

7 Media production

Media production is a complex and demanding process that requires extensive planning and organisation to ensure that the technical and aesthetic conventions of a media form are used in a manner that will engage your intended audience.

Whether you're interested in filmmaking, photography, magazines, animation or radio, this chapter will show you how you can create a polished and professional media production. You'll see how to manage this complex and often demanding process, and receive advice on the planning, organisation and production.

Your school-assessed task will consist of three parts:

- research portfolio and production exercises
- production design plan
- production.

Peter Jackson, director of *The Frighteners* (1996), *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) and *The Lovely Bones* (2009)



7.1 The production design plan

A production design plan is the blueprint for your media product. It includes all of your planning documents such as your treatment, screenplay, storyboards and shooting script, if you have decided to create a film product.

A GOOD PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The most effective production design plans are those that effectively communicate your vision through a clear and detailed outline of the processes involved. Some schools choose A4 or A3 folios, others choose bound journals, while some will ask you to complete entirely digital design plans. When you are creating your design plan, it is important to remember not to waste time decorating it. This is a professional document intended to communicate your concept clearly to others. It should be written and organised in a way that is recognisable by industry professionals. Time decorating your design plan is better spent developing your idea, screenplay, storyboards, mock-ups or other planning documents.

The production design plan is a crucial planning document that you will use throughout the production and post-production process. The criteria for the school-assessed task can be found on the VCAA website. It's important to familiarise yourself with these assessment criteria because they can help guide you to make a more polished and more professional product.

MEDIA PRODUCTION DEVELOPMENT

Before undertaking any production, media producers engage in a process of development, during which they explore ideas, experiment with equipment and research the form, style and genre of their production.

Ideas do not appear from nowhere. If you are having difficulty developing an idea for your media production, do not sit around and wait for inspiration to strike. Ideas are developed through a process of investigation and research. They develop by immersing yourself in the media. You need to watch, observe, scrutinise, annotate and think. Because creating a media product is a long and time-consuming process, settling on an idea that is achievable and will sustain your interest is crucial.

It is also important to ensure that your idea is feasible. In the planning stage of your production, you need to reflect carefully on the opportunities and challenges that might

occur throughout the process. Problems are much easier to resolve when you are experimenting with ideas in the planning stage. Not thinking carefully about anticipated difficulties can lead to much more significant problems during production and post-production.

BRAINSTORMING

In the early stages of your media production, it's important to document the development of your ideas. The process of developing an idea is called brainstorming. This is a word that most of us are familiar with, but few actually understand how to do it properly.

DEVELOPING IDEAS

Friends and family

Talking to your friends, family and teachers is a great way to develop ideas. The process of articulating your thoughts to other people means you start to clarify exactly what you'd like to make.

Newspapers and magazines

Flipping through a newspaper is often a terrific way to find an idea for a media production. Everyday newspapers are filled with human drama. It might be a crime or a human-interest story that becomes the inspiration for a documentary or narrative film, or the reporting of a current, topical issue might form the focus for your magazine.

Books

If you are interested in narrative film, it is important to read regularly and widely. Reading fiction will give you a sense of storytelling, character, dialogue and narrative structure. Short stories are a particularly good source of ideas for short films. You can get a clear sense of the type of stories that can be told by reading short stories. If you base your film on a short story, you will need to get permission from the owner of the short story if you want to enter the film in film festivals or distribute it on the internet.



FIGURE 7.1.1 Excerpts from production design plans created by Top Screen selected students, Bridget Webster and Ben Head

Pick a genre, any genre ...

Still looking for an idea? Take a look through this list of genres and formats to see if it sparks an idea: action, adventure, advertisement, alien invasion, animation, arthouse, B-movie, biopic, buddy cop, chick flick, claymation, comedy, coming of age, cooking show, crime, current affairs, dance film, detective film, documentary, drama, educational film, edutainment, espionage, experimental, fantasy, film noir, game show, ghost story, heist film, historical documentary, horror, infomercial, lifestyle show, melodrama, mockumentary, music video, musical, mystery, neo-noir, news, parody, period drama, political satire, post-apocalyptic, psychological drama, radio drama, reality television, romance, romantic comedy, satire, science fiction, sitcom, slapstick, soap opera, spoof, sport, spy, survival, suspense, techno-thriller, teen comedy, thriller, travel, vampire, western, zombie.

Five films and the ideas that inspired them

- Writer Richard Matheson came up with the idea for his novella *Duel*, which was later made into a film by Steven Spielberg, after he was forced off the road by a truck driver.
- Leigh Whannell and James Wan were inspired to make *Saw* (2004) by the final sequence of *Mad Max* (1979).
- Director Edgar Wright was inspired to make *Hot Fuzz* (2007) because, as a fan of action films, he was disappointed by the number of British entries to the genre. In the process of developing the screenplay, Wright and co-writer Simon Pegg watched 138 cop films.
- Filmmaker Clayton Jacobson put himself through film school by cleaning toilets, which is where he got the initial inspiration for the film *Kenny* (2006). After his brother Shane Jacobson did an impersonation of a toilet company employee, the idea started to take shape.
- Novelist and screenwriter Alex Garland developed the script for *28 Days Later* (2002) partly as a response to the way the British government was dealing with mad cow disease. He was also inspired by the work of George A Romero.

Once you have developed an initial idea for your film, it is time to start refining the concept. Start to write down ideas for scenes, characters, shots, ideas, interview questions or page layouts. Unlike the brainstorming process where you are writing down a series of possibly unrelated ideas, developing the concept requires a deeper exploration of ideas. It is important to document these as they develop.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Once you have settled on an idea for your production, you will engage in a research task to explore aspects of the media form that you will work in. Throughout this process, you will develop a deeper understanding of narrative, genre, style and the codes and conventions that are relevant to your production.

The best research portfolios will be clear and purposeful. If you are making a horror film, for example, you might conduct a detailed analysis of how notable horror films use composition or sound to create a sense of unease. Similarly, if you are creating a documentary film, you might investigate and write about how documentarians tell a story using a combination of interviews and b-roll. This research portfolio is assessed as part of your production design plan. It is important to recognise that you should refer to this research portfolio throughout your production. When you are shooting or editing your film, for example, you might return to this research for guidance.

During the development phase of your media product, you will also complete two production exercises during which you develop an understanding of the skills, processes and equipment required to complete your production.



FIGURE 7.1.2 Shane Jacobson as Kenny in *Kenny* (2006)

There are a number of ways you can approach your research portfolio and production exercises. Regardless of your starting point, you need to produce a detailed document that reflects extensive knowledge of your selected media form and genre.

Ideas for your research portfolio and production exercises can be found in the sections dedicated to each media form.

INTENTION

When writing your intention, think carefully about what you hope to achieve. Write about the purpose, impact and outcome of your media product. When you are writing a statement of intention, it is crucial that you explain what you are going to create clearly in the first sentence. A student creating a music magazine might write something like this:

I am going to create a twelve-page alternative music magazine. This magazine will be an engaging and intelligent read for people who are passionate about the alternative music scene. It will enrich their understanding of the music and artists by including in-depth news, reviews and feature articles, which not only comment on this subculture but also give an insight into the creative process. This magazine is for people who love alternative music and will encourage them to delve deeper into this world, appreciating and enjoying the music and artists even more, providing fuel for their interest and passion in this area. Ultimately, this magazine does not aspire to introduce new people to alternative music, but rather to build support for artists and musicians by creating further passion and interest among their existing fans.

AUDIENCE

Audience is one of the most important considerations when planning a media product. Who are you making the media product for? What do they expect? What will they enjoy and find interesting? The knowledge, expectations and experience of your audience will inform every stage of the planning and production of your media product.

Understanding the audiences' knowledge of your subject matter is fundamental to forming a clear picture of who will be consuming your media product. Imagine you are creating a computing magazine. This is one example in which the audience's knowledge is crucial. Are you

creating your magazine for users who struggle to upload photographs to their computer? Or are you creating a magazine for programmers? The moment you disregard what your audience already knows about your subject matter is the moment you lose their interest entirely.

When you are planning your media product, it is also important to understand audience expectations about its conventions, genre and style. Observing the technical and aesthetic conventions of your media form is crucial. Audiences will judge your media product by the same standards that they have for professional media productions. If you are creating an upmarket fashion magazine, readers of these publications have particular expectations about the use of typography and white space—disregarding these expectations means that you're disregarding your audience. When you consider this, every element of your production—from the weight of the typography and the width of margins, to the positioning of drop caps and photographs—becomes important. It is very similar with video production—audiences have highly developed expectations about the aesthetic and technical conventions of films. Poor use of headroom or the ineffective recording of dialogue—that is, not observing the technical conventions of this form—can reduce audience engagement with the text.

Audience expectations about genre are also important. If you are making a romantic comedy, for example, part of the audience engagement with these texts comes from their conventional narrative structure and the anticipation of a happy ending. Having a clear understanding of an audience's expectations also means that you can subvert what they expect to happen.

Defining your audience

When you are defining the audience for your media product it is important to avoid generalisation. It is not helpful to write that your intended audience will be 'adults' or 'teenagers'. Simply referring to a particular age group does not tell you much about the people who will be engaging with your media product. You need to have a clear audience in mind. Imagine that you are creating a music magazine, which will focus on alternative music. You might write something like this: 'The audience for this magazine will be teenagers who are interested in music.'

When defining your audience, you need to be far more specific. Write about the attitudes, expectations and knowledge of the audience. A more detailed description of audience:

The audience for this magazine will be people who are interested in the alternative music scene. They are the type of people who have their radios tuned to Triple J or RRR. They have an active and passionate interest in music and are always interested in discovering new acts. It is likely that they are not particularly interested in musicians who have achieved mainstream success or regularly have songs in the Top 40. They enjoy music that is more individual, expressive and may not appeal to a mass audience. Individuality and musical integrity are important to the audience. They are not only interested in listening to new alternative music, but they enjoy reading interviews with artists and bands, which gives them a greater insight into the creative process. When choosing a music magazine, they will have certain expectations about its content. It must be fresh, detailed, and insightful and have a great deal of integrity. It will be well-written and not feature shallow puff pieces. They enjoy reading serious music journalism. The audience for this magazine will have a very detailed understanding of alternative music already and will seek out magazines that enrich their understanding of music and its associated subcultures.

7.2 Film

Students creating a film or video product must create a product less than ten minutes in duration. The production design plan will address the codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- treatment
- screenplay
- storyboards
- shot list
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and/or media form, such as location, camera techniques, techniques of engagement, edit details, lighting and music and sound effects
- production notes.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used. Here are some ideas that you might use as starting points:

- Research how camera techniques, acting, *mise en scène*, editing, lighting and/or sound are used in the genre or style of filmmaking you have selected. When writing about the use of particular codes, illustrate your discussion with stills from relevant films and explain how you will use these techniques in your production.
- Study notable examples from the genre or style of film you have selected. Genre is an important consideration when making any media product, particularly short films. The audience will have particular expectations about the narrative, characters and style of your film based on its genre. If you do not fulfil these genre conventions the audience may feel cheated. At the

same time, it is necessary to make your film feel fresh and unexpected. Explain how you will use these genre conventions in the planning and production of your own film.

- Analyse the typical narrative structure of your selected genre, showing an understanding of conventional structure with reference to significant films. Comment on the opening, development and resolution of the narrative. How will you use these typical story structures in your production?
- Undertake a character study explaining how characters are established and developed in films of your selected genre. Explain how characters are developing using a range of cinematic techniques. Likewise, comment on the character arc they undergo during the film.
- Investigate and analyse the style of notable directors from your selected style or genre. Comment on the technical and aesthetic qualities of their films and explain how you will utilise such techniques in your own filmmaking.
- Study notable examples of audience engagement in similar films. This might include how suspense is developed through the use of cinematic techniques or how the audience responds to aspects of the story, such as character development or narrative resolution.

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your media form. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary for completing your project.

- **Camera:** Storyboard and film a short sequence that allows you to develop a greater understanding of the camera required for your production. The exercise should allow you to explore the camera's capabilities, such as lenses, focus and manual settings.

- **Camera movement:** If your film requires specific types of camera movement, the production exercises are an opportunity to explore how you will achieve these during your production. Such exercises might involve experimentation with tripods, sliders, dollies, cranes and drones.
- **Lighting:** Explore different lighting set-ups. This might involve using a three-point lighting set-up for a simple scene or bouncing fill light onto characters using reflectors. If you are making a horror film, for example, you might explore how to film low-light sequences.
- **Sound:** Shoot a simple scene that involves recording dialogue and sound to explore the capabilities of the microphones you are using. Develop an understanding of how to edit and mix these sounds into your final sequence.
- **Editing:** Using the footage shot for your first exercise, you might learn and explore the capabilities of your editing software, such as assembling footage, colour correcting, colour grading and mixing sound.
- **Music:** Given the difficulty of securing clearance for copyrighted music, you might explore the potential of software like GarageBand and FL Studio to create music for your production.
- **Software:** Production exercises are an opportunity to explore the software you will require to edit.
- **Dialogue:** Short films often require dialogue scenes. Shooting and editing a dialogue scene will enable you to develop a better understanding of microphone positioning, sound editing and mixing.
- **Special effects:** If your film involves particular special effects, you might use software such as Adobe After Effects to explore the feasibility of achieving these results in your final film.

PRE-PRODUCTION

TREATMENT

A treatment is the first stage of developing a script for your video production. It is typically several pages long and describes what happens in your film from beginning to end. Check out the description of how to write a screenplay earlier in the book.

SCREENPLAY

A screenplay is the written planning document for your film. Check out how to write a screenplay earlier in the book.

STORYBOARDS



FIGURE 7.2.1 A storyboard by Tom Hughes

During pre-production, it is important to storyboard every shot in the film. Storyboards will save you time during both principal photography and post-production. Although first-time filmmakers often feel daunted by storyboarding, it's possible to create clear, expressive storyboards with little more than a pencil, paper and some perseverance. Your storyboards should clearly convey your intended use of camera movement, shot size, *mise en scène* and lighting. How you storyboard depends on your preferences and artistic ability. Some filmmakers find it easiest to envisage shots simply using a pencil and paper. Storyboards don't have to be amazing works of art. They simply need to convey a clear sense of composition, movement and expression. Even very basic illustrations can convey the blocking and composition of a shot, as seen in Figure 7.2.1.

Storyboards should convey a clear sense of composition. Filmmakers often use the rule of thirds to create aesthetically pleasing composition. If you divide the frame into thirds, the points of interest should be positioned along these lines or at their intersections.

