

Recording a 'piece to camera' with a smartphone

When we address the camera directly, we call this a 'piece to camera,' but not all 'pieces to camera' are created equally. We want you coming across as well so your audience are focussed on the message, not poor production.

All you need is a smartphone, a tripod (or something you can use to prop your phone on) and these 5 easy points:

1. Delivery
2. Planning
3. Lighting
4. Sound
5. Quality

The 2 most important factors are: 1. Compelling message; and 2. Confident delivery

Delivery

Think objective – Ask yourself, 'What action do I want the audience to take after watching?' Frame the performance around this point.

Best friends – when addressing the audience, it should be as if we were speaking to our friends. Be yourself and loosen up, and explain your points as if your friend was in the room.

Multiple takes – you are the director - you shape the video your way. If you aren't happy, try again. Make sure you watch the footage afterwards; it's best to get it right first time!

Begin and end decisively – ensure that there is a definite beginning and ending to your thoughts, trailing off is not a great way to end the piece in certain ways... (trailing off)

Warm smiles – Beginning and ending a section with a smile is generally what we do with our audience.

One-take preferred – Do it in one continuous take if possible, but if it's a long section, feel free to break it up into bite-sized chunks. The rule is this: begin and end a paragraph decisively. But in between, each sentence can be cut into smaller chunks.

Pause between thoughts – If you choose to break the video up, make sure you pause between takes, because editing can be really choppy and distracting if there are no pauses.

More energy – Be yourself, but try adding a little more energy to the delivery.

Be concise – Simple, well-articulated, brief thoughts are preferable. Use simple English.

Planning

Give yourself time – Mark out a chunk of time in your calendar. You may not get it in one take, so be prepared to redo some shots until you are happy.

Plan the environment – make sure any distractions like traffic, ambient noise or interruptions are avoided.

Get mentally prepped - Even if it's a casual video, write an outline ahead of time so you are mentally prepared. It's a good idea to practice in front of the mirror; this will improve your confidence.

Phone – Ensure sufficient charge, storage capacity, airplane mode with notifications off.

Lighting

Daylight in shade - Best to shoot during the day, facing a window or in the outdoors under the shade.

Face the sun – but turn on an angle so you are not squinting.

We want to see your eyes – if you are wearing glasses, consider removing them for the shoot.

Don't use a flash or indoor lighting – it's too hard to get it right.

Audio

You will usually have to make do with the in-built phone microphone.

Keep the microphone out of the wind, away from rubbing clothing and away from distracting noises.

Quality

Tripod – it's preferable to sit the camera on a tripod, but you can also opt to have a friend with you to hold the camera steady. Please don't film 'selfie-style'!

Camera at eye-level – we don't want people looking up or down at you.

Look straight at the lens

Don't Zoom – Don't use the digital zoom on the phone, as it reduces quality. Step forward and backward to frame your shot.

Head and torso only – centre yourself in the shot and make sure there is not too much space above your head.

Don't get creative – don't try to edit, add titles, or try different angles. Get creative with the words, but let's be straightforward when it comes to shooting. Please send us raw footage, and we will do the editing.

Landscape not portrait – it's a widescreen world, so ensure your videos are horizontal or landscape orientation.

Wipe the Lens - with a clean cloth beforehand to avoid smudges

Enjoy!

Possible extra viewing:

1. Simple ways to shoot better video with a mobile phone:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ2LIW5hOfM> (Duration: 2 minutes; 9 Seconds)
2. Watch this video about body language: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmbQFWBvTtY>
(Duration: 4 minutes; 51 Seconds)