

**Mississippi Arts Commission**  
**Whole Schools Initiative**  
**Introduction to Creating a Digital Video**  
**Two-Video Series**  
**G. Mark LaFrancis**  
**Film Maker and Teaching Artist**

**SUPPLIES NEEDED**

On-line access (preferably through PC, Laptop, Smartpad)

**INTENDED AUDIENCE**

Middle and High School teachers

**DETAILED OUTLINE OF LESSON**

**OVERVIEW**

Introduction to Creating a Digital Video is intended to give the teacher confidence in the fundamentals of video creation: history, preparation, equipment, recording, audio, recording video, careers in digital video, types of digital videos, terms used in digital video, and more. Introduction to Digital Video Creation will use video clips, on-line lessons, and instruction via video produced by the instructor G. Mark LaFrancis. The lesson is intended to be a pathway to further instruction in more advanced digital video creation (editing, software, audio tracks, and more). The lesson will include short sample digital videos using the basic techniques taught in the Outline of Lessons. The instructor has extensive experience teaching film and film production at the secondary school level and currently is a Resident Artist at the Fallin Career and Technology Center in Film and Photography.

**LESSON/TRAINING OUTCOMES**

The goal of Introduction to Digital Video Creation is to have teachers armed with knowledge of the fundamentals of digital video creation, the tools, personnel, and methods. In addition, the lesson is intended to have teachers gain confidence in their ability to educate their students on the various components of digital video theory, professions, language, terms, equipment, and video creation.

**OUTLINE OF LESSONS**  
**VIDEO ONE OF TWO**

**Running time: 15:21**

- A. History of Film and Video: a short overview of video from the silent films to the digital age.
- B. Types of Videos: documentaries, feature films, shorts, commercials, music videos, promos, etc. The teachers will learn the similarities and differences of each type.
- C. Terms Used in Video: Scene, Clip, Pan, Tilt, Zoom, A Roll, B Roll, On Location, etc. The teachers will learn the terms and how each is applied to the creation of a digital video.
- D. Types of Jobs/Careers in Video creation and production: Director, Producer, Sound Technician, Video Technician, Camera Operator, Gaffer, Rigger, and more. The teachers will learn the job titles and how each is applied to the creation of a digital video and in the development of a career in digital video. This will enable teachers to help students understand that there is a career pathway using the skills they learn.
- E. Equipment used in Digital Video Creation: Camera, Tripod, Microphones, Lights, and more. The teacher will learn how equipment is used in digital video production.

## **EXERCISES IN VIDEO ONE**

There are two short exercises in Video One

1. Name a favorite film and describe why you have selected that film.
2. Consider a film you would have your students create.

## **OUTLINE OF LESSONS VIDEO TWO OF TWO Running Time 17:00**

- A. Feature vs. Documentary: Teachers will learn the differences of feature film and documentary, and the planning process for each.
- B. Clips: Teachers will learn the importance of clips and their use in the overall film.
- C. Screenplay (Script) and Shot Plan: Teachers will learn the importance of both a screenplay and shot plan in the development of a film. Examples of each will be shown. (SHOT PLAN is attached)
- D. Three Stages of Video Production: Teachers will learn the first of two stages of video production: Pre-Production and Production and what these stages entail.
- E. Video Log: Teachers will learn the importance of a video log and see an example. (VIDEO LOG is attached)
- F. Camera Angles: Teachers will learn the importance of varying camera angles and see an excerpt of a short film created by students at Adams County Christian School, which demonstrates the technique.
- G. Tips: Teachers will receive tips on situations to avoid when video recording. (TIPS are attached)
- H. Software: Teachers will see a list of some of the various digital video editing software: Adobe Premiere Elements, Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, Video Pad, iMovie.

## **EXERCISES IN VIDEO TWO**

1. Identify Clips: Teachers will see in slow motion the 30-second Nutella commercial shown in Video One and identify the number of clips used in the production. This exercise underscores the importance of clips and varying camera angles.
2. Create a Shot Plan: Teachers will be tasked to reflect on the exercise in Video One and develop a shot plan for a film they would like to make and/or have their student to make.

## **MISSISSIPPI CCR STANDARDS**

Introduction to Digital Video Creation is intended to give teachers knowledge and skills in order to enable their students to complete some of the requirements as outlined in the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (Specifically MA: Cr1.1.I through MA: Cr2.2.I.

## TIPS

**Pre-Roll/Post-Roll:** When recording, you should let the camera record for a few seconds before the action starts (Pre-Roll), and continue recording when the action stops (Post-Roll). When recording people, especially, have them hold their pose or position until the Post-Roll is finished. It will make your editing much easier.

**Sunlight:** Harsh sun can ruin a shot. It is best to record outdoors under “flat” or overcast. If you must record in bright sunlight, bring along sun-blocking material (cardboard, etc.). Avoid shooting where there are lots of shadows (unless you’re seeking that effect.)

**Steady:** Work hard to keep the camera steady. A tripod or monopod (one leg) can help a great deal. If you have to use hand-held, brace the camera by positioning your elbows into your side (human tripod).

**Pan/Tilt/Zoom:** Try to have these movements smooth and fluid. Practicing really helps, especially when using two or more of these techniques at once.

**Batteries/Memory Cards:** Have extras on hand. AND make sure you have plenty of memory and battery before a shooting project.

**Audio:** Use earphones to verify your audio. DON’T trust you have good audio, make sure you do. NOTE: when using a lapel mike, many of them record in mono, not stereo, so you very likely will hear in only one side of the earphone. You can create a dual audio channel with most digital video editing software.

**Shot Plan:** Have a written plan BEFORE you shoot, even a short video (i.e. 30 seconds or so).

**Background:** Avoid clutter in the background of your shot, both inside and outside (i.e. posters, clocks, bulletin boards, wires, cars, telephone poles, etc.).

**Noise:** Avoid unnecessary noise (i.e. air conditioners, lawn mowers, cars, hammering, bells, announcements, talking, etc.)

**Starting a Shot:** Three steps before recording on a location, set, etc.: Demand QUIET ON THE SET. Ask CAMERA READY (or CAMERAS READY). Ask TALENT or ACTORS READY. Then you’re ready to declare ROLL-EM and ACTION. Remember, let the cameras record a bit (Pre-Roll) before calling for ACTION.

**Story Board:** Many motion picture companies create a Story Board (a picture/drawing book or board) from a script or shot plan. That’s good, but what I often do is create Scene Notes (i.e. Scene 1, Scene 2, Scene 3...) This can be done after a shot plan is developed. Scenes, though, do not have to be shot in the same sequence. They can be sequenced in the project time line.

**Download:** It is important you download from the memory card as soon as possible after recording for a while or a day. Make folders on the computer specific to the project and certain scenes/categories within the project.

**Music/Copyright:** You may use copyright material ONLY if it is for classroom instruction, NOT for YouTube, Facebook, Tic-Tok, etc. Such use falls under the Fair Use in the Classroom guidelines. However, if you wish some great royalty free music, footage, images, I recommend Pond5.com. YouTube also has some nice material for use.

**Camera Angles:** Vary your camera angles, rather than record straight ahead shots. Try low-to-high, high-to-low, side shots, wide, medium, close-up.

**Have Fun and Good Luck!**