Your storyboards should show an appropriate use and progression of shot size. A typical scene will usually progress from an extreme long shot to close-ups. When storyboarding your film, think about how shot size and the sequence of shots contributes to the narrative.

Director Ridley Scott is renowned for the small, thumbnail sketches, dubbed 'Ridleygrams', that he uses to convey the visual composition of his films. During the pre-production for *Alien* (1979), 20th Century Fox were so impressed with the detail of his storyboarding that they doubled the film's budget to US\$8.4 million.

Although not everyone can draw, most people have access to a digital camera. One of the best ways to pre-visualise your film is by using a series of digital photographs. Because creating storyboards with a digital camera requires that you visit the actual location, it is a great way to block out a scene, giving you the opportunity to think carefully about the positioning of actors and props within the frame and allowing you to solve problems before you embark on principal photography. Given that many students choose to shoot on DSLR and mirrorless cameras, this is a terrific way to give you a sense of how you can position actors and props within a location. The other advantage of taking photographs using a camera that you are going to shoot the film on is that it encourages you to think about lens choice.



FIGURE 7.2.2 A scene from *Heat* (1995)

Director Michael Mann (*Collateral* 2004, *Miami Vice* 2006) used an SLR camera to pre-visualise the climactic sequence of the film *Heat* (1995). The film involved an armed chase along a busy Los Angeles street. In order to ensure that they filmed the scene as efficiently as possible the director shot the sequence as a series of photographs during pre-production.

Pre-visualising your film with a smartphone is a quick way to think about composition and the sequence of shots. You don't need a storyboarding application, just a photo app that allows you to organise photographs into albums. The advantage of this approach is that it is quick and gives you the freedom and flexibility to develop ideas that occur spontaneously.

ANIMATICS

Creating an animatic is another good strategy for pre-visualising your film. While storyboards are effective ways for thinking about the composition and blocking of shots, they do not give an accurate sense of the rhythm and pacing of your editing. An animatic is a rough edit of your storyboards. This is a useful exercise because it allows you to see how your story will unfold. Completing an animatic allows you to think more carefully about editing, sound effects and music and to gauge the emotional tenor of scenes before you shoot them.

SHOT LIST

A shot list is one of the most useful things that you can have on a film set. A shot list typically has the following columns: scene number, shot number, duration, shot size, location and description. When you are shooting your film, it is a great idea to have a copy of your shot list on a clipboard so you can cross each shot off after it is completed. This avoids frustrating and time-consuming reshoots to pick up material you missed the first time around.

LOCATION SCOUTING

Location scouting is an important stage in the filmmaking process. It is important to choose locations that are accessible and available for filming. There are certain locations—such as train stations—that are not public spaces and will require permission. If you want to film in a location such as a cafe or store you will require permission from the owners to do so. The best approach is to contact them in writing, giving them a detailed overview of the project and how long you will be on the location.

CASTING

When you are thinking about ideas for your film, base the narrative around the actors that you have access to. Casting age-appropriate actors is important. If you are planning to shoot a crime drama, it is not going to look terribly convincing if you cast a seventeen year old as a police detective. It is usually possible to convince older people such as parents or members of your extended family to take on these types of roles. If you do not have access to older actors, do not write a script that requires them. It is also a good idea to keep the number of cast members to a minimum. Every time you add another character you're making your film more complex to shoot.

REHEARSAL

Creating a low-budget film often means that you are relying on the generosity of actors and crew, which means that a smooth, well-organised shoot becomes especially important. Giving your actors adequate time to rehearse is crucial. Make sure that they receive copies of the script several weeks in advance so that they have time to read over their lines and think about delivery. If you spend a few hours the week before principal photography running through the lines with your actors, it will make the shoot quicker and more efficient.

A SHOOTING SCHEDULE

Creating a shooting schedule is one way to ensure that you have adequate time to make your film. A shooting schedule will typically include the date of filming, location, actors, as well as the props and equipment required for filming. Once you have created a shooting schedule, it can be used like a checklist to ensure that you have everything necessary for the shoot. There's nothing worse than arriving on the location only to discover that you've left the batteries for your camera behind! Sometimes, despite careful planning, it is necessary to go back and pick up extra shots. Plan for this contingency. Aim to have the film completed at least a week before the deadline to receive feedback and make further changes.

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY

If you've carefully planned your film during pre-production you should be able to confidently shoot your film and easily deal with any problems that arise.

TIPS FOR DIRECTING

- The day before your shoot, review the storyboards and visit the location to block out the scene.
- Arrive early to the set and ensure that you have all of your equipment; being organised is a great way to inspire confidence in your actors.
- Give clear instructions; be polite, patient and assertive.
- Be specific about where you want actors to stand, how you want them to move and what you want them to say.
- Check the lighting, sound and framing of the shot before rolling.
- Encourage the actors to wait a few seconds after you call 'Action' before they start to perform; this will give you a little more space when editing a scene together.
- Encourage your actors to keep performing until you say 'cut'.
- Do not finish shooting a scene until you've picked up cut-ins and cut-aways.

SHOOTING DIALOGUE

Dialogue is often filmed using a 'shot reverse shot' set-up. This involves framing the actors individually and shooting their lines out of sequence. For example, you set up the camera and shoot all of the first actor's lines. Then change the position of the camera and shoot the second actor's lines. Shooting dialogue in this manner is useful when you're dealing with inexperienced actors who may not be able to remember whole pages of dialogue. Remember that the actor should be looking in the direction of the person they are talking to so their eye lines match when you edit the shots together. Always capture about thirty seconds of the actor listening to the other person talk; this means that, if there is a problem with the other shot, you can cut away to the shot of the other actor listening.

Always shoot a master shot. This is a wide shot that shows all of the actors standing in the frame. This will give you greater control when you're editing.

THE 180-DEGREE RULE

If you start filming a conversation on one side of your actors, stay on that side. Crossing the imaginary 180-degree line will make it appear as if your actors are looking in the wrong direction and their eyelines won't match.

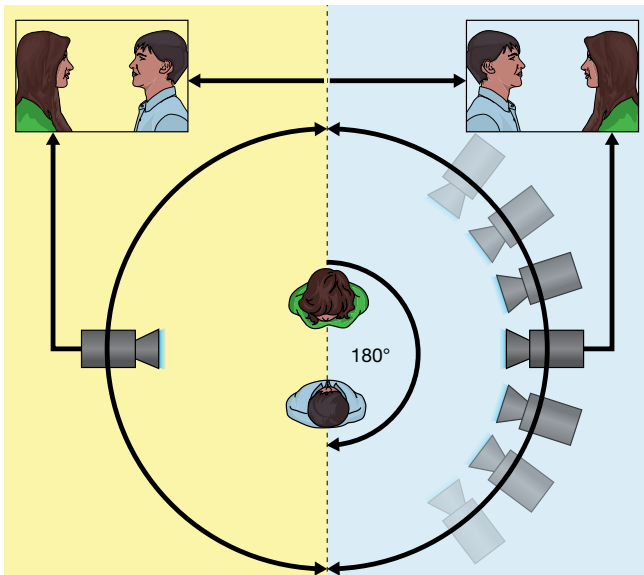


FIGURE 7.2.3 The imaginary line connecting the two actors and the 180-degree arc on which cameras may be positioned to get the corresponding left/right shot relationships

THE 30-DEGREE RULE

If you want to edit two shots together, they must be filmed from sufficiently different angles. It is very difficult to edit shots that are less than 30 degrees apart without the edit becoming conspicuous and jarring.

MATCH ON ACTION

One of the most impressive and seamless editing techniques is the match on action. This is achieved when you film something from two different shot sizes or angles and cut them together at the moment the actor performs a particular action. Because the audience is used to this particular technique, it appears almost seamless. Achieving a match on action in post-production requires precise direction during principal photography. The actor needs to replicate the action precisely so that it can be filmed from two different angles. Before filming shots that are going to be used for a match on action, rehearse a few times. When you edit the results together, the cut should appear seamless.

LIGHTING

Poor lighting in your film is something that an audience will not forgive. Like ineffective handheld camera movement and poor sound, inadequate lighting will make your production look amateurish. Many consumer-level cameras are incapable of shooting good footage in low-light conditions. Shooting in low light will often result in digital video grain, which degrades the quality of your image.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

If you are shooting in sunlight consider using reflector boards to soften the shadows on your subject's face. Having someone stand off camera with a large piece of white cardboard is one of the simplest ways of achieving this. Large reflective sunshades used to keep the heat out of cars are also a cheap way of creating fill light for a shot. Large sheets of polystyrene are also useful for this purpose. Overcast days usually provide the best lighting for outdoor scenes because the cloud cover diffuses the light. When you are shooting outside, be aware that patchy cloud cover can cause frequent changes in lighting conditions. It may not be possible to edit two shots together if one is filmed in direct sunlight and the other is not.

INDOOR LIGHTING

When you are making a low-budget film, indoor lighting gives you greater control over the lighting of a scene. If you are shooting indoors during the day, make use of available light from windows. Daylight is your best source of lighting. Pointing the camera away from windows is the best way to avoid troublesome backlighting and ensure that your characters are adequately lit. If the window has curtains, you may be able to use these to diffuse strong sunlight. When you are shooting indoors, always turn on the overhead lights. Lamps can be positioned around your actors to create fill light and further illumination. If lamp light is too bright it can be diffused by pointing it towards the ceiling or wall.

SHOOTING AT NIGHT

Although film and television programs might look like they are shot at night, they are often shot during the daytime and the footage is adjusted in post-production to give the illusion of night-time. To achieve this, the filmmakers will often give the footage a blue tone, which conveys the impression of moonlight to the audience. If you have a scene at night, it might be a good idea to shoot it on an overcast day—which will help avoid telltale shadows—and darken the footage in post-production.

WHITE BALANCE

Before you start rolling, you have to make sure that the white balance on your video camera is set correctly. The best way to ensure this is to manually set it for every shot. This usually involves putting a white piece of cardboard directly in front of the camera and activating the manual white balance. The image will be adjusted for the available light. Incorrectly set white balance can cause the image to be too orange or too blue. If you are unsure how to manually set the white balance on your camera, check the manual.

SOUND

First time filmmakers often overlook the importance of sound. Before you start filming, listen to the location and do your best to eliminate any background noises. Turn off air-conditioners and close windows to reduce the noise of traffic. The human ear is extremely effective at filtering out this sort of background noise. The microphones on most consumer video cameras are not as discerning, picking up everything in the background. Even if you are using a camera mounted shotgun microphone, attempt to get it as close to the actors as you can. It is possible to increase the level of dialogue in post-production; however, when you boost the levels on an audio track you are boosting everything including any background noise.

CHOOSING SOUND EQUIPMENT

The available equipment will determine how you record sound. Expensive equipment does not guarantee a well-recorded soundtrack. It is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different microphones and equipment so you can use them effectively when you are out on location.

- **Onboard microphone:** A camera's onboard microphone is often capable of capturing clear audio. Always get the microphone as close to your actors as possible. With an onboard microphone, this often involves keeping your lens wide.
- **Shotgun microphone:** A shotgun is typically a condenser microphone. It is a highly directional microphone that is favoured on film sets because it allows the sound operator to target who is speaking. Although shotgun microphones can often be mounted to the top of a camera, it is desirable to get it as close to your actors as possible. If you are shooting a medium shot, for example, the shotgun microphone can be held slightly out of frame by your sound operator or mounted on a tripod.

- **Lapel or lavalier microphone:** This is a small condenser microphone that can be clipped to an actor's lapel, which is often used in documentary and news reporting. In narrative films, where it is undesirable to see a microphone in shot, the lapel microphone can be used in long shots if they can be obscured beneath an actor's shirt. Keep in mind that these microphones are particularly susceptible to the movement of actors and their clothing.
- **Tripod:** Spare tripods can be used to position microphones directly out of shot.
- **Boom pole:** Shotgun microphones should ideally be positioned above an actor angled towards their throat. This will capture both the sibilant sounds coming from the actor's mouth and the deeper sounds that come from their chest. Operating a boom pole successfully is something that requires skill, not only to position the microphone correctly, but also to reduce handling noise.
- **Shock mount:** A shock mount is a rubber mount for a microphone that prevents handling noise travelling into the microphone. Shock mounts are handy but not strictly necessary since a skilled sound operator will always be able to reduce handling noise.
- **Dead cat:** When you are shooting outdoors, a 'dead cat' or 'foam sock' will reduce the muffled sound created when wind hits the microphone's diaphragm.
- **Pistol grip.**
- **Headphones:** Headphones are the most important part of a sound kit. Monitoring sound as it's being recorded on location means you are able to deal with any sound issues as they occur.

If your scene requires that a television or radio be on in the background, add these sounds during post-production. Recording dialogue over such noises is difficult and causes countless continuity headaches when you are editing the film.

If you are shooting outside, be aware that wind can play havoc with your audio, creating a low rumbling sound, which will ruin dialogue. If you are using an external microphone, consider using a dead cat over the microphone to reduce wind noise. Think about how you can position the actors and block out a scene, using buildings and other structures to shield the camera so you're not standing directly in the path of the wind.

It is very important to listen to the sound that you are recording through a pair of headphones that are connected to your video camera or audio recorder. This will allow you to pick up on problems with the sound as you're shooting. If there is a sudden noise that interferes with a line of dialogue, try doing another take because noises like these are very difficult to edit out in post-production. For this reason, it is advisable to have a dedicated sound operator. This will allow you to focus on composing shots and directing the actors.

POST-PRODUCTION

EDITING

Even basic video-editing software, like iMovie and Windows Movie Maker, gives you the tools to create a sophisticated film. Observe the following advice when editing:

- Most video-editing programs offer a range of transitions and effects. It is best to avoid these. Most of the time, you will simply be performing a basic cut from one shot to another.
- Used to convey the passing of time, the fade should be used sparingly.
- Establishing shots are an important part of narrative filmmaking. They are part of the glue that holds a narrative together. They can also be effective in conveying the passing of time. For example, if you want to bridge the gap between a scene that happens during the day and one that happens at night, it is as simple as cutting from the first scene to a shot of the sun setting over the house, then to the first shot of your night-time scene.
- Use a match on action to create a seamless cut between two shots. For example, you might have a mid-shot of your character pouring a glass of orange juice. Cutting to an extreme close-up of the glass at the precise moment the orange juice hits the bottom of the glass in both shots will make it appear seamless.
- Observe the 30-degree rule. If two shots are not sufficiently different you will not be able to cut from one to another without creating a jump cut, which the audience will potentially find obtrusive and jarring.

