



LSE Film and Audio

Guidelines for filming a piece-to-camera using a smartphone

This guide assumes that you will be filming yourself delivering a piece-to-camera using a smartphone. If you have any other technology such as a camera and/or microphone, many of these same principles will apply.

Most smartphone cameras will produce a higher-quality image than that of a webcam. It is preferable that you film yourself on a smartphone rather than through your computer.

To Prepare:

- Decide where to record. Filming inside is usually more straightforward. Find a room that's quiet and bright, ideally with natural light (see below for more info on lighting).
- You can deliver the piece to camera either sitting down or standing up. If standing, make sure to keep feet planted firmly on the floor to prohibit you from swaying side-to-side.
- Put your phone on flight mode (unless you are live streaming) so that it doesn't beep or vibrate during your recording.
- Consider a 30-second test recording.

Filming the video:

- **As a rule**, shoot in **horizontal/ landscape format** (16:9), with the smartphone on its side. **Only** use vertical footage if you're filming for specific social media platforms (e.g. Instagram stories).
- Where possible, use natural lighting to light your face. Do not shoot with a window directly behind you. Make sure that the device does not throw a shadow onto your face or immediate background.
- Keep the shot as static as possible, and try to avoid filming completely hand-held. If you have a tripod or stand for your device, use this. Otherwise, prop the device up on an object or piece of furniture.
- Where possible, get someone else to shoot the video for you (also using an object/piece of furniture to balance the device where possible).
- Where possible, do not use the phone's 'selfie'/front-facing camera (unless you are specifically asked to), as the cameras on the back of smartphones are generally more sophisticated. If you have a recent model smartphone, the selfie camera should be adequate if no one is around to help you film.
- Place the device at **your eye level** and perpendicular to the floor (i.e. not angled up towards the ceiling/down towards the floor).
- Provide a good deal of distance between yourself and your backdrop where possible. Do not shoot right up against a wall.

- Frame yourself in a medium close-up, so that your head is centre-frame. There should be a small amount of room above your head, and the shot should end below the shoulders (at the upper chest). As a guide, your eyes should be around one-third of the way down the shot, e.g.:



Recording audio:

- Where possible, use a separate audio recording device. E.g., if you have a second smartphone available, place (or have someone hold) this as close to you as possible, and just out of the frame. Record audio on this device using a voice memo app, or by recording another video.
- Alternatively, if you have some earphones or headphones that include an inbuilt microphone, you can connect these to the smartphone and place (or have someone hold) the microphone just out of frame.
- If you do not have an additional smartphone, microphone, or alternative recording device, the sound on the original video will suffice.

Whilst recording:

- Address the camera directly. Make sure that you identify where it is on the smartphone, to ensure that your eye line is correct.
- If the footage is going to be edited, leave a couple of seconds of quiet at the beginning and end of the recording, as well as in-between responses. If you stumble and wish to pick up your sentence again, provide a moment of pause.
- If you're answering questions, consider integrating the question into your answer. E.g. 'What's your favourite colour?' would be answered 'my favourite colour is green', as opposed to 'green'. This will depend on the kind of video that you are contributing to.

Sharing files:

- The way in which you will share the files will depend on the project.
- Avoid sharing footage and audio on messaging services such as WhatsApp or Messenger, as they will compress the files.
- Where possible, use file sharing apps such as Google Drive, OneDrive, or Dropbox. You could also use Microsoft Teams.