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# BASIC VIDEO TECHNIQUES



## Video examples

- Level 1: Video interviews only
- Level 2: Video interviews + supplemental footage
- Level 3: Video storytelling

# Things to think about

- Avoid "shaky cam"
- The best video journalists use a tripod whenever they can
- If you can't use a tripod, steady the camera against a wall
- Sit on the floor and use your arms and knees as a makeshift tripod



### More things to think about

#### Zooms

- Don't do it just because you can
- Spielberg and Hitchcock both made films without zooming one single time
- Zoom off camera, not on, or...
- Zoom with your feet!
- NEVER use digital zoom



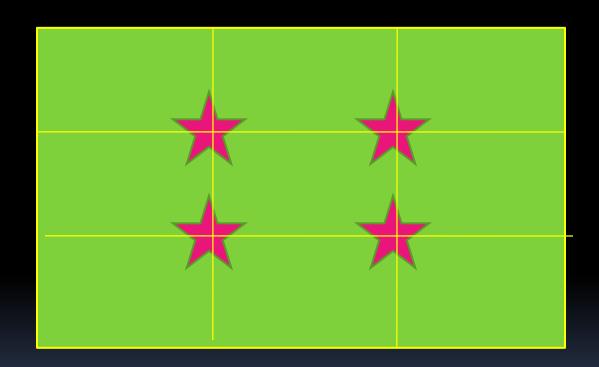
# Shot terminology

- PANS and TILTS
- A "pan" is moving the lens side to side
- A "tilt" is moving the lens up or down
- Move slowly, even more slowly than your instincts tell you to move
- Know where you're going before you start



# Composition

Remember the <u>"rule of</u> <u>thirds"</u>





#### Headroom

- Give 'em some space
  - -- in the right place



- Make sure people's heads are not cut off
- But don't make shots too loose either
- When you must cut a body, cut it in logical places, such as joints – the knees, not the ankles
- Apply the rule of thirds one third of the frame above the eyes, one third below the neck



# Backgrounds

- Force yourself to look at the background of your shot
  - Avoid unintentional motion or distraction
  - No trees or posts coming out of your subject's head





### Shots you need

- "B-ROLL"
- B-roll is secondary footage that can flesh out the story and add visual interest
- Make sure you allow time to shoot B-roll and try to think in advance of shots to get
  - Shoot more than you think you'll need!



## You be the expert!

- OK -- we've learned the basics.
- Now be a critic.
- Watch this story and see how many problems you can spot.



# You be the judge...





### Shots you need

- Three types of shots are needed for virtually any story:
  - The "establishing shot" (usually wide angle)
    - A picture of the whole soccer field
  - The "medium shot" focusing in on the action
    - Kids playing soccer on that field
  - The "close-up"
    - A sweaty face, an anxious mom



#### Shot ratio

- What's your guess on the ratio of shots?
  - What's the average percentage of close ups, medium and wide shots?
- Think about the makeup of a story this way:
  - 50 percent close ups and extreme close ups
  - 25 percent medium shots
  - 25 percent wide shots



## Shots you need

- Don't shoot it all from eye level
  - Use different points of view
  - Move around
- Have an "angle"
  - Get down on your knees or your stomach
  - Climb up on something
  - Lie on your back



#### Stick with it

- Stay on the shot
  - Every shot should be at least 5 seconds long.
  - Stay with the shot 5 seconds longer than you think you should
  - Count it down because 5 seconds is longer than you think
  - Video editors will thank you



### Shot sequences

- Think action / reaction
  - If the soccer ball is kicked (the action), your viewer will want to see it go in the net (the reaction)
- Think sequences
  - Of shots
  - Of events





# Brainstorming the story

- Video assignment:
  Gas prices boost use of commuter buses
- What shots will you get?
- Let's watch!





# Lighting

- Good lighting really does matter
- Don't shoot at noon
  - Try to arrange your shoot for morning or late afternoon
  - If you can't, try to shoot in "full shade"
  - Keep camera and subject in same lighting conditions



# Lighting

- If it's dark, add light
  - Open the curtains or blinds
  - Turn on lamps and lights
  - Move subject to a better location, if possible
  - DIY lighting kits can be inexpensive





#### Get the sound

- Pros will tell you the sound is at least as important as the pictures
- Without an external microphone, you need to get close!
- Be aware of background noise
  - A busy street will drown out voices
  - Move your interview subject for better sound



# Shooting an interview



- Do shoot the subject straight on, or slightly angled --not in profile
- Don't have the subject look into the camera



# Shooting an interview

- Frame up the face and shoulders
- Be aware of the direction of the light
- Rule of thirds





# Interview questions

- Avoid two-part questions
- Ask open-ended questions – those that evoke emotion, feeling or opinion





# Shooting an interview



- The hardest part?
- Keeping your mouth shut!



#### Let's shoot!

- Teams of two
- Each person is to operate camera, interviewing each other about your favorite place on the Ole Miss Campus
- Go to that spot and shoot 2 video sequences
- Bonus points if you find someone there to talk to!
- Be back on time you have 45 minutes



#### Let's watch!

- What's one thing you feel your team did very well?
- What's one thing you know you could do better next time?
- Instructor's choice



### Seven deadly sins

- 1. Headhunting--placing every subject in the center of your frame.
- 2. Motor zooming--overuse of on-screen zooms.
- 3. Rooting--staying in one spot instead of looking for interesting angles.



### Seven deadly sins

- 4. Fire hosing--panning all over the scene.
- 5. Upstanding--shooting everything from standing eye-level.
- 6. Snap shooting--taping only two or three seconds per shot.
- 7. Backlighting--too much light falling on the background instead of on the subject.



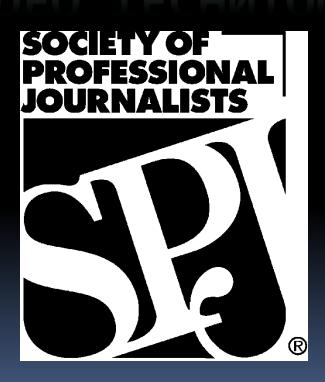
#### What we learned

- Stabilize your shots/tripod
- Frame for head & nose room
- Shoot sequences & hold your shots
- Be aware of the lighting
- Sound really, really matters
- YOU can do it!



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# The Fabric Merchant

Avoiding the zoom shot part II

YouTube link