SOUND EFFECTS

Sound is an aspect of student productions that is often overlooked. In professional films, sounds are often replaced using sound effects from production libraries or specifically recorded foley sounds. Even on a low-budget production, it is possible to add significant polish to a film by doing the same. This is also a useful way to remove the microphone hum or any noise on location, such as that created by refrigerators or air-conditioners.

SCORING

There are several different approaches to scoring that you can take. One approach is to write leitmotifs, which are short sequences of music that are associated with a character or situation. The most famous examples of this include the shark in *Jaws* (1975) and Darth Vader in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). Another approach to scoring is simply to create music that provides a particular mood. For example, if you are making a horror film, you might simply create an ominous soundscape to inspire a feeling of dread in the audience.

When using software like GarageBand be aware that the loops used in these programs are easily recognisable and can sound clichéd. If you're not musically inclined, enlist the help of people who are.

The internet is another good source of soundtrack music. Often unsigned bands and artists are willing to allow filmmakers to use music in their movies. There are many sites on the internet, such as SoundCloud, that allow you to find unsigned artists and bands. While music from royalty-free production libraries can sound very polished, you must be willing to pay for the privilege of using it in your films. If your film is going to be sold outside the classroom or sold for profit, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder of any music. This can be a long and expensive process, so think carefully about including such music before you do so.

Quiet by Ben Head

Quiet is an ambitious and dramatic war film created by VCE Media student Ben Head, which is based loosely on the real-life experience of his grandfather Sergeant Bill Woodcock who served in the Suffolk Regiment during the Second World War.

The inspiration for the film came from the stories he heard about his grandfather while he was growing up. 'I had never met my grandfather,' says Ben, 'but his ability as a young man to join the army and fight for king, country and peace inspired me, especially as he was my age at the time'.



FIGURES 7.2.4 AND 7.2.5 Ben Head's *Quiet* is a visually stunning and emotionally visceral short film set during the Second World War.

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In) 2.

Text: In honour of the past servicemen of the Suffolk Regiment. To my granddad, Sergeant Bill Woodcock. 1st Suffolk Regiment

'The big obstacle in the path of an advance towards La Ferte Mace was the Andaine Forest. Reports had it that these woods were thick with enemy.'

The film starts suddenly with an intense drum roll and a medium shot of dense pine trees. (Drum music continues)

Text: France, August 1944.

Camera pans to the left to eventually show 4 British soldiers in a foxhole, some with their weapons aimed outwards, others relaxing with helmets off. Close up shots reveal dirty faces and uniforms, but wary men. Some men smoke. 3 riflemen and a Sergeant. Their position is merely a hastily dug pit, camouflaged with pine branches.

A close shot reveals the sergeant staring over the top *butts cig* at the forest ahead (eyes twitching), and an over the shoulder shot. He then shrinks down below the parapet and lies against the wall. He pulls out a map.

Bill:

Truth is mate I have no idea where we are.

Jimmy:

That bloody artillery shredded the platoon up good. Any chance others are trying to regroup like us?

Bill:

I doubt it. Both trucks were hit by shells. Was just pot luck we were out taking a piss.

Jimmy:

So we are the buffer between the whole bleedin' German army and our rear echelon boys. *Laughs* There're gonna fookin' smash us up for sure.

Bill nods, eyes nervously twitching, looking at his watch.

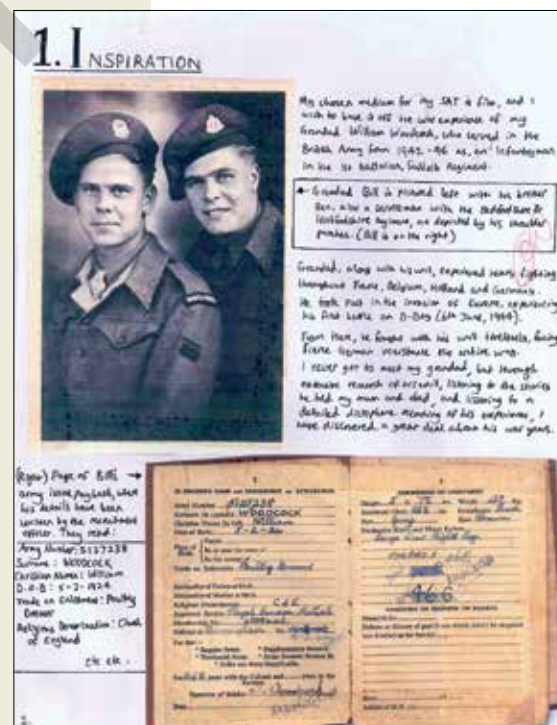
Bill:

Alright, I want you with eyes front, it's all round defence until the others catch up with us. I want minimal chatter and stay wary.

A shot looks up at the forest and the sky, then rotates downwards to see the eerie dense woods yet again. The woods are quiet. As one man keeps an eye out, the other three relax.

Henry:

It's quiet.



FIGURES 7.2.6 AND 7.2.7 A detailed investigation of Ben's grandfather's experience during the Second World War led to the development of the screenplay for *Quiet*.

Ben was also inspired to make the film by a keen interest in war films and a love of history.

'I fit in the storyline for the film alongside my grandfather's regimental history, and what it accomplished in the war,' he said. To achieve a sense of authenticity, Ben researched the locations and times of battles that his grandfather's battalion fought in.

The script developed organically over a period of weeks as Ben and his father experimented with dialogue and improvised British accents:

Eventually, I sat down at the kitchen bench and wrote for about an hour straight, and at the end of the time I had an eight-page script for the film. I revisited the draft several times in the lead up to preparing our folios in media, adding small pieces here and there, arming myself with a copy of my grandfather's regimental history to make sure everything was authentic.

Ben had initially planned a far more ambitious battle scene. Acknowledging the difficulty this would pose, he simplified the idea to focus on three British soldiers hunkered down in a trench, ending up with a total cast of twelve people. 'I realised that the audience would be closer to a smaller group of protagonists,' he said, 'especially if I could fit all three of them in the frame at once.'

During pre-production, Ben maintains that you don't need artistic ability to draw effective storyboards. 'The aim of a storyboard is to outline the rough construction of a frame, and stick figures can allow enough of an idea to reconstruct what has been put on paper and convert it to the screen.'

Costumes were an integral part of achieving his vision. Fortunately, Ben is a member of a military performing arts and re-enactment group. 'I had many friends at my disposal who owned vast collections of period authentic uniforms, equipment and weaponry, as well as myself,' he said. 'Luckily for me, all I had to do was contact my actors—most were re-enactors but some were school friends—and ask for them to bring their gear and themselves to the film set.'

Quiet was shot on a Sony a7S that he borrowed from a friend. During principal photography, Ben emphasises the importance of good organisation.

On the day, I was lucky to have thoroughly laid out the shooting plan for the day, taking into account lunch breaks and when it started to get dark. Once aspects like this were taken into account, including possible extraneous variables that could impact upon the success of the shooting, I was able to direct and act with relative ease.

Ben's father is a retired member of the Australian army who works as a small arms instructor and safety advisor. He acted as an armourer on the set to ensure that appropriate measures were taken to ensure the safety of those involved.

In relation to firearms, particularly blank firing, people often underestimate the serious nature of their use on a film set. I would highly recommend only employing firearms if you can have a capable and qualified safety officer and armourer present. Emergency services notifications in relation to use of firearms is also critical.

During post-production, Ben spent hours editing, colour correcting and mixing the sound. He encourages VCE Media students to pursue original music because obtaining permission to use copyright music can often be problematic. He also emphasises the importance of 'spotting' music—the process of carefully considering where music will be used and what impact it will have on the audience. 'Musical scores also need to be used tactically to suit the mood of what is being presented to the audience,' he said.

During the course of planning *Quiet*, I was advised that I was perhaps biting off more than I could chew in terms of the scale of the production. I knew, however, that because I had been developing and thinking about the concept of my film for so long, I would be able to pull it off. Don't be put off!

7.3 Documentary film

Students creating a documentary are required to make a film or video that is less than ten minutes in duration. The production design plan will address codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- interview questions
- script
- pre-interview
- storyboards
- shot list
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and/or media form, such as location, camera techniques, techniques of engagement, edit details, lighting, music and sound effects
- production notes.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used in your documentary. Here are ideas that you might use as starting points for your research.

- Select documentaries that have a similar style to the production you are undertaking. Make a note of how the documentaries use camera techniques, *mise en scène*, editing, lighting and sound.
- Consider the narrative structure of notable documentaries. How does the story open, develop and resolve?
- Study several interviews from the style of documentary you aspire to make, noting how they frame, light and conduct the interview.

- Study how similar documentaries use b-roll, noting how these shots are composed and contribute to the ideas and issues being explored in the documentary.
- Study how similar documentaries use photographs, archival footage, re-enactments and other material to create visual interest and contribute to the story.
- Analyse the most engaging moments in similar documentaries and explain how you will use this knowledge to engage your audience.
- Analyse the editing of a scene in a notable documentary, commenting on its use of editing, transitions and sound. Make note of the techniques you will utilise in your own documentary.

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your media form. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary for completing your project.

- Interview: Conduct an interview with someone to learn more about framing, recording sound and lighting interviews. After the interview, you can develop an understanding of how best to frame and shoot b-roll footage to edit together with this.
- Sound: Explore the capabilities of available microphones, which could include your camera's onboard microphone, shotgun microphones or lapel microphones.
- Editing: Develop a better understanding of the post-production workflow for your documentary by editing, cleaning up audio and mixing the sound for an interview that you have shot.

- Lower third: Documentaries often incorporate lower third titles to indicate the name and occupation of interview subjects. Use the production exercise as an opportunity to explore how your editing software or motion graphics programs like Adobe After Effects can be used to design and animate these titles.

PRE-PRODUCTION

The key difference between planning an interview-based documentary and planning a narrative film is that you cannot be precisely sure what your interview subject is going to say in response to your questions. Your written planning document, therefore, should consist of a script for your narration and the questions you plan to ask your subject. Although you cannot be certain what they are going to say, it is still possible to anticipate their answers, particularly if you have already read other interviews or done sufficient research on the subject.

Although the element of interviewee response will remain in doubt until you are in the editing suite, it is still possible to visualise your film. You should have a clear sense of how your interview subject is going to be framed and the type of photographs and footage you are going to cut away to during the interview.

When you are planning a documentary film, research is critically important. You need to find out as much as you can about the interview subject so you can write your narration, devise thoughtful questions, source photographs and obtain other appropriate video footage that you would like to use in the final cut.

WRITING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before you interview someone, make sure you conduct adequate research on the person. It is usually possible to discover the basic facts about a person or topic beforehand. Already knowing the basics means that you can focus on asking thoughtful questions and receiving meaningful answers, rather than just checking the simple facts.

Closed-ended questions are questions that invite a single word or short answers. Examples of closed-ended questions include:

- How old are you?
- What year did you meet your wife?
- What type of car do you drive?
- Where do you live?

For the purposes of an interesting and engaging documentary, you want your interview subject to give more substantial responses. Open-ended questions are designed to provoke detailed responses. The following opening phrases elicit open-ended questions and can lead to lengthy answers:

- Tell me about ...
- What do you think about ...?
- Why do you believe ...?
- How do you feel about ...?

ORGANISING AN INTERVIEW

There are different ways that you can arrange an interview. Sending an email is a great way to make initial contact with an interview subject, but it is good practice to follow up with a telephone call to introduce yourself 'in person'. Make sure you explain the purpose of your interview and how their information will be used.

You should also explain that you are making a documentary film, which most likely means that you will need to film the interview. Some people can feel nervous or self-conscious about being in front of a camera; it is important to be reassuring and to try and make your interview subject feel as comfortable as possible with the idea of being filmed.

Remember, the interviewee is doing you a favour by setting aside time to speak to you. When trying to organise a time to interview someone in person, it may be a good idea to approach or call them towards the end of the day or during their quietest time. It is usually not recommended to visit someone without giving sufficient notice. When arranging a time for the filming, make sure you ask for and set up a time that is convenient for you and your interview subject.

CONDUCTING A PRE-INTERVIEW

Conducting a pre-interview is one way to develop a better understanding of the subjects of your documentary. Going into the production of a documentary with interview questions alone means that you are often unsure about the responses that your subject will give. Conducting a pre-interview is an effective way to reduce this doubt and give you a clearer understanding of how your documentary will come together. To conduct a pre-interview, all you need is some kind of audio recorder or even just a smart phone. Going through this process is also a good way to reduce any anxiety your subject might have regarding the interview itself, it also helps the subject think more deeply about the questions that you are going to ask them.

Once the pre-interview is complete, you can transcribe the audio and incorporate this into your planning document and storyboards. Visiting the subject for a pre-interview is also a good opportunity to come up with ideas for b-roll footage and take photographs that can be incorporated into your storyboards.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Make sure you know the way to your interview destination. Turning up late to an appointment that you have requested is not a good start to the interview! Leave early as it is better to have time to spare than be struggling to make it on time. Not only does arriving late create a bad impression, it also sends a message to your interview subject that you do not value their time, which they have generously agreed to give you.

If you are meeting the interviewee face-to-face for the first time, it is important to try and develop a friendly rapport with them. Be sure to thank your subject for agreeing to be interviewed and for taking the time to speak to you. Make conversation or general 'small talk' to begin with to put them at ease. A lot of people can feel intimidated by the idea of being interviewed, particularly if they have never been in front of a camera before. If your interviewee is relaxed, then you are probably going to get detailed responses from them, which will result in a better interview.

Think about your *mise en scène* carefully. When you conduct an interview with someone, it will usually take place at their home or workplace. Do not be afraid to suggest locations for shooting. Try to find somewhere where something interesting will appear in the background or look for an aesthetically pleasing way to compose the shot.

When you are setting up for the interview, ensure the shot is lit correctly and that you are able to record dialogue effectively.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Before the interview begins, ask the interview subject to state their name and spell it on camera. This will be useful in post-production when you need to create lower third titles.

If you have ever watched interviews on television current affairs, you will have noticed that the interviewer often interrupts or cuts off the person being interviewed. While this can lead to fiery and controversial interviews that make for entertaining prime-time viewing, it is not the best way

to conduct an interview for a documentary. The interview subject should be given time to answer questions in detail. Also, if you speak over or interrupt them, you are going to be faced with countless problems in the editing suite.

