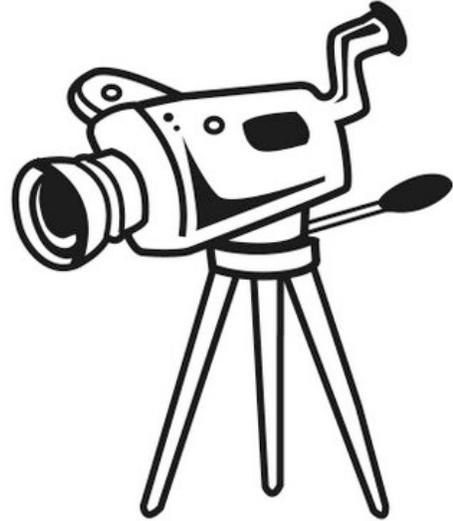


YouTube Video Creation

Step 1 - Plan your project

1. **Develop your message** – “I want everyone to understand that _____.” You have to have a central message you want others to hear.
2. **Develop the flow of your message** – From your central message should flow a few natural supporting points that lead your audience to your central message. Write out your script in simple, direct statements. With this in mind, you will want to stay under 200 words most likely and strive to stay within 8-12 statements.
3. **Align statements with imagery** – Once you have your script, create a “storyboard”. Find or shoot to visually support what your script says. Keep “talking heads” to a bare minimum. Use voiceovers and images to reduce background noise.



Step 2 - Collect / Capture Video

1. **Collect Pre-existing Video** – It is much easier... Assemble existing footage and determine what is left to shoot.
2. **Capturing Good Footage** – footage you need to shoot to complete your video, **Use a tripod**
3. **Minimize as much “shake” as possible** - Use a tripod.
4. **Think like a photographer** - Don't “center weight”. Compose your shots so they are arranged with the points of interest happening at one of the points where the imaginary lines cross. The circles represent the locations that are good to place the shot's “interest”.
5. **Filming people** - If you have to film a person talking, keep it short. Don't film at high noon with harsh shadows, no sunglasses, no hats, wear uniforms, etc.
6. **White balance** - Ensure your white balance is set to the right conditions (i.e. full sun, cloudy day, deep shade, etc.) and your image is in focus.
7. **Film distances** - Shoot several “distances” for each concept you want to illustrate. Shoot a close-up, a medium distance, and a far distance shot for each if possible. It takes a lot of time and effort to be in a place to capture good video, so capture 2 to 3 times the number of shots or amount of footage than you think you will need. You can always not use it, but you may not be able to recreate that same opportunity again.
8. **Footage length** - Shoot a minimum of 20 seconds of footage for each “take” to ensure you have enough to fade in / fade out in the final production.

9. **Sound** - Only worry about the video's sound if you will NEED to use it. Often, the raw video's sound can be stripped and / or replaced in the final production. You can capture useful video with sirens blaring in the background.
10. **Digital File Saving** - Purchase a high capacity external drive (terabytes) to download, organize, and store the footage you capture. File naming: YEAR_MONTH_TITLE such as "2014_06_junewildflowers"

Step 3 – Record Voiceover

1. **Microphone quality** – There is nothing that sets the quality of your recording more strongly than the quality of the mic you use. A cheap mic cannot make a quality recording no matter what you do post-recording. You can get a good condenser mic for under \$150. If you will be making your own voiceovers, check with your supervisor to get a good mic.
2. **Tone** - Record your script statements in a pleasant, variable tone (not monotone).
3. **Distance** - Keep your mouth about 6 inches from the mic. If you are too far away, you won't get a good sound. If you are too close, you risk distortion when you say a "t" or a "p", etc.
4. **Gaps** - Leave a couple of seconds of silence between the statements you record to allow the editor to clip statements and insert them as needed into the finished product.
5. **Location** - Record in a location that is as quiet as possible so that your voice can be isolated and used in the finished product without introducing "extra" noise.
6. **Smile** - Your facial expression can be "heard" when you speak. Smile when you do your voiceover. Your smile will come through in your voice.
7. **Format** - Save the recording in a high quality format such as a .wav file. File formats accepted: MOV, MP4, MPEG-4, WMV.

Step 4- Add finishing touches

1. **Introduction / Exit** – Every video must begin and end with the standard introduction and exit to brand these videos as a Texas Master Naturalist Program product. Any credits should be displayed along with the exit graphic. Required text -
Funding for the Texas Master Naturalist program is provided by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
2. **Clip length** – As a general rule, clips should be on the screen no less than 2 seconds and probably no more than 5 or 6 seconds before you transition to a new shot.
3. **Transition rules** – Transitions should be as seamless and go unnoticed. The most professional looking, least distracting transitions are fades. Use fade through black only at the beginning and end separating the body of the video from the intro and exit.
4. **Text rules** – Use only a sans serif text font (Arial, Helvetica). The font size should be large enough for you to read it on your computer screen from 6 feet away. 24 point is a good.

Stick with one font color white or a neutral color like beige on a dark background. Use good placement on the video background to ensure that text can be easily read. Leave it on the screen long enough for you to easily read it in the time allotted. Again, fades are best for text to come and go. Avoid tumbling, spinning, flying-in etc.

5. **Background music / sounds** – Choose music that fits the “feel” of the video. Use pleasant music for uplifting scenes, darker music for less uplifting scenes. Try to align the start of video “segments” with the start of musical segments. This is very much an art, but try. Also, music should not compete with the voiceover. Use royalty free music or nonprofit designated use.
 - a. <http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/>
 - b. <http://www.danosongs.com/>
 - c. <http://www.mobygratis.com/film-music.html>
 - d. <http://www.freesoundtrackmusic.com/>
 - e. <http://www.publicdomain4u.com/>
 - f. <http://www.beatpick.com/player/index>
6. **Master Naturalist Logo** – The logo must go on every video. It is to be placed in the lower right corner and set to a transparency of 30%. To determine the size and placement of the logo, please use this image as the template:



Step 6: Video Review and Approval Process

1. **“Finished First Draft”** – Take time to review your video and determine it is the best you can make it before showing others.
2. **Supervisor / Program Director Review** – Once you have gotten your video as polished as you can you will submit it to Jennifer Buratti jmburatti@gmail.com. Jennifer will work with the program staff to review the video and report back any changes that need to be made before it is used in the contest.