

## Step-by-Step Guide to Making a Welcome Video



### Step One: Create an Outline

Before jumping right in to record an introductory video, it is a good idea to first create an outline of the topics you might want to cover in the video. Creating an outline will help ensure that you cover all the essential information students should know about you or the course and ensure a smooth and logical flow of information being delivered. TIP: An outline will also help to keep the video to a reasonable length, and file size. An average video length is 3-5 minutes.

#### Instructor Introduction

- Welcome to the students, including introducing yourself, your title and field of expertise.
- Information on your educational and work background
- Why you love your discipline and the courses you teach.
- What excites you about online teaching and some "pitfalls" you will help them avoid as online students?
- Personal information, such as hobbies or information about your family/home life (Optional)

#### Course Introduction

- Course number/name and how the course fits into the curriculum of the program
- The importance or reason for this course
- How or why this course is relevant to the students.
- How the course is designed/organized and delivered to students
- How/why the course design will help the students achieve the course goals and learning objectives.
- Expectations for student participation
- Special instructions for assessments or assignments

### Step Two: Write a Script

A script is the fleshed-out version of your outline. This should literally be exactly what you plan to say while recording. The script should be word for word what will be read into the camera.

**TIP:** Federal law requires multimedia content to be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Essentially, this means that text transcripts should be made available for any enrolled students. Therefore, it is a good idea to write out your script word for word, so you will have a transcript already prepared when you are done recording.

### Step Three: Set Up Your Camera

#### Check Smart Phone Camera or Webcam Set-up

If you are using an external webcam, follow any installation and setup instructions that came with it. If you are using a built-in webcam or camera on your smart phone, you should be set. Regardless of whether your webcam is external or built-in, you should also check your microphone settings before

you begin. This allows you to verify that the proper microphone is being used to record your audio, and that the volume is acceptable for the recording.

### **Sit near the camera**

Webcams can have a limited field of view (what the camera can see) and recording with them can be deceptive. While recording, you may be looking at a very large window on your computer's screen. This gives the impression that students will be watching your video at that size as well.

### **Step Four: Set up Your Lights**

Proper lighting is the most important element of any recorded video. Use the simple techniques listed below to take maximum advantage of the lights around you in your office or home.

#### **Lights in front, not behind**

When it comes to lights we can place or move, typically a table or floor lamp, we tend to place them behind where we sit. This works from a practical standpoint because it illuminates the things in front of us (like books we are reading). However, having your primary light source behind you can ruin the quality of a recorded video. This happens because the primary light source is not illuminating your face, the most important part of the video.

### **Step Five: Prepare the Recording Environment**

#### **Find a quiet place**

You will likely have to perform a recording multiple times. It is essential that you find a quiet and distraction-free location in which to record. Public spaces rarely make good recording locations. You should also consider potential distractions at home. Are the kids home? Does the dog need a walk? Is your partner vacuuming or doing the dishes? All these factors can affect the overall quality of your recording or distract you from being able to successfully deliver your content.

#### **Do not blend in**

Regardless of lighting or the quality of your camera, a lack of contrast between you and your background can ruin the quality of your video. The focus of a video is very often you, so you do not want to let your background steal the show. There are two simple steps to follow to establish contrast in your videos:

- Find a (relatively) plain background. A solid color will work best, and preferably lighter than darker.
- Wear clothing that contrasts (well) with the background you have chosen. In general, you will have the best luck using a plain background (especially if you do not have advanced lighting equipment).

### **Step Six: Recording Your Video**

The process of finally recording video of yourself can be uncomfortable for some people. We are not used to hearing and seeing ourselves speak in a recorded format, and it is easy to be overly critical or feel like we are not at our best. If you experience these feelings, try to flip them around to focus more

on areas you can improve (like if you say “um” too frequently). The following advice will also help improve the quality of your recordings.

### **Use your voice**

Vary the tone of your voice, as well as your rate of speaking to avoid sounding too monotone. But try not to go overboard; it is easy to push a microphone too far. If you are using an external microphone for your audio, try to find and use a Pop Filter. A Pop Filter is a small screen that rests between you and the microphone. It dampens “pops” from sounds like the “t” and “p” in the word “type.” These sounds can create “pops” that go outside the normal range of the audio recording and decrease the quality of your audio.

### **Relax your movement**

It is important that you try to relax on camera. This will help you seem more approachable to your audience. Try to avoid anything that may be an unnecessary distraction (e.g., dangly, or sparkly jewelry, constantly shifting in your seat, etc.). If you tend to “talk with your hands,” try to slow your gestures a bit. Swift movements do not always translate well in recorded audio and can make your hands appear blurry due to their motion. This is distracting for the audience. This also affects any objects you may be physically demonstrating or showing. If this is the case, hold the object near the camera and move it very slowly.

### **Be prepared**

Keep your script nearby. If you can, keep it open on the screen in front of you. Doing this will make it much less noticeable when you are reading your script (since you will not have to look away from the screen-and the camera-to do so). Keeping a glass of water nearby may also be helpful. If you are recording a lot at once, your throat may go dry and affect your ability to speak with consistency. Remember to frequently drink water, use hydrating cough drops, and take frequent breaks between recordings (every half hour or so, if possible).

### **Save your video**

This is one of the most overlooked areas of video creation: Where to save your file, and what format to save it in. Ideally, you will want to save your video as a .MOV or .MP4 video file. Both file formats will reduce the size of your video file without reducing the overall quality and meet file type requirements for uploading to video sharing sites such as Articulate Presenter, Mediasite, and YouTube.

Adapted from:

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