During everyday conversations, people often provide verbal feedback as they listen to another person speak. It is common for the listener to pepper the conversation with verbal cues, such as 'uh-huh', 'yeah', 'right', to let the speaker know they are being listened to. When you are interviewing someone for a film documentary, it is important to avoid this social nicety. If you want to let someone know that you are listening, make eye contact, nod and smile. Verbally interrupting them will affect the audio and cause editing problems during post-production.

VOX POPS

Not every interview you shoot while making a documentary is going to require such extensive planning. Documentary filmmakers often include shot interviews with ordinary people and passers-by. These interviews are called 'vox pops' which is derived from the Latin *vox populi*, which means 'voice of the people'. Conducting successful vox pops means thinking quickly and carefully. When approaching subjects for a vox pop, be polite, explain the project you are working on concisely and ask if they would like to be interviewed. Keep in mind that many people find cameras intimidating and are likely to decline. When someone agrees to film a vox pop, pay particular attention to shot composition, sound and lighting. Using the rule of thirds is a good rule of thumb for quickly composing the shot. Ensure that your subject is adequately lit. This may involve asking them to move into a more desirable location. Monitoring sound is very important. Ensure you keep away from noisy locations such as roads, and monitor the audio through headphones while you are recording. In cases like this it is sometimes necessary to coach the interview subject, particularly to frame their answer by incorporating the question in their response.

CAPTURING B-ROLL

If you are creating a documentary about a person, it may be necessary to follow them around for a day to collect footage for your documentary. This sort of actuality can be incredibly useful when you are putting the project together. Cutting away from the interview to footage of the interview subject at work, for instance, can make your documentary much more visually interesting.



FIGURE 7.3.1 Additional footage of your subject can be invaluable when editing your documentary.

Here are some tips for capturing great b-roll:

- **Coverage:** Get as much coverage of your subject as you can. When you're filming b-roll, roll the camera for at least five seconds. Anything shorter than this is difficult to edit.
- **Movement:** When someone is moving, begin and end with them leaving the frame. This will allow you to more easily edit the shot into a sequence.
- **Camera movement:** When you are panning, zooming or dollying the camera, always begin and end with a static camera.
- **Rule of thirds:** Using the rule of thirds is a good rule of thumb when shooting documentary b-roll.
- **Shallow depth of field:** Using shallow depth of field can draw your viewer's eye to a particular part of the frame and makes shots look cinematic.
- **Deep staging:** Give your shots a sense of depth by having foreground, middle-ground and background elements.
- **Perspective:** Use the natural perspective of a location to lead the viewer's eye and create a visually pleasing sense of depth.
- **Foreground framing:** Shooting through objects such as windows and doorways creates a frame-within-a-frame that is visually appealing. Your subject can also be framed by objects in the foreground.
- **Pull focus:** Design shots so you can pull focus from a foreground element to an interesting and relevant background element.
- **Camera angles:** Although it is tempting to leave your camera at eye level, you can create variety and visual interest by using a range of camera angles, including over shots, high-angle, eye-level, low-angle and under shots.
- **Shot sizes:** Varying the use of shot size—ensuring that you use extreme long shots, long shots, full shots, medium shots, medium close-ups, close-ups and extreme close-ups—will bring greater variety and diversity to your b-roll footage.

Photographs are a staple of documentary film, particularly when video footage is not available to illustrate a story. Often documentary filmmakers incorporate photographs using the Ken Burns effect, where the camera will pan across and zoom in or out of a photograph.

LOGGING FOOTAGE

At the end of every day, it is important to log and sort footage to ensure the post-production process proceeds smoothly. On your computer, sort all of the interviews with accompanying audio into their own folders that are labelled appropriately. Your b-roll also needs to be organised in a folder; subfolders can be labelled with the subject of footage. At this stage, renaming and labelling files will help you identify footage quickly in post-production. If a file is named 'DSC0004' changing the name to something more specific will help you identify it later. Both operating systems and editing applications allow you to label footage with different colours. By default, Adobe Premiere Pro allows users to label footage with eight colours: violet, iris, caribbean, lavender, cerulean, forest, rose and mango. During the initial logging process, when you identify a shot that will definitely be used in the documentary, it's a good idea to mark this with a vibrant golden colour like mango. If time permits, roughly editing the footage in the timeline will draw your attention to the need for further footage.

Once you have identified the parts of the interview that you are going to use in your final product, it can sometimes be useful to create another version of the script that specifically includes these sound bites. This will encourage you to evaluate your pre-edited interview to ensure that the documentary flows smoothly and is easy for your audience to follow.

POST-PRODUCTION

The post-production stage is when your documentary film really comes together.

Before you start editing, it is a good idea to clean up your audio. Usually this involves noise reduction, hard limiting and normalising to ensure that the voice of your subject is loud enough. These effects can be applied in editing software like Adobe Audition and Audacity.

When you are planning a documentary, it might not necessarily be obvious how it will start. It is not always engaging or interesting to begin with the interview subject identifying themselves. Think about the most dramatic or interesting part of your interview and use that as a hook for your audience. It is also a good idea to begin with the strongest shots that you captured during principal photography. The first 30 seconds of your documentary are key to engaging your audience. Once you have hooked the viewer, you can backtrack and start to explore your interview subject or topic in more detail.

LOWER THIRDS

The first time an interview subject appears on screen in a documentary, it is customary to identify them using a lower third title. This is a quick way to give your audience the information they need to know about this person, including their name and occupation. The name of the interview subject is usually identified in the first line with their occupation listed beneath this in smaller type.

Using software like Adobe Photoshop or Adobe After Effects is recommended when designing and animating lower third titles. Here are some things to consider when designing your lower thirds.

- **Positioning:** The title is usually positioned in the lower third of the screen. You can use either the left or right side of the screen depending on the positioning of your interview subject. However, ensure you keep within the title safe area to prevent the title being cropped by some displays. Most editors provide title-safe overlays, which show how close a title can be positioned before it is likely to be cropped. The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers recommends positioning the titles no closer to the edge than ten per cent of the total image.
- **Colour:** Choose a simple colour scheme that works with the tone of your documentary.
- **Typography:** Select a clear, readable sans serif font such as Helvetica.
- **Style:** Adding an outline or drop shadow to your title will ensure that it is adequately separated from the background.
- **Animation:** Lower third titles are often animated to push into the frame or dissolve. Keep any animation simple so that it doesn't distract the audience from your interview subject.
- **Duration:** The lower third should appear on screen long enough for the audience to read it. Five seconds, in many cases, is ample time.

One Man's Trash

One Man's Trash is a documentary created by Bridget Webster that explores the work of the Melbourne-based recycling company Green Collect. The documentary was selected for Top Screen 2016.

Green Collect is an organisation that takes hard-to-recycle objects—such as computers, keyboards, laptops, printer cartridges and offices supplies—and upcycles these into products that can be sold in their retail stores. Bridget first heard about the organisation from her father.

‘I found myself becoming fascinated with them,’ she said. ‘I realised that by creating a documentary on Green Collect I could find out more about the company, and hopefully inject some of the curiosity and fascination I had with them into the film.’

Although Bridget had initially considered creating a narrative film, she became keen to explore documentary filmmaking as an art form.

‘Don’t underestimate documentaries,’ she said. ‘They can be very powerful. If you’ve got a story to tell, then documentary can be a really powerful way of telling it.’

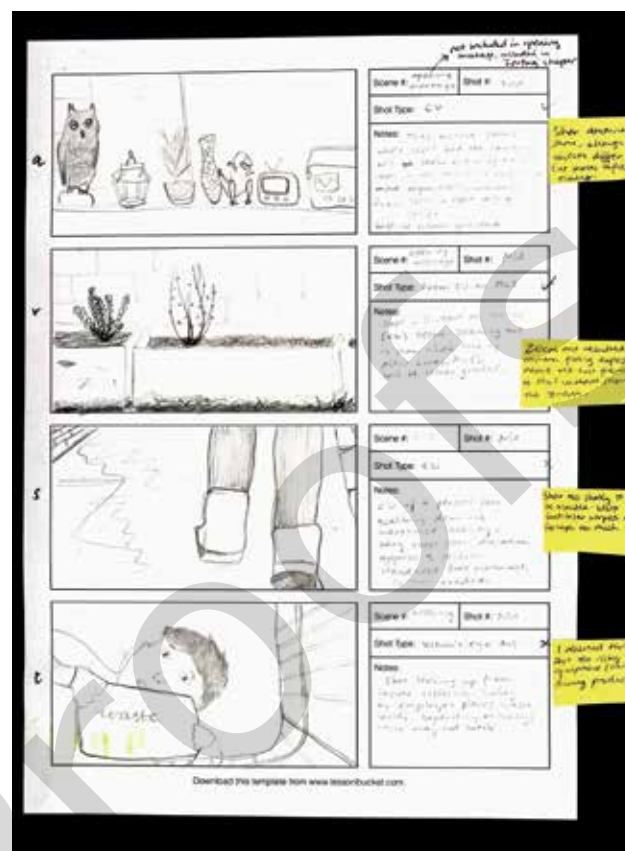
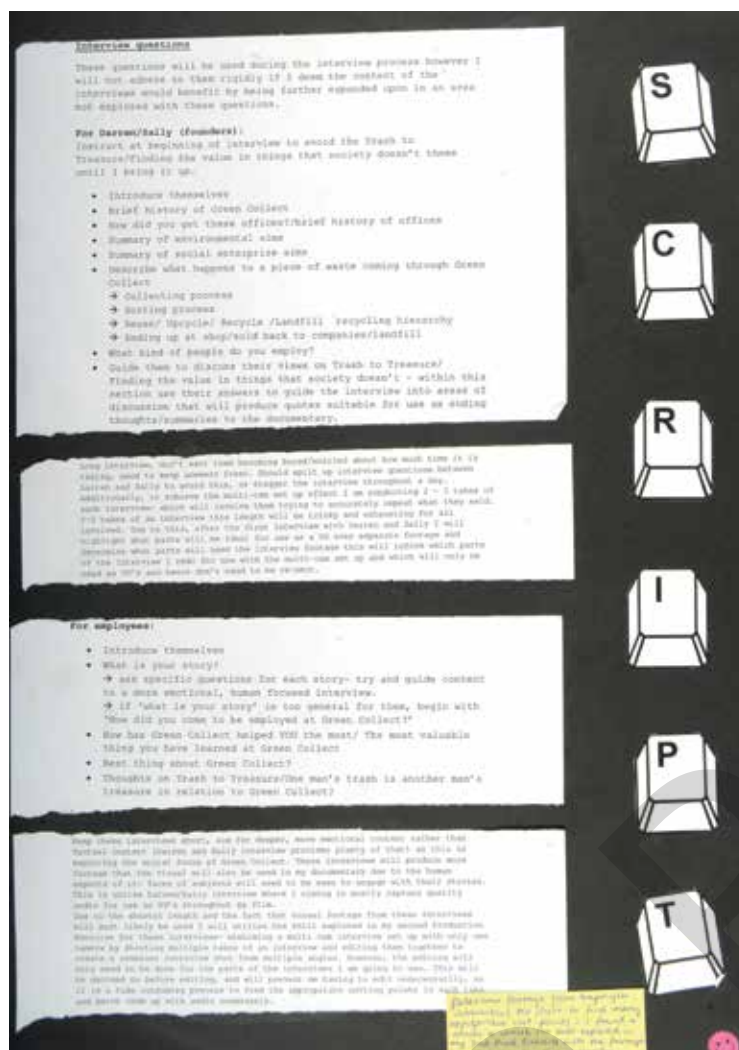


FIGURE 7.3.2 A still from Bridget Webster's documentary *One Man's Trash*

Developing the intention and audience for her documentary was an important stage in the pre-production process. ‘I had to be very clear about what I wanted the documentary to look like and sound like,’ she said, ‘because I had to make a lot of split-second decisions on set about what I was going to shoot and how I was going to shoot it.’



FIGURE 7.3.3 Bridget Webster's documentary about upcycling company Green Collect was selected for Top Screen for its impressive visuals and compelling story.



FIGURES 7.3.4 AND 7.3.5 Bridget's script included interview questions and possible responses and her storyboards reflected a clear sense of purpose for the shoot.

During the pre-production of her documentary, Bridget thought carefully about who she would interview and how she would frame the story. She imagined the documentary following the journey that a piece of waste takes from collection, through to upcycling and finally retail.

Bridget acknowledges the difficulty of storyboarding documentaries. Nevertheless, she encourages anyone working in this form to visit locations to take photographs and get ideas for framing interviews and shooting b-roll. While shooting documentaries, she stresses the importance of improvising and responding to opportunities that arise. While making *One Man's Trash*, Bridget accompanied one of the company's employees on a collection route, during which she was forced to think quickly and creatively about the sorts of shots she needed to capture.

She also encourages students to be well-prepared for production. On the first day of shooting, the amount of filming that she did quickly drained her batteries and she was forced to arrange another day to capture everything.

One of her planned interview subjects also dropped out at the last minute, forcing her to improvise and find someone else. 'Be calm and collected,' she said.

Bridget used her production exercises to develop an understanding of how to capture clear sound when shooting a documentary, exploring equipment, acquisition and mixing. 'By the time it came to production, I was really confident about how I could capture professional sound.'

By the time she finished shooting, Bridget had over ten hours of footage to edit into a ten-minute film. 'I think it's important not to get overwhelmed,' she said, encouraging students to sort through footage at the end of every day, watching takes, labelling files and organising them into folders. She recommends that students allow ample time to edit their films. She spent hours editing clips, cleaning up sound and colour-grading her footage.

7.4 Animation

Students creating an animation must create a product less than ten minutes in duration. The production design plan will address codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- treatment
- screenplay
- storyboards
- shot list
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and style, such as: character design, model design, set design, location, camera techniques, techniques of engagement, edit details, lighting, voice talent, music and sound effects.
- production notes.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea for your animation, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used in your animation. Here are ideas that you might use as starting points for your research.

- **Narrative:** Explore animations in a similar style and genre to your intended production. Consider the opening, development and resolution of the narrative. Comment on what audiences will expect from your animation and how you will structure your narrative accordingly.
- **Genre:** Analyse animations with a similar genre to your intended production. What are the conventions that audiences expect from these genres? How will you meet these expectations while making your animation feel fresh and surprising?

- **Style:** Analyse the style of notable animators. This might involve a written discussion accompanied by annotated stills. It might also be appropriate to comment on how a particular style was achieved.
- **Animation techniques:** Conduct research into the techniques and processes used to create your selected style of animation. These may include books, articles or online videos.

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your selected style of animation. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary to complete your project.

