

CREW SHEET - Random Video tips

1) WHITE BALANCE

We all know that you need to do a white balance for the type of light you are using before you start shooting. This sets up the correct colour balance in the camera. Interesting effects can be obtained, however, by doing a white balance on coloured paper the picture is washed by the colour that would be opposite on the colour wheel. Experiment for yourself.

2) BETTER SOUND Use an external microphone connected to the mic input. The video sound can generally be infinitely improved by using an external mic plugged into the mic input of the camera. Dick Smiths have a full range of adapters that will help you get connected.

The use of a directional mic, (a shot gun, or electret) will cut down the surrounding noise. You still need to record in a quiet environment however.

To reduce the risk of damage to the microphone and camera, use some gaff tape to fix the cable to the handle of the camera. In this way if the cord is tugged it doesn't stress the cable.... Watch your feet. Don't get tangled around a pole or another person.

3) ARE YOU STEADY? Dealing with the camera shakes (Part I)

Good camera work equals good video - most of the time! A steady shot is not always the best type of shot, however, it often helps stacks! Obviously you can use a tripod to get a steady result. Use a fluid head tripod for smooth movement. Manfrotto and Miller, as well as other brands have low cost tripods that suit domestic cameras normally found in schools. Check them out.

If you can't use a tripod steady the camera against any solid object eg, a tree, a pole, a desk, the ground, another students head!@#\$. Brace yourself in the shape of a pyramid arms wedged into your chest.

4) STAY WIDE AND SURVIVE! Dealing with the camera shakes (Part II).

The wobbles in hand held camera work can often be reduced by setting the lens angle (zoom control) to fully wide. This reduces apparent movement, and gives you an NYPD Blue effect to your shooting, great for vox pops. You will need to keep close to your subject. With the camera lens set wide the focus also will become far less critical...BONUS!

This approach will not always get you the type of shot you want, use only as directed and if pain persists...

5) BATTERY POWER A good idea to invest in several good long life batteries. You can pay squillions for branded batteries you buy from a video store or if you are after an effective and low cost solution buy your batteries from a battery specialist eg Battery World. I saved around \$200 per battery on the long life Cannon equivalent batteries.

Charge your batteries as soon as you finish shooting (provided the battery is cool) and don't allow them to flatten completely. This extends the life of your battery considerably. (Deep cycling is good for lead acid batteries only!)

6) FEELING ROMANTIC? If you want a soft blurred edge around your shot, place glad wrap plastic film over the lens and smear some Vaseline around the edges... Works best if you are zoomed in on your shot rather than wide. If candlelight is involved, a stocking stretched over the lens gives a star filter effect. (Also best if the camera is locked on a tripod with no movement.) Recommended uses - romance, dream sequences, flash backs

7) BURNING OUT THE SHOT If you use the indoors camera settings (ie High gain, open iris and indoor colour balance) for shooting outdoors, the result looks mad! This is not the technically correct way to shoot but it gives an interesting result. Check it out! Also try doing your white balance on different colored objects.

8) SHOOTING IN THE RAIN? DON'T! If you really need to, simply use a large umbrella and/or a wet weather cover... about A\$20.00 from places like Brashes. I have also used a kitchen tidy bag on a camera with a wide angle lens. A hole is cut in the bag and attached to the lens of the camera firmly with electrical tape. Once attached, a small blade is used to trim excess plastic away from the front of the lens. if you do it right the main body of the bag protects the camera from moisture. (to an extent). **The deluxe version** uses a large lunch bag that can be sealed. These bags are also made from clear plastic giving you access to the view finder.

9) LIGHTING - Save Big Bucks! A video production studio needs some free standing lights that can be easily moved around. A standard lighting kit consists of 3 lights that are used as 'key', 'fill' and 'back' lights. (see LIGHTING LESSON PLANS) A standard kits normally cost around \$2500. Arlec make a light stand with two 500 watt floods that sells for around \$80 and they work great as they are. Your metalworks dept. could also make up shutters for them so you can shape your light. You can get them from most hardware stores.

LED video lights are very expensive. Alternative - check out LED work lights for the motor industry. An 18 watt led work light is a fraction of the cost and bright enough for lighting a video interview. They use very little power and do not get hot. If you are buying them specify 'warm' lights to match halogen colour temperature (around 3600K).

Manfrotto make a cheap lighting stand around \$100 ea. They also make a connector that you will need to connect the lamp to you stand.

10) DOLLY SHOTS A dolly shot is one that is taken from a moving platform... The secret is out and you DIDN'T hear it here first!

Library trolleys, because of their large wheels, make great dollies for that moving shot you just have to have! **'The great escape'!** - Another useful piece of information is that the librarian is usually NOT in the library the period just before lunch!

11) CLEARER FOCUS Using auto focus is great most of the time but you can often get more creative shots using the manual focus function (eg focus pulls and depth of field effects). To optimize the focus of your shot, line up the object you want in sharp focus, zoom in as far as your camera will allow, focus, and then zoom out to the desired degree. Cameras are 'para focal' so what is in sharpest focus in close will give the best focus out wide. (note - focus is less critical the wider the shot is.)

12) DON'T POINT THE CAMERA AT THE SUN!!

Obvious... But its not that hard to do when you are just carrying it between shots. Could make for a very expensive day!