

How to make instructional videos

This tutorial was taken from the Vimeo tutorial below and then updated for our Math Senior Seminar: <https://vimeo.com/blog/post/how-to-make-instructional-videos/>

Because instructional videos are all about clear explanations, it's important you do the early legwork to make sure your video is as simple and straightforward as it can be. That means that instructional videos require a decent amount of prep-time. Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning and producing your instructional video:

1. Decide your video's goal

Before you even begin the scripting process for your instructional video, decide what your key takeaways should be. Once you've clearly outlined your goals, continue to refer to them throughout the process. This will help you make sure you're hewing closely to those key tenets.

2. Identify your audience

When preparing your content, it's critical that you get clear about your intended audience. Consider what they might ask, why they're watching this video, and what particular problem needs to be addressed. This will help ensure your video serves a need.

3. Decide your intended length

This doesn't have to be exact, but it's good to think about your intended platform before you jump into your video plans. If your video is intended to live only on your website, feel free to plan for a longer video. If you're planning on a social media distro plan, you'll want to keep it much shorter (like, under a minute) so you can program it everywhere. When thinking about teaching students usually videos of 30min max is recommended and in fact many educators suggest short snippets to keep student's attention.

4. Draft an outline and storyboard

Now it's time to outline and storyboard. Start by writing out a vague sketch of the steps you'll want to cover and how you'll want to visually represent them. If you're looking to work with a conventional structure, we suggest starting with introducing the main idea, outline the steps needed to make it actionable, then include a section with a key points wrap up near the end.

How do I structure my instructional video?

Any good explainer (like any good story!) needs a beginning, middle, and an end. Follow these steps to make sure you create an instructional video that answers all of your viewer's questions.

1. Start by clearly reviewing what your video is going to explain or teach. Give your viewers a high level view before you dive in.
2. Next, start at the very beginning of the process and run through it linearly, step-by-step. Make sure you accompany each step with supporting explanation and visuals to make it easy to glean important information at a glance.
3. Before you sign off, circle back and revisit each of your steps. This will help your viewer cut down on repeat watches and boost their info retention.

5. Write the script

Now that you've got the critical concepts outlined and ordered, it's time to officially write the words and visual cues you'll use in the video itself. Make sure you're thorough on this step! You want to make sure your instruction is super clear and easy to follow. When in doubt, speak and write like you're explaining your concept to a friend!

6. Capture and edit your instructional video

There are a couple of ways you can gather the visual and audio elements you need to make your video. Let's outline your options.

Capture your screen

For those looking to explain something digitally, it's hard to beat the ease of screen recording for capturing and sharing an instructional video that's got clear visuals and your own audio baked in. Simply start recording, say what you need to say, and share your work with the world. One way to do this is create a Beamer presentation and then talk while presenting on your screen. Some apps will let you record your face (via your computer's camera) and overlay that on your slides.

Shoot it yourself

If you need to represent something IRL, we promise it's not so hard to capture content on your own. In most cases, your phone will work just fine as your primary mode of recording. Just spend a few moments making sure your light is on point (check out [our full guide to lighting at home here](#)), set your phone on a stable surface, and get to work. You can use a tripod to keep the phone steady. Also many computers and tablets have good recording capabilities. Make sure to shoot a test video before trying to record the whole thing to check that sound and video work.

Download a Whiteboard app

If you want to communicate something where you are doing live calculations, then a whiteboard app is a great choice. Educreations is an app that records your voice while you write things on the app's whiteboard. You can upload images, or even beamer slides (one by one as images). This allows you to write on your slides.

6. Share your video

Now that your video is ready to go, consider a few things before sending it out the door. First, watch the video to make sure it is what you want to send out. Then find someplace that is easy for people to watch it. Vimeo is a good place to post videos, you can send links to friends, family, and students. I also find YouTube is a good place to post videos, and you can make a play list for your class.