- **Animation techniques:** Explore the animation techniques required to make your production. If you are creating a claymation this might involve constructing figures, lighting and capturing frames. Hand-drawn animators will explore workflow processes including drawing, capturing and animating frames.
- **Walk cycles:** Walking is one of the most difficult parts of animation; one of your production exercises might explore the most efficient way to create a walk cycle.
- **Software:** Most animators will use some type of software to capture and edit frames into a complete animation. The production exercises are a good opportunity to see how software like Adobe After Effects, Adobe Flash, Adobe Animate, Dragonframe and Toon Boom Studio can help you achieve your vision.
- **Voice recording:** Recording voices for characters is often an essential part of the animation process. Experiment with the best microphones and environment to record your actors.

- **Lip syncing:** Record test dialogue and develop a process for syncing your animation to your characters' lips.
- **Sound editing:** Sound is one of the most important parts of your animation, helping to immerse your audience in the world you have created—develop a process for recording, editing and mixing your soundtrack.

TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

Traditional animation is one of the most challenging styles to master. It involves drawing every frame sequentially on pieces of paper. The individual frames can be drawn on a light box, which allows you to see the previous frame. Because it is time-consuming, traditional animation is usually drawn at a rate of twelve frames every second. The progress of your animation can be viewed by physically flipping through the illustrations. The individual frames can be photographed and animated in video-editing software by setting the duration of every illustration to two frames. Given the time-consuming nature of traditional animation, it is best to develop a simple concept that can be explored in a short time frame, such as ninety seconds.

CLAYMATION

If you decide to create a stop-motion animation out of original models, it is a good idea to sketch what you want your models to look like before you begin sculpting them. This gives you an indication of the materials that you will need to create your models. Students often assume that they can create their models entirely from modelling clay. This is not the best idea because the figurines can easily become deformed under the constant manipulation of the animation process.

It is best to begin by creating a skeleton of your models out of aluminium wire. Using a pair of pliers and wire-cutters, twist the aluminium wire into a strong, pliable skeleton, which can be bulked up with aluminium foil. This lightweight framework (called an armature) allows modelling clay to be applied to the outside frame to create a figure. When creating a model, it is important to ensure that it has large enough feet to carry the weight of its body. If a figurine falls over, you will have little choice but to reshoot the scene.

If you are not confident in creating your own models for a stop-motion animation, there are many alternatives, such as using action figures and other everyday objects. *Power of Imagination*, a short animation by past VCE Media



FIGURE 7.4.1 Acclaimed animator Ray Harryhausen, whose work includes *King Kong* (1933) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), is renowned for combining stop-motion animation and live action footage.

student Alex Clapp, demonstrates how simple household objects can be used to create an entertaining and engaging animation. The film is about a student who falls asleep at his desk. The objects around him, including a stapler, paperclips and a desk lamp, come to life and join forces to help him stay awake and study.

Finding a suitable location in which to film your animation is essential. As filming an animation can be a lengthy process, you need an area where you can have your models set up for a long period of time.



FIGURE 7.4.2 *Mary and Max* (2009) is a stop-motion feature that was directed by Australian animator, Adam Elliot.

The area should be completely void of natural light or you risk unwanted lighting variations between the still frames. This phenomenon, known as luminance flicker, is one of the most troublesome difficulties that animators encounter.

When you are organising the set for your animation, use desk lamps to create a three-point lighting system, which will give you greater control over the shading and shadows produced by the lighting.

If you are using a still photographic camera, ensure that you operate the manual settings and avoid using a flash. Take a few practice images to work out which settings are best for the lighting that you have on set. Once you have decided on the appropriate settings for your animation, stick to them! Slight changes in exposure, aperture and focus can cause problems when you are trying to create the illusion of seamless movement in the editing stage. Take twenty-four frames for every second of footage in your film.

There are a number of dedicated stop-motion animation programs, such as Boinx iStopMotion and Stop Motion Pro, which provide a useful platform for creating animation films. They usually involve connecting a digital video or still photographic camera directly to your computer so shots can be taken, reviewed and reordered as you go along. This provides a number of advantages, including the ability to see several frames at once—a technique known as onion skinning—which can help create more fluid and dynamic movement in your animation.

If you have created your animation solely using a digital video camera, you will need to assemble the footage in an editing program such as iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, Apple Final Cut or Adobe Premiere. Set the length of each image to one frame. The advantage of editing individual frames is that they can easily be rearranged and reused. Audacity is a free online program that can be downloaded and used to record and edit sound.

CUT-OUT ANIMATION

Terry Gilliam, a member of the comedy troupe Monty Python, is one of the most notable cut-out animators. Gilliam would use appropriated material such as books, magazines, old photographs and greeting cards combined with his own airbrushed backgrounds to animate sequences for Monty Python's *Flying Circus* and films like *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. He would combine these elements and take twenty-four photographs for every second of film. Gilliam would cut out different images using

a scalpel and combine them to create a comedic effect (see Figure 7.4.3). After cutting out the images, Gilliam would black the edges of every element with a marker to help sell the illusion that they were real objects instead of pieces of paper.



FIGURE 7.4.3 Terry Gilliam worked with images cut from books, magazines and old photographs to create animations for Monty Python.

When working in this form, it is important to recognise its limitations. Cut-out animation, according to Gilliam, is best suited to simple ideas and quick, sudden movements.

Gilliam used interesting gimmicks to avoid creating walk cycles. In many cases a character might simply float into frame without the legs moving at all. If more articulation was required, he might replace a character's legs with wheels or have them bounce into frame. To simplify the process of lip syncing to audio, Gilliam would create simple mouths that could be pulled open and shut.

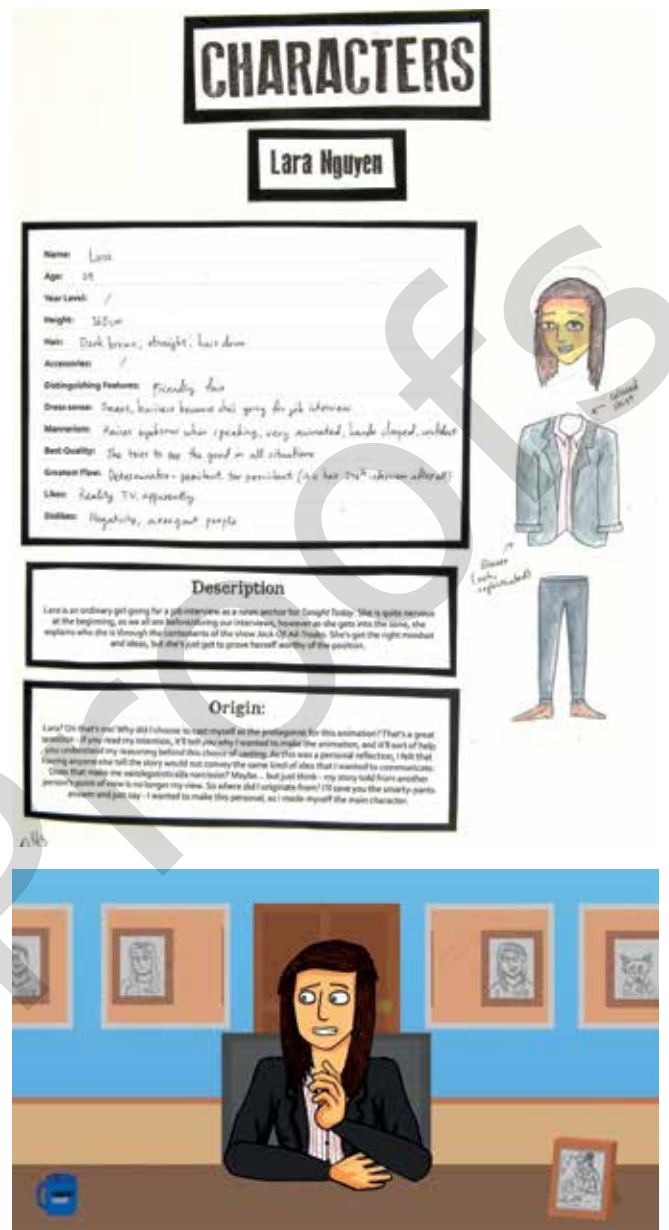
Several photographs are typically required to build a character. A character might consist of a separate torso, lower body, arms, legs, head and mouth. A great deal of articulation can be achieved by combining these elements.

Although it is possible to complete traditional cut-out animation such as this with a digital camera, most modern animators prefer to construct their sets and models in Adobe Photoshop and animate them in Adobe After Effects. The long running television program *South Park* used cut-out animation for its pilot but subsequently moved to digital animation to speed up the workflow. Each of the characters is constructed like a puppet that can be moved and articulated in the animation software Maya. The paper textures that were used in the original episode were scanned and are used as the basis for constructing new characters and sets.

DIGITAL ANIMATION

Two-dimensional digital animation can be completed in a range of software applications including Adobe Flash, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Animate and Toon Boom Studio. The workflow is similar no matter what software you decide to use.

- **Designing characters:** Start by sketching out your characters. This can be done on paper or in software like Adobe Photoshop. When you are designing the character, it's a good idea to draw your character in full from a range of angles, including front on, three-quarter view and from behind. Having a range of views will give you greater flexibility when blocking out scenes later on.
- **Designing walk cycles:** Creating a walk cycle for your characters is one of the most challenging parts of animation. Sketching out a walk cycle in pre-production will help you design this later on.
- **Designing faces:** When you are animating, the design of a character's face is particularly important and typically involves drawing each of the following elements: nose, right eyebrow, left eyebrow, right pupil, left pupil, left eyelid, right eyelid, and a range of phonetic mouth shapes and expressions.
- **Rigging your character:** In your animation software, you will need to rig your character. This involves creating every element of a character that you would like to animate on a different layer; for example, face, torso, arms and legs. Nesting objects within each other will simplify the animation process. Having all of the elements for a face—such as eyes, mouths and noses—within an object called 'head' will enable you to move all of these elements when you animate the head.
- **Designing backgrounds:** When you are designing a scene, don't forget to pay attention to the background. Having elements in your foreground, middle-ground and background will help to make your scene look more interesting.
- **Recording audio:** Before you start to animate, you will need to record your voices. These will provide the foundation for your scenes and allow you to start lip syncing.



FIGURES 7.4.4 AND 7.4.5 Lara Nguyen's *Introspection* was selected for Top Screen. The design plan for her film reflects considerable attention to character design.

- **Animating:** You will typically start animating a scene as a full shot, posing and moving your characters in a location.
- **Animating camera:** Software such as Adobe After Effects, Adobe Animate and Toon Boom Studio has virtual cameras that can be animated and moved around your set. This allows you to pan, zoom and cut to different shot sizes within a scene.

7.5 Audio

Students creating an audio production are required to make a product at least eight minutes in duration. The production design plan will address codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- script
- discussion points or interview questions
- flowchart of content
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and/or media form, such as: style and/or genre, techniques of engagement, dialogue, voice-overs, sound effects, music and edit details.
- production notes.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea for your audio production, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used in your audio production. Here are some ideas that you might use as starting points for your research.

- Analyse similar genres to your proposed production. If you are creating a radio documentary, for example, you might find relevant examples and comment on their structure and style. An analysis of radio drama might comment on story structure and the development of a narrative using sound effects, dialogue and music.
- Analyse the way similar productions use audio to engage the audience and compensate for a lack of visuals.

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your selected style of audio production. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary to complete your project.

- Experiment with the microphones you intend to use during your production by recording a practice script.
- Create an environment for recording your production and perform experiments in your homemade studio.
- Develop a post-production workflow by identifying the most effective way to reduce noise, clean up sound and normalise audio.
- Identify the best EQ settings for your voice talent.
- Practise editing a short sequence, combining voice-overs, sound effects, music, bumpers and atmosphere into a finished package.
- Learn how to export, format and upload a podcast.

GENRE

If you decide to create an audio product, you will need to identify a genre or style of audio production that appeals to you. Many broadcast radio programs predominantly comprise music with occasional announcing and ad-lib work from announcers. Although this can be entertaining to listen to, it is not an acceptable format for your production. You are expected to create something individual and unique, which is not achieved by simply playing back other people's music. Fortunately, radio production is more than just playing music. A brief search through the channels of your radio reveals the variety of creative styles and genres possible in radio format. Here are some genres, styles and formats that you might consider developing including radio dramas, documentaries, news, current affairs and panel discussions.



FIGURE 7.5.1 Gregory Peck and Kay Brinker in *Hitch-Hike Poker*, a radio play about a hitchhiking war veteran

RADIO DRAMA

Podcasting has led to a resurgence in radio dramas. Podcasts like *Welcome to Night Vale* and *The Black Tapes* have demonstrated that this classic format is still relevant. If you are looking for inspiration, the internet is a wonderful source of classic radio dramas like *Suspense*, *X-Minus 1* and *Murder at Midnight*. Although radio dramas reached the peak of their popularity in the 1950s (see Figure 7.5.1), organisations such as the BBC still produce a small number including the dramatisation of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's novel *Good Omens*.

SCRIPTING YOUR RADIO DRAMA

SCENE 1

THE GRAVEYARD IS FILLED WITH THE EERIE SOUND OF WIND. LEAVES RUSTLE AND, IN THE DISTANCE, A WOLF HOWLS. THUNDER RUMBLES OMINOUSLY.

JOHN: Okay ... just a bit more.

A SHOVEL DIGGING IN THE DIRT, THE SOUND OF EARTH BEING THROWN TO ONE SIDE.

MEL: (frustrated) I don't know what you're trying to prove.

JOHN: Here we are (BEAT) ... Come and help me.

WOOD SPLINTERS AND BREAKS, THERE IS A CREAKING SOUND AS A COFFIN OPENS.

MEL: (hesitantly) But it's empty.

THUNDER RUMBLES.

MEL: What does it mean?

JOHN: It means we're in trouble.
(PAUSE) Big, big trouble.

A MALEVOLENT WHISPERING.

MEL: What was that?

JOHN: Let's get out of here!

THE SOUND OF RUNNING, WHISPERS. A SUDDEN SCREAM AND A SPLASHING SOUND.

CREEPY ORGAN MUSIC. FADE.

SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC

When you are recording your radio drama, it's possible to record your own foley sounds or make use of Creative Commons repositories such as *Freesound*.

DOCUMENTARY, NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

Radio and podcasts are ideal platforms for exploring ideas and issues through news, current affairs and documentaries. If you are interested in exploring the journalistic potential of radio and podcasting, it is worthwhile listening to a range of these programs to inform your approach to the production. The ABC produces a number of effective programs in this genre, including Triple J's *Hack* and Radio National's *Background Briefing*.

