

BEFORE THE SHOOT

- Charge the batteries
- Make sure you pack everything (batteries, mic, tapes, tri-pod, earphones, release forms)
- Get tapes ready to record

COMPOSITION

- Look at the image in the viewfinder, not through the lens to the scene
- Use the whole frame (include in the frame only what adds to your story)
- Watch that headroom (no head space and watch that nothing is coming out of head)
- Lead your subject (if person looking in particular direction leave space on that side)
- Rule of Thirds (putting the subject on the edge of the shot rather than the center)
- Don't be afraid to get close
- Go for the interesting angle
- Control the depth of field (how much is in focus) through the zoom (more you zoom the less depth) and through the iris (the higher the number the more depth)

CATCHING THE ACTION

- Avoid zooming except when there is a real need (during interview)
- Practice a slow zoom
- Put yourself in the middle of the action by moving your feet
- Turn camera off when moving from shot to shot (zoom out when must move)
- Don't need to catch every minute of the action, instead try letting the action pass in front of the camera and then move to another location and set up a new shot.
- Shoot with handles (let the camera roll for a few seconds before and after shot)

AUTO FOCUS unless:

- Shooting an object too close to focus normally (Tele Macro)
- Shooting an interview where camera is more than 6 feet away using zoom or low light
- Shooting through window (especially when wet or dirty)
- Shooting an object that is reflective, low contrast, fast moving, or horizontally striped
- Want the focus to be on an object not in the center of the shot
- Low lighting

AUTO EXPOSURE unless:

- Colors look wrong (white balance)
- Bright light is behind the subject (backlight button)
- Too dark or too bright (shutter speed, f-stop, gain)
- Extreme low light (Magic Pix [press once]: blurs with movement)
- No light (0LUX Magic Pix [press twice]: reverse the viewfinder adding light)

AFTER THE SHOOT

- Label each tape with date, name of event, and number (1 of 3)
- Create log for each tape with description of each shot and time code

STORAGE

- Avoid wet, humid or hot places (i.e. not in car)
- Rewind tapes when not in use
- Take battery off camera
- Turn mics off

MANUAL EXPOSURE

- ▶ AWB (Auto White Balance) ▶ light bulb (indoor light) ▶ sun (outdoor light) ▶
- flower (manual balance): hold up to white or black and press ▶ until flower stops flashing
- ▶ Shutter speed – Controls the number of frames per second and thus the light let in
 - 1/60 ▶ 1/8000 (with 1/60 letting in the most light)
 - Shoot fast moving action at 1/120 or above
 - Easiest way to brighten or darken a scene
- ▶ DB – Gain up value (closer to 18db the worse the quality but the more light)
- ▶ F-stop– Controls depth of field(how much is in focus) and the light that comes in
 - Open ▶ f16 (the closer to open the less depth of field and the more light)
 - Must have gain at 0db to use F-stop
 - Can't change shutter speed after setting f-stop

CHOICES

- Place (good sound, comfortable for the talent, adds to information)
- Frame (only include information that is relevant)
- Microphone (right sound for space)
- Angle and Composition (what tells your story in the most engaging way) *tri-pod?*
- Zoom (a little zoom is more flattering and gets rid of clutter)
- Exposure (depth of field, amount of movement, and level of light)
- Focus (auto or manual)
- How long before change positions (don't forget the handles)

Using Light

- Avoid hot spots (bright lights/whites included in shot)
 - Try to shoot your subjects with light on their faces rather than with light coming from behind them or from any extreme angles (directly to the side or directly from below or above)
 - A light coming slightly from the side is preferable, so that the face doesn't look flat. It will allow for more definition of the face or subject matter and create subtle shadows for depth. This might require turning off overhead lights and using lamps or windows)
 - Shoot early in the morning or late in the afternoon for better lighting (warmer, better angled light and nice shadows)
 - Overcast days provide nice, even light but also mutes colors, lowers contrast and opens up dark shadows
 - Shooting in the shade can soften light but will also flatten image
 - When shooting under a tree watch out that the subjects skin does not turn green (manual white balance)
 - Midday sun is often the worst lighting but can use deep shadows to create a dramatic contrast
 - Bright walls can be used to bounce light on a subject when face is in shadow (be careful because the walls brightness will mess up camera meter or will be too white on screen)
 - Just after sunrise and just before sunset the proximity of the sun to the horizon tends to focus and channel the light (similar to a spotlight)
- * Light from more than one source will be more even (fewer shadows)

Holding the Camcorder

For maximum stability, grip the camcorder in your right hand and keep your right elbow pressed against your body. If necessary, support the camcorder with your left hand. Be careful that your fingers do not touch the microphone or lens.

High-angle Recording



Low-angle Recording



For More Stability

Lean against a wall



Put the camcorder on a table



Lie on your elbow



Use a tripod



Lighting

When recording outdoors, we recommend recording with the sun at your back.



- When using a tripod, do not leave the viewfinder exposed to direct sunlight; it may melt (due to concentration of the light by the lens).
- Do not use tripods with fastening screws longer than 0.2 inch (5.5 mm) as they may damage the camcorder.