 (Editing) and L9 (Batching).

4. End-of-Lesson Assessment (7 Questions)

1. **(MC)** What are the 3 *core components* of a "Simple Studio"?

   - A) A 4K RED camera, a $1,000 mic, and a green screen.

   - B) Good Light, Good Sound, and a Good Phone.

   - C) A laptop, a ring light, and a 30-page script.

   - D) A clean background, a trending sound, and a filter.

2. **(MC)** What is the "#1 Rule" of good lighting?

   - A) Film at night.

   - B) *Always* face your light source (e.g., the window).

   - C) Put the window *behind* you to look artistic.

   - D) Use as many different colored lights as possible.

3. **(MC)** What is *more* likely to make a viewer "click away" from your video?

   - A) Bad lighting.

   - B) Bad sound (echo, hum, buzz).

   - C) A messy background.

   - D) Not using a filter.

4. **(SA)** What are 2 ways to fix "echo" in an empty room?

5. **(SA)** What 2 smartphone camera settings did we change for "Pro-Mode"?

6. **(SA)** What is "AE/AF Lock," and why do we use it?

7. **(Scenario)** A student sends you their test video. You can't hear them (their voice is quiet), but you *can* hear a loud "hmmmm" sound. What is the *most likely* problem and the 2-step "Drill Sergeant" fix?

Correct Answers: 1(B), 2(B), 3(B) 4. (Example) 1. Add a rug. 2. Add curtains, pillows, or any soft furniture. 5. (Example) 1. Record in 4K at 30fps. 2. Turn on the "Grid." 6. (Example) It's "Auto-Exposure / Auto-Focus Lock." We use it by tapping and holding