PLANNING YOUR PROGRAM

Planning an effective radio documentary or current affairs segment begins with research. Find out as much as you can about the event, idea or issue that you are exploring in your program. When you are researching, you will identify possible interview subjects. When considering an interview subject, think about their voice and whether it is suited to radio. Find additional interviewees in case someone falls through or is unsuitable. Given the nature of this form, engaging your audience means crafting a story using a combination of scripted voice-overs, interviews, actuality and music. Varying the voices and sounds in your program will help to engage your listener.

Conventions of radio current affairs

- **Actuality:** Short, atmospheric pieces of audio recorded on location, which can be used to set the scene for your listener and create a sense of atmosphere.
- **Sting:** A short musical interlude that is used to break up a program.
- **Taster:** A short, intriguing grab from a segment, which is used towards the beginning of a program.
- **Vox pop:** Short interviews with members of the general public, which are cut together into a short package.

When you are writing a script, it is important to use straightforward, everyday language. Radio is a spoken medium. Imagine talking directly to your audience. Maintain a conversational tone without using slang. Voice-overs that are too formal will seem stilted and unnatural. Use short sentences and write in an active voice. Avoid sentences that have sub-clauses. Long and difficult-to-read sentences will cause difficulties when you are recording. Your script should engage the listener and help your program to move seamlessly between segments. Keep

your voice-over brief, eliminate unnecessary words and unnecessary details. Read your copy aloud as you are writing to ensure clarity and readability.

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS SCRIPTS

There is no standard format for radio news, current affairs and documentary. This format allows you to clearly identify voice-overs, interview questions, music, sound effects, actuality and edit details.

ACTUALITY: The sound tractor, sheep bleating ...

<<fade out>>

Announcer: Farming communities are suffering. The financial hardships of living on the land means that young people are leaving the country in droves. Unlike most of his friends, Bradley James has decided to stay in the country and work the family farm ...

MUSIC: The opening bars of a country and western song.

<<fade down>>

What prompted you to take up farming?

[Possible responses: It's a family tradition. Living and working in the country provides a better lifestyle. Farming is an important industry.]

What makes farming a difficult occupation?

[Possible responses: It's physically demanding. Early mornings and late nights. Running a farm is a financial gamble, you are at the mercy of the weather ...]

<<fade out>>

Minister: We need to do more to keep young people in regional Australia.

Announcer: This exodus has attracted a great deal of attention, particularly from the Minister for Agriculture, who spoke at a town meeting last year.

SOUND FX: The sound of an audience in a town hall.

Minister: We simply need to do something about it. The future of our food security depends on the continued prosperity of Aussie farmers.

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

As a radio journalist, always consider the role that an interview will play in your program. Interviews can be informative, investigative or emotional:

- Informative questions give your listener key facts and details about events or issues. Although these types of interviews are often used in news bulletins, they also have a place in current affairs, giving the listener knowledge and context that forms the foundation for deeper analysis.
- Investigative interviews often go deeper than this, exploring the causes of a conflict or event. They are an opportunity to provide deeper analysis and discussion.
- Emotional interviews are conducted with anyone who has an emotional involvement in a story. These bring human interest, but require great sensitivity.

When writing interview questions it is important to ask open questions that give your interviewee a chance to go in-depth on a topic. These responses can be cut together with voice-overs into a seamless package.

ON LOCATION

When you are on location, choose a quiet location for recording. Avoid large spaces with hard floors that might cause a reverb. Carpeted spaces with soft furnishing are preferable because they absorb sounds. Turn off refrigerators, air-conditioners or any other devices that might interfere with recording. Locations with an interesting ambience often add texture and variety to your program. Recording your interview twice—once with the ambience of the location, then in a more controlled environment—will give you more varied material to use in the edit.

On location, capture as much audio as you can. Location sounds and ambience can be used to engage your audience and set the scene for your story.

Also look for opportunities to record voice-overs on location. These bring spontaneity and a sense of atmosphere to your program.



FIGURE 7.5.2 Conducting an interview for a radio news or current affairs segment is similar to running an interview for a documentary film.

Throughout the interview, it is important to get your microphone close to the interviewee. Use a pair of headphones to monitor the interview as you are recording. While you are recording, keep your eye on the recording levels to ensure that they average around -12 dB.

At the end of every day, make copies of your audio files and label them appropriately. Listen to your location recordings. Documentaries and news and current affairs programs usually have a greater variety of recordings than a panel discussion or radio drama. If your audio editing software allows batch process, this can be an efficient way to ensure every interview and voice-over is at the same level and loudness. When you are cutting a radio program like this, it's recommended that you use a multi-track editor like Audacity, GarageBand or Adobe Audition. Place each of your interviews on a track. Trim the most interesting sound bites from your recordings. At this stage, it might be necessary to change planned voice-overs so that the material flows smoothly.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

There are many podcasts and radio programs that take the format of panel discussions. These rely on the personality and banter between panellists to explore topics and engage the audience.

PLANNING YOUR PANEL DISCUSSION

Although this might seem like an easier option than a scripted documentary or radio drama, it still requires careful planning to be successful.

- **Selecting panellists:** Selecting interesting and knowledgeable panellists for your program is essential. Choose people who know your subject matter and are confident speakers.
- **Consider chemistry:** When selecting guests, always consider a combination of people who will be able to engage in entertaining banter or intelligent debate.
- **Running sheet:** As the producer of the podcast, devise a running sheet for the episode, which contains discussion points, interview questions or other stimulus material. When you are planning, think realistically about the duration of each segment and how you can keep your audience engaged. Breaking up the discussion with sweepers, short musical interludes or other content is a good way to break up an episode and keep the audience engaged.

- **Scripted monologues:** Although panel discussions consist largely of unscripted banter, writing a short introduction for every segment can give your program greater polish and structure.



FIGURE 7.5.3 Panel discussions have become a popular format for podcasts. Ensure that you are well-prepared by selecting your panellists appropriately, preparing a running sheet and scripting monologues.

BUMPERS, STINGERS AND SWEEPERS

Short sounds and musical interludes can be used to break up the flow of your podcast and introduce new segments. These help to orient listeners and give them a break from discussion. There are many sites that sell royalty-free bumpers, stingers and sweepers. It is very straightforward to combine voices and the royalty-free loops that are found in most music software programs in order to create your own. Always consider that these interludes should reflect the tone and style of your program.

RECORDING AUDIO

- **Ensure that your 'studio' recording environment is absolutely quiet.** Not everyone has access to a soundproof recording studio, but it is still possible to create a quiet recording environment. For example, blankets can be hung from the walls to absorb outside sound.
- **Use an external microphone.** Although it is possible to record directly from computers and laptops, an external microphone will contribute significantly to the quality of your audio.

- Before you start recording, do a sound check by reading through a section of your script. Set the recording level to avoid 'clipping', the distortion that occurs when the signal is too high.
- Be wary of plosive sounds like 'p' and 't' that can cause clipping.
- Practise and coach your guests on correct microphone technique.
- Everyone who is speaking should wear a pair of headphones throughout the recording to monitor audio levels.
- Try to avoid making and recording sounds that might come from handling the objects around you, such as tapping the microphone, clicking pens or knocking the desk.
- It is not easy to edit errors in the middle of dialogue. If you make a mistake, the best approach is to take a breath and start again from the beginning of the sentence.
- If you are on location, capture a few seconds of ambience or environmental sound. This is a great way to orient the listener at the beginning of a radio segment. For example, if you are creating a segment about shopping, you could start with the ambient sounds of a shopping complex combined with the sound effect of a cash register.
- Audio recorders and audio software usually give you a choice of formats to record in. WAV or AIFF are preferable because they are raw, uncompressed audio. MP3s can be recorded when you are running out of space but threaten audio quality by removing frequencies typically beyond human hearing.
- When you are recording audio, try to ensure that the voices and sounds average around -18 dB on the meter. This gives you enough room for your talent to speak louder without the sound clipping.

When recording a radio program or podcast, practising correct microphone technique is essential. While filters can be applied to enhance voices in post-production, little can be done to improve poorly recorded audio.

In a studio environment, it is essential to help talent use microphones correctly. Ideally a microphone should be positioned about 15 cm from your mouth. Being too close to the microphone will accentuate low-frequency sounds and make your voice sound too muddy. When speaking into the microphone, be aware that plosive sounds, particularly words beginning with 'p' and 't', can cause popping sounds as air hits the diaphragm of the microphone. This can be avoided by using a pop filter or foam windsock. When you are speaking, it is important to speak directly into the microphone so that you capture directional, high-frequency sounds. Before recording, ensure that your talent is comfortable and they don't have to turn away from the microphone to speak to each other.

Recording interviews and vox pops on location requires practice and skill to move the microphone to an appropriate distance from the speaker while avoiding handling noise. Before conducting an interview on location, do your best to avoid ambient noise, such as traffic or reverb. As you are interviewing the subject, listen to the flow of the conversation and anticipate when you will need to move the microphone. Depending on the directionality of your microphone, you might inadvertently miss what a speaker has said. Keep in mind that adjusting your grip on the microphone will result in unwanted handling noise.

EDITING AUDIO

Editing audio requires precision and attention to detail. Understanding the strengths and limitations of your audio editor is important. Most audio editors, including GarageBand, Audacity and Adobe Audition, allow multi-track editing. Editing your audio production in a multi-track editor is recommended because you can have individual tracks for voice-overs, sound effects and music, making it easier to mix these elements.

When editing out mistakes from dialogue or voice-overs, try not to cut too close to a word or phrase. If you do not maintain the rhythm of the person speaking, your audience will notice the cut. Adding a short cross-dissolve between clips can make the transition less noticeable.

NOISE REMOVAL

Apply a slight noise removal filter to your dialogue if necessary. In audio editing, noise removal involves taking out consistent, unwanted frequencies produced by objects like air-conditioners and microphones.

The first step in removing noise involves finding a moment of 'silence' in your recording and capturing a profile of that sound. Most audio editors then allow you to adjust the percentage of noise reduction and the number of decibels that you want to reduce that sound by. There are no absolute rules when removing noise from recordings. As you apply the filter, listen to the recording carefully through a pair of headphones until it sounds desirable. Also, be aware that excessive noise reduction can often result in artefacts that almost sound worse than the noise you were trying to remove in the first place.

NORMALISING

When you were recording audio, you probably tried to ensure that the sound averaged around -18 dB, so it did not clip. Before you start editing your audio, it is a good idea to normalise the clip. Normalising will increase the maximum volume of your recording. Normalising to -0.1 dB is the most you can increase before clipping occurs.

EQUALISATION

Most editors allow you to adjust the EQ. This can be used to enhance the voices of your presenters. Editors like GarageBand and Adobe Audition have non-destructive parametric equalisers, which can be adjusted to eliminate unwanted frequencies and accentuate the desirable characteristics of voices.

Male voices are usually between 80 and 180 Hz, while female voices are about an octave higher at between 160 and 260 Hz.

Parametric equalisers can be used to apply a high-pass filter to everything below 80 Hz. This will reduce low-frequency rumbling, such as wind noise and microphone handling, while preserving the recorded voices.

Parametric equalisers can also be used to reduce sibilant sounds, the harsh, high-frequency sounds that occur when people utter consonants like 's' and 'z'. These can be negated by reducing sounds above 8000 Hz.

While adjusting low and high frequency sounds using a parametric equaliser can improve the quality of your audio by removing unwanted frequencies, voices can

be enhanced by boosting frequencies within the range of human speech. Slightly increasing the upper or lower ranges of male and female voices by about 3–5 dB can 'sweeten' sound and improve the clarity of voices.

When it comes to equalisation there are no absolute rules. Listen carefully to the voices that you have recorded and do what sounds best. If a voice sounds too muddy or too reedy, then you have gone too far with your EQ adjustments.

COMPRESSION

Multi-track audio editors also have compressors that can be applied to voices. A multiband compressor is a good place to start. Many audio editors have presets for different kinds of compression. Selecting a broadcast style compressor is a quick and convenient way to improve the overall sound of your audio.

Multi-track audio editors often have buttons that can turn effects on or off. When you are listening to audio, it is a good idea to toggle these buttons to determine whether you are making discernible improvements to the audio.

EXPORTING AUDIO

MP3 has been adopted as a standard for publishing podcasts. It is compatible with the majority of platforms and devices. As users typically download episodes of a podcast to their media players, it is important to strike the right balance between quality and file size. It is preferable to use a stereo file encoded at a constant bitrate of 256 kbps at 44.1 kHz. For a 30 minute episode, this compression will typically result in a 60 MB file.

PUBLISHING A PODCAST

Publishing a podcast is a little more complicated than using sites like YouTube and Vimeo to share videos. While there are a number of sites that will publish your podcast for a fee, the basic requirements for publishing a podcast are a web server and RSS feed. Soundcloud is a service that allows users to share audio files. Users are provided with the address of their RSS feed, which can subsequently be shared with services like iTunes so people can download your podcast.

7.6 Photography

Students undertaking photography are expected to produce a photographic work or series with at least ten original photographs. Discuss the scope of your project with your teacher. The production design plan will address codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- outline of content
- mock-ups or storyboards
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and/or media form, such as: camera techniques (including shutter speed, aperture, ISO, lens choice), lighting, flashes, locations, composition, art direction, models, styling, direction and techniques of engagement.
- production notes.

SELECTING A STYLE OR GENRE

In VCE Media, there are a range of different styles and genres of photography that you can explore, such as advertising, aerial, architecture, astrophotography, bands, candid, celebrity, conceptual, decor, events, family, fantasy, fashion, fine art, flora, food, glamour, industrial, landscape,

live performances, macro, microscopic, narrative, news, portraiture, products, property, public relations, social documentary, sports, still life, street photography, surrealist, telescopic, tourism, travel, underwater and wildlife.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea for your photographs, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used in your audio production. Here are some ideas that you might use as starting points for your research:

- Explore the style of a photographer working in a similar genre of photography. This exploration might include a written commentary on how the photographer explores ideas or achieves particular effects. Your discussion might be accompanied by annotated examples of this photographer's work.
- Analyse the use of photographic techniques in the selected work by commenting on the use of particular codes such as camera techniques, framing, positioning of subjects, *mise en scène*, lighting and the use of post-production techniques.

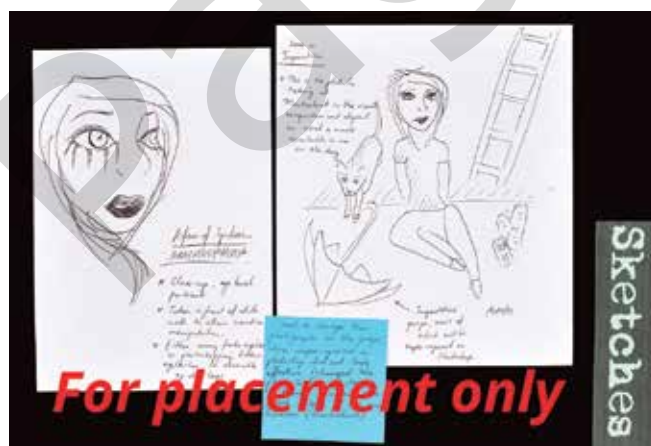


FIGURE 7.6.1 Examples of mock-ups created by past VCE Media student Stephanie Cammarano for her Phobias photographic folio

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your selected style and genre of photography. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary to complete your project.

- One of the best production exercises is simply getting to know your camera, exploring its manual settings and options so that you become a more effective and efficient photographer. This exercise might involve understanding how best to use settings such as aperture, ISO, shutter speed and white balance.
- Explore the implications of using different lenses. For example, you might ask yourself which focal length and aperture is best-suited to the genre and style of your production.
- Experiment with the different styles and sources of lighting required to complete your production. This

could include experiments with natural, practical or studio lights. You might also experiment with reflectors and diffusion to achieve desired effects.

- Both onboard and off-camera flashes require practice if they are to be used effectively.
- Some styles of photography, such as street or event photography, require quick thinking and familiarity with your camera—use the production exercises as an opportunity to practise these skills.
- The production exercises can also be used to develop your understanding of how to achieve particular photographic effects, such as strobe photography or long exposures.
- Explore the features of your photo-editing software, including programs like Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Lightroom. You might, for example, learn how to use histograms, filters and other advanced features.
- Explore the best options for printing and mounting your photographs. Experiment with different types of paper stock and printers.



FIGURE 7.6.2 Depth of field

PLANNING

The best photographic design plans show a clear sense of purpose going into a shoot. Successful plans clearly define what the final photographs will look like, giving a sense of how elements such as colour, lighting, framing and *mise en scène* will be used.

PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNIQUES

When you are planning a series of photographs, consider using the following camera and compositional techniques.

CAMERA

- **Raw:** Many cameras allow photographers to shoot in a raw format, giving them greater flexibility to manipulate images in post-production by preserving details in shadows and highlights. If your camera is capable of shooting raw, give it a shot and experiment with it later.
- **Aperture:** Changing the aperture of your lens gives you control over the depth of field (see Figure 7.6.2). Shallow depth of field can be used to draw the audience's eye to a particular element, while deep focus allows them to see into the background.
- **Shutter speed:** Adjusting the shutter speed of your camera allows you to either capture crisp, clear action or motion blurs. Using long exposures can also create interesting effects like those shown in Figure 7.6.3).
- **Burst mode:** If you are doing event or sports photography, make the use of burst mode on your camera. This allows you to capture the right moment by taking a series of shots in quick succession.
- **Neutral density filters:** A neutral density filter can be attached to the lens of your camera to reduce exposure. This allows photographers to reduce the depth of field on bright days or use longer shutter speeds to capture motion blurs during the day.
- **HDR:** The high dynamic range function on a camera allows photographers to take three shots of an image: one underexposed, one correctly exposed and one overexposed. These shots can be combined with software on your computer or smartphone to preserve detail in difficult lighting situations.



FIGURE 7.6.3 This example of motion photography was created using a slow shutter speed.



FIGURE 7.6.4 An HDR image

COMPOSITION



FIGURE 7.6.5 Symmetry: Balancing objects within the frame can create a sense of harmony in your composition.



FIGURE 7.6.9 Leading lines: Leading lines can be created by natural objects, props or architectural features. They draw the audience's eye into the composition and create a pleasing sense of perspective.



FIGURE 7.6.6 Asymmetry: Asymmetrical composition can add dynamism to an image by creating disequilibrium.



FIGURE 7.6.10 Deep staging: Add depth to your images by considering how you can use the foreground, middle-ground and background to bring meaning and life to your photograph.



FIGURE 7.6.7 Rule of thirds: Dividing the frame into thirds and positioning your subject along these lines or their intersections is a common photographic convention.



FIGURE 7.6.11 Flat staging: A lack of perspective in shots can draw your viewer's eye to a particular element or create a sense of banality.



FIGURE 7.6.8 Perspective: Perspective will bring a sense of depth to your photograph that leads the viewer's eye into the image.



FIGURE 7.6.12 Frame within a frame: Using frames in the foreground, such as objects, doors or windows, is a good way to guide the eye to the subject of your photograph.



FIGURE 7.6.13 Space: Positive space is the subject of your photograph and negative space is the area that surrounds it. You can decide to have your subject fill the frame or be dominated by the background.



FIGURE 7.6.14 Colour: Colour can be used to make your subject stand out or blend in with the surroundings.



FIGURE 7.6.15 Natural light: Shape natural light with reflectors and subtractors to create dramatic effects.



FIGURE 7.6.16 Studio light: Continuous lighting in the studio can allow you to create dramatic, controlled effects.



FIGURE 7.6.17 Contrast: Contrast using colour, light, shadow or patterns can emphasise elements in your frame.



FIGURE 7.6.18 Pattern: The repetition of patterns can be used to create striking images and, through contrast, attract attention to one part of the frame.



FIGURE 7.6.19 Camera angle: Consider how you can use overshots, high-angle, eye-level, low-angle and undershots to create visual interest within the frame.



FIGURE 7.6.20 Shot size: Your distance relative to the subject contributes significantly to the meaning of a shot. Consider how the shot size you use (extreme long shots all the way to extreme close-ups) contribute to your meaning.



FIGURE 7.6.21 Flash photography: Flash photography can be used both in the studio and with natural light to make the subject pop from the background.

CAMERA CHOICE

The advent of digital SLR and mirrorless cameras means that photographers now have the ability to experiment with a wide range of lenses to achieve particular effects. Fish-eyes are ultra-wide lenses that create hemispherical pictures. They are often used by sports photographers, particularly in skateboarding, to create dynamic and interesting pictures. Wide-angle lenses are often used in photojournalism because they emphasise the distance between objects and allow photographers to capture large panoramas. Wide lenses can cause fish-eye style distortion around the edges of the frame. Longer lenses, those between 70 mm and 105 mm, are frequently used for portraits because they make people's noses appear smaller. Prime lenses create crisp images, while zoom lenses are useful for covering live events and allow the photographer to zoom in on people or things.

PRODUCTION

While it is possible to take excellent photographs with the automatic settings of a camera, using the manual settings will ultimately give you greater control over your final images.

SHUTTER SPEED

The shutter speed determines the length of time the camera's shutter is open and how long light is permitted to enter the camera. On many digital SLR cameras, the shutter speed can be controlled quite precisely. Fast shutter speeds are useful for shooting fast-moving objects. Slow shutter speeds can be used to create motion blurs.

APERTURE

The aperture is the hole in a lens that light travels through. A wider aperture allows more light to enter a camera. The width of the aperture is measured in stops. The lower the f-stop, the larger the aperture is. An aperture of f/1.4 is larger than an aperture of f/8. A wide aperture with a slow shutter speed is used to create a very shallow depth of field.

WHITE BALANCE

Setting the white balance of a camera is an important step that contributes to taking a good photograph. If the image is too orange or blue, it is likely that the white balance on your camera is set incorrectly. On most cameras, white balance can be set for direct sunlight, overcast weather, and incandescent and fluorescent lights. Many cameras allow manual white balance by taking a photograph of a white card, which provides a digital reference for the lighting.

ISO

ISO determines how sensitive the camera is to light. Low film speeds, such as ISO 100, are generally recommended for use on bright, sunny days. High film speeds, such as ISO 1600, are ideal for low-light conditions. Typically, depending on your sensor, higher ISO creates increased grain in an image.

POST-PRODUCTION

Photo-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom and Apple Photos can be used to modify and adjust images after they have been taken. Before you start editing your photos, ensure that you make a copy of the original files and/or negatives. It is good practice to avoid saving over the original images; work on a copy instead. That way, if you encounter difficulties, you can always return to the original and start again.

Photo-editing programs often have automatic adjustment features that will improve the contrast and colour in most images. Using these automatic adjustments can be an effective way to quickly improve the overall look of the photograph. However, you can achieve more precise control over an image by adjusting the presentation levels manually.

During post-production it is also a good idea to consider cropping your images. Sometimes, despite meticulous planning, the shot might be slightly wider than desired or not composed correctly. Cropping allows you to subtly change the framing of the photograph, for example, to comply with the rule of thirds. When performing operations such as cropping or straightening, it is important to keep in mind that these alterations can reduce the resolution of the photograph. Significantly cropping the photograph could mean that you reduce the quality of the print. Planning your shoot carefully means that such adjustments will only ever have a negligible effect on the quality of the image.

PRINTING

It is important to determine the printing specifications that are going to be most effective for your production. Ask yourself if you want to print on matte (not shiny) or gloss (shiny) paper. Consider what paper thickness will suit your images and how you will present your images. During the initial planning for your photography production, create a basic layout and experiment with the presentation methods, paper stock and printer options available to you.



FIGURE 7.6.22 Adjusting the 'black point' (darkness) and 'white point' (lightness) in a photograph can result in a richer image with improved contrast.



FIGURE 7.6.23 The curves tool of a photo-editing program alters the representation of the shadows, midtones and highlights in an image. Creating an S-curve is an effective method for making a flat image appear more dynamic.



7.7 Print

Students creating a print product are expected to produce a work of at least eight pages. The best way to clarify the scope of your project is to discuss potential ideas with your teacher. The production design plan will address codes and conventions, formats and processes appropriate to your intention, audience and media form.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGN PLAN

The production design plan may include:

- brainstorming
- research folio
- production exercises
- intention
- audience
- outline of content
- articles
- mock-ups
- scheduling documents
- codes and conventions and specifications appropriate to your genre and/or media form, such as: a description of style and/or genre, techniques of engagement, typography, layout, presentation (such as paper stock and method of printing) and visual material (such as photographs and illustrations)
- production notes.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Once you have settled on an idea for your print production, you will need to complete your research portfolio. Your research portfolio will examine codes, conventions, narrative, genres and styles relevant to your production, making specific and detailed reference to how these techniques will be used in your print product. Here are ideas that you might use as starting points for your research.

- Analyse pages from similar print productions. If you are creating a fashion magazine, for example, you might annotate the pages to indicate important conventions you will adopt in your project.
- Identify the structure and style of writing from your selected genre. A glossy tourist brochure will be written in a very different manner to a current affairs magazine. Be specific about how you will use this structure and style in your own production.

- If you are creating a graphic novel, comic or storybook find prominent examples of these genres and comment on the structure of their narratives.
- Describe the style of photographs or illustrations included in your selected genre. Your description of these may be accompanied by annotated examples.

PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Following your research portfolio, you will undertake at least two production exercises to explore the technology, equipment and processes relevant to your selected style and genre of print production. Each of these exercises will be accompanied by documentation including an intention and evaluation. The best production exercises will be related to your research and proposed production, giving you the opportunity to explore the equipment and processes necessary to complete your project.

- If you are illustrating material for a magazine, graphic novel, zine or storybook explore the materials you will use to create these illustrations and how they will be scanned, manipulated and included in the final product.
- Explore how to take photographs for your production. These tests might include an exploration of camera settings, lenses, lighting and flashes.
- Explore the features of your photo-editing software, including programs like Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Lightroom. You might, for example, learn how to use histograms, filters and other advanced features to manipulate photographs and images for your print publication.
- Explore the features of page layout programs such as Microsoft Publisher, Adobe InDesign and Apple Pages.
- Conduct tests to determine the most suitable printers and paper stock for your production. You may also test options for binding your product.

frankie
design · art · photography · fashion · travel · music · craft · home · life



FIGURES 7.7.1 AND 7.7.2 The cover of a publication sets the tone and provides the reader with expectations about the content to follow.

MAGAZINES

Despite the rise of digital and online content, magazines, in a range of formats and styles, are still incredibly popular. They are also a popular choice for students creating their school-assessed task.

MASTHEAD AND COVER

The masthead, or title of your publication, is probably the most distinctive and important element of your print publication's cover. Experiment with the font type, size and weight, and the space between the letters until you end up with something that expresses the style of your magazine. Carefully consider the use of colour on the cover of your print product, ensuring that it is consistent with the overall style of your publication.

TYPOGRAPHY

If you are going to make an effective print product, you need to choose fonts that suit its style, content and format. Current affairs magazines are often extremely conservative in their use of typefaces to ensure that their typography is clean, consistent and easy to read. Using too many fonts can result in a design that is busy, cluttered and difficult to read.

Typography can be subtly manipulated to create contrast **with colour,** **the weight of a font,** use of serif and **sans serif fonts,** the size of text and **the combination of UPPER and lower case words.**

FIGURE 7.7.3 Think carefully about the use of typography in your print product to create contrast and draw attention to particular words.

Heading The top part of the page and/or the title of the article

cover story

is still there. Despite her profile steadily rising and spreading like those balloons above, despite the fact that she was recently nominated for her first Gold Logie, Keddie is ready for a rest, and at this point is damn sure she's going to take one.

"I'm glad that I've recognised that I need to refuel a little bit," she acknowledges, laughing. "Yeah, I'm going to stop. I'm going away."

Drop cap The enlarged or elaborately decorated first letter of the body text

On the way to the temporary headquarters of Offspring productions. Whoops and screams rise up from outside, where the crew are gathered in a circle playing hacky-sack.

After changing out of costume, the 36-year-old actor apologises (unnecessarily) for a short delay. She sits down on a sand-coloured, linen-covered couch. I sit on a chair. We talk about her childhood. The conversation is like therapy.

Margin The space around the printed matter on a page

Now her mother, an English lit and drama teacher, named her after actress Jane Asher (the, after Charlotte and Emily), how she studied psychology and anatomy, how the family lived in Sandringham and how she flung from being "painfully shy" to "craving attention".

"I think there was the desire to be approved of and noticed and recognised as I was growing up, which was the performer in me," she says, "and the other part of me was struggling from a very early age with conflicting emotions about being the odd one out."

Her uncle, film producer Richard Keddie, remembers the young Asher as an instinctive performer and copycat even as a five-year-old. "I remember I gave her a Christmas present and she

said, 'Thank you. That's so kind of you. You really shouldn't have,'" he says. "She was a great play actor as a child." And then she was a great professional actor as a child, working on a handful of telemovies and miniseries from ages eight to 12-week shoots in the outback "adventure" but also "very lonely".

"I liked to think of myself as quite a loner. The fact is I was a little girl," Keddie says. "I was in a room by myself for weeks on end. It would never happen now. I think for some years with some guilt over that, but I was the sort of child who pushed and pushed to get what I wanted, and I didn't want to be told 'No'. I don't know that that part of me has changed that much."

Giving up acting and going to high school – a decision made by her parents – was a tricky adjustment after she had worked with a tutor for so long. Fitting into an academic and sports-focused boarding school was a challenge. "I switched to Grammar School. Still, as a teenager, I really pushed it to the limit. I don't think I was quite as popular with my family then," she says. "Emotionally, I pushed as many buttons as I could. Looking back, I think I wanted people to be reactive, so that I could work out how to deal with them."

Her uncle, who produced the telemovies *Hawke* (in which Keddie played *Blanche d'Alpuget*) and *Curtin* (in which she played prime minister John Curtin's daughter) is more generous about her time as a hell-raiser, perhaps euphemistically referring to her "incredible spirit".

"She was such a close observer of others," he says. "I think she learned how to get through situations by remembering how she saw other people get

Pull quote A quote or an extract lifted from the body text and set in a different, more visually striking font, to attract readers' attention

"I was really very much an escapist in my 20s, I wasn't keen on living in the present... Patience wasn't my greatest strength and perhaps still isn't, but I'm getting better."

through them, which is an interesting actor, isn't it?"

"It's probably not uncommon to speculate. 'To be an actor and performance, you've got to be wrestle with your emotions and I was certainly doing that at the time'."

When she turned 18, she had an adult agent, so she walked away with that?"). and then, so far lasted almost 20 years, productions with the MTC to a lot of TV shows including *State of Mind*, *Guys Bad Guys*, *Janus*, *Stinger*, *The Secret Life of Us*, *Satisfaction*, and, of course, her breakout *Through the Outback*. Throughout that time, she endured (or cultivated) an emotional "troubled artist".

"I was really very much an escapist in my 20s, I wasn't all that keen on living in the present, what I wanted to do and I know I can't achieve. Patience wasn't my greatest strength, perhaps still isn't, but I'm getting better. That's just needed conflict. That's the thing to say, but I think I needed so that I could sort it out."

And then? Then around 30 – of rejecting good opportunities, fractious friendships or bad boys, what I think it comes down to? quite a lot of life experience as a late bloomer. And bloom she did. high-strung, strung-out Julia Jackson, a turning a point in her life – a rewarding but personally liberating



Bleed Design elements that extend to the end of the page and are placed to 'bleed' beyond the edge

Caption A title or description of the image shown nearby

Asher Keddie "I think I was a late bloomer."

Footer Repeated text or graphics at the bottom of the page (often contains the page number)

FIGURE 7.7.4 Common features typically found in print publications

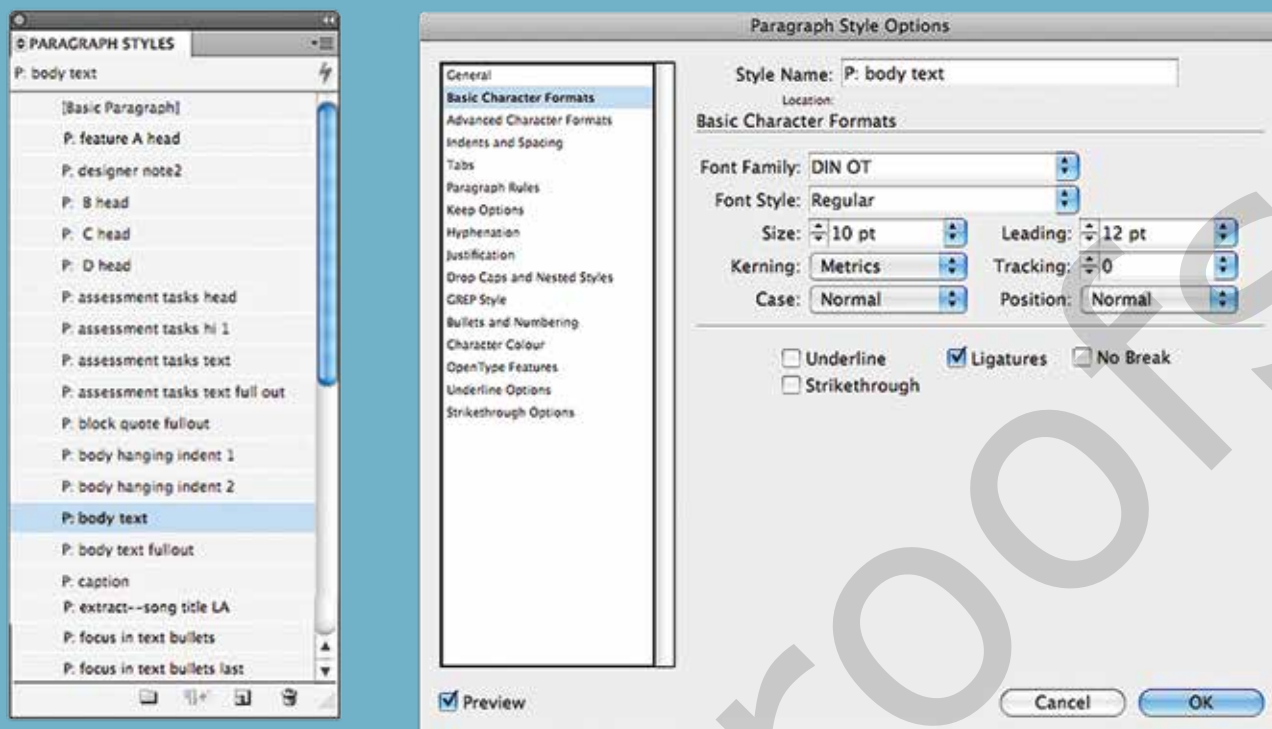


FIGURE 7.7.5 Paragraph-style options and settings can be changed and refined in page-layout programs such as InDesign.

Contrast in typography can make your design appear dynamic and interesting. Magazines often have headings that use different weights of the same font. For example, part of a heading may be in Helvetica and the rest in a derivation of the Helvetica font type. By manipulating the font type, size, weight, colour and the case of the text (i.e. upper or lower) you can emphasise particular words of importance.

STYLES

It is important to think about how you are going to present the text in your print product; that is, the styles you will use to differentiate your content. Most page-layout programs allow you to create paragraph styles that set the parameters for the font type, size, weight, kerning and leading of your text.

Within any print publication you will have a range of styles for items such as body text, headings, subheadings, pull quotes and captions. Defining these styles before you become immersed in your design will make it easier to consistently format text as you go along.

Your print product should have a sense of consistency. Desktop publishing software, such as Adobe® InDesign®, allows users to create master pages. These master pages contain recurring features and styles and their use ensures that most of the pages in a publication carry a similar design. Aim to give every spread a sense of individuality, while maintaining an element of consistency throughout the publication.

BODY TEXT

It is vitally important that your text is legible. For example, it is usually not a good idea to place large amounts of text over a photograph, particularly if the image is complex, as it is likely to make the text almost impossible to read. If you are looking for a typeface that is simple and easy to read, you do not have to settle for the commonly used Times New Roman. There are a range of other attractive serif fonts that are noteworthy for their legibility, including Garamond, Baskerville, Georgia and Palatino. If you want to use a sans serif font, popular options include Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma and Verdana. As serif fonts are considered easier to read than sans serif fonts, you may want to use a serif font for the body text and sans serif fonts for other text styles, such as headings and captions.

Helvetica Size: 9pt • Leading: Auto
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Et ille ridens: Video, inquit, quid agas; Indicant pueri, in quibus ut in speculis natura cernitur. Graecis hoc modicum est: Leonidas, Epaminondas, tres aliqui aut quattuor; Perge porro; Quamquam te quidem video minime esse deterritum. Duo Reges: constructio interrete. Quippe: habes enim a rhetoribus; Consequentia exquirere, quoad sit id, quod volumus, effectum.

Baskerville Size: 9pt • Leading: 14pt
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Et ille ridens: Video, inquit, quid agas; Indicant pueri, in quibus ut in speculis natura cernitur. Graecis hoc modicum est: Leonidas, Epaminondas, tres aliqui aut quattuor; Perge porro; Quamquam te quidem video minime esse deterritum. Duo Reges: constructio interrete. Quippe: habes enim a rhetoribus; Consequentia exquirere, quoad sit id, quod volumus, effectum.

Lorem ipsum is a type of filler text that dates back to the sixteenth century. It is frequently used by designers when creating page mock-ups as a text placeholder. There are several lorem ipsum text generators available online.

FIGURE 7.7.6 Think carefully about your use of body text. Font type, size and weight communicate a great deal about your publication and contribute significantly to its readability.

As well as thinking about the font choice for your body text, it is important to consider the leading. By default, most page-layout programs will set the leading to 120 per cent of the font size. So if your font is size 10, the leading will automatically be set to 12 points. Increasing the leading of your body text applies more space between the lines and can improve the legibility of your text.

COLOUR

Colours, and combinations of colours, communicate meaning and carry emotions.

Analogous colours are close to each other on the colour wheel and are pleasing to the eye. Complementary colours are direct opposites on the colour wheel; they are dynamic and when used together draw attention to themselves.

When you are planning mock-ups for your print product, take some time to think about your use of colour. You might start by creating colour swatches to see how the colours you intend to use work together. If a photograph is going to be used as the dominant feature of a design, think about using the eyedropper in your photo-editing software to select colours from the image that can be used for headings.

HIERARCHY

The size of the elements on a printed page often indicates their importance to readers. The heading and photograph(s) associated with a newspaper article are usually the largest and most dominant features of the design, following by subheadings, body text and captions. Increasing the size of an image or part of the text gives these features greater prominence on the page.

ZINES

Zines are handmade magazines. You don't need software or even a computer to make a zine. All it takes is a black marker and a photocopier. In many ways, zines are a reaction to the glossy perfection of the mainstream magazine industry. They are lo-fi, underground publications that often feature messages of rebellion.

In the 1970s and 1980s, zines developed as a form of expression for the punk movement, and featured political commentary, music reviews and poetry. Punk zines were largely produced using everyday equipment including typewriters, photocopies and marker pens. They often appropriated and modified images from mainstream publications, promoting a do-it-yourself ethos encouraging ordinary people to make their own culture. The format and ethos of these punk zines was quickly adopted by other counterculture movements, including the feminist riot grrrl movement of the 1990s. These handmade, independent publications often explored ideas and themes neglected by the mainstream media.

The Sticky Institute is an independent organisation in Melbourne, Australia that promotes zine culture. They provide people with equipment—such as typewriters, photocopiers and long-arm staplers—to create and sell their own zines. 'The Festival of the Photocopier' is an annual event that promotes zine-making in Australia.



FIGURE 7.7.7 Zine by Anji Bignell

PRINTING YOUR PROJECT

It is important to determine the printing specifications that are going to be most effective for your production. Ask yourself whether you want to print on matte or gloss paper and what paper thickness will suit your publication. Also consider how the product is going to be bound. During your production exercises, it is a good idea to create a basic layout and experiment with the binding, paper stock and printer options available to you.

PRODUCTION NOTES

When you are making your product, ideas often develop and evolve when you are in production. While completing the school-assessed task for VCE Media, you are expected to keep a record of these ideas and changes. These production notes demonstrate the learning that occurs when you are making your production and allow your teacher to authenticate your work. Production notes may take a range of forms. Some students have a dedicated production notebook that they write in while they're on location and editing their film. Other students will simply choose to keep the annotated screenplay and shot lists that they used while they were making the film. These documents will be added to your production design plan before submission, but must be clearly differentiated from the design plan itself. Unlike other subjects, such as Studio Arts, you are not expected to write a formal evaluation of your work. The production notes should be an authentic record of your production.

FIGURE 7.7.8 Sticky Institute, Melbourne



CHAPTER SUMMARY

- When developing an idea, take the time to research and investigate the media form you are interested in.
- Audience is one of the most important considerations when planning a media production. Identify the knowledge, expectations and experience of your audience and remember to consider them throughout the production process.
- Successful media products require detailed written and visual planning documents. The planning documents should address how codes and conventions specific to the media form will be used.
- Before undertaking any media production, identify what you hope to achieve by clearly stating your aims in your intention.
- Undertaking production exercises that may, for example, involve experimenting with the use of technical equipment, is a good way to prepare yourself for your media production.
- Media production is a time-consuming process that requires sound organisational and production skills to create an engaging and polished product.

ASSESSMENT: RESEARCH PORTFOLIO AND PRODUCTION EXERCISES

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

A research portfolio is a detailed investigation of codes, conventions, narratives, genres and/or styles relevant to your media production. Your portfolio will take the form of a written report that is accompanied by relevant reference material, such as stills, audio clips or video. Your discussion should be specific and detailed, commenting on how you will use this knowledge throughout the production process.

ASSESSMENT: PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Before you commence, it is important to develop relevant media production skills. Getting hands-on experience with the technical equipment and processes related to your chosen medium will allow you to develop the necessary skills to create your own media production, and be well-equipped to handle potential problems that may occur during the production process. These production exercises should evolve organically from your research portfolio.

For this course outcome, you are required to complete at least two production exercises with accompanying documentation. Your school will decide on the length and complexity of the tasks, which may be linked or separate. For example, you may decide to shoot a documentary interview for the first exercise, then edit it for the next exercise.

As you complete your production exercise, you are expected to record, document and evaluate your development of ideas and skills.

INTENTION

Whether you are exploring how to create a three-point lighting system for a stop-motion animation sequence or experimenting with the use of digital photography for a zine, you need to explain clearly what you intend to achieve from each media skills task.

When writing your intention, research the skills and techniques required to complete the production exercise. If you are practising how to shoot a dialogue-heavy film scene, for example, you should research and explain the technical and aesthetic knowledge required to successfully complete the task. Your intention should anticipate any problems that are likely to occur while undertaking your production exercise as well as any possible solutions.

EVALUATION

When you have completed each production exercise, carefully and critically evaluate what you have achieved with reference to your stated intention:

- Did you meet the aims as outlined in your intention?
- What have you learnt in the process of completing this media skills task?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Is there any other technical knowledge you need to acquire before beginning?