GUIDE TO VLOGGING

Learn quick tips for prepping, shooting and producing your own vlog
THE PREP

topic
When selecting a topic for your vlog, go with something you’re passionate or knowledgeable about – successful vlogs are all about the content, so it’s important to choose something you enjoy talking about. Keep in mind that you are looking to inspire, motivate, entertain or provide value to your viewers through your vlogs.

location
Once you have your vlogging topic, it’s time to figure out where you’ll shoot. If you choose an indoor location, rooms with natural light and uncluttered backgrounds are best. For outdoor locations, make sure you choose somewhere fairly quiet to limit any distractions from the main focus – YOU!

storyboard
A storyboard helps you plan out how your vlog’s story will flow. Keep in mind that this is just a rough outline and you’ll most likely make changes on the fly as you’re actually shooting.

script
Don’t try to wing it! Write a script to help you stay on track. Once recording, a script will help you avoid freezing on camera or forgetting what to say – this is known as “red light syndrome.”

Pro Tip: Attach a smartphone or small tablet to your camera or tripod so that you can see your notes while filming.
shotlist
Write a list of all the footage you plan to take that will not include you talking. This supplemental footage – also called B-roll – will help break up seeing just the main shot throughout the entire vlog. Note down details like the scene, shot number, location (exterior, interior, etc.), camera angle (wide, medium, tight, etc.), and description to help keep you organized once you start editing.

gear check
Make a checklist of the equipment you’ll need in advance. If shooting on location, pack your bag ahead of time so you’ll have everything ready. Make sure your batteries are charged and memory cards are reformatted in the camera that you’re going to use.

Pro Tip: Insert a reformatted memory card into your camera while you’re prepping so you can start vlogging as soon as possible!

settings
Make sure your camera settings are adjusted before you pack. Typical base vlog settings are as follows: frame rate of 30P (or 29.97P), shutter speed of 1/60th of a second (or 1/50th for 24P also called 23.98P), aperture of f/4, ISO 100 (starting point depending on exposure).

Reminder: If your camera has a face/eye tracking feature, don’t forget to turn it on!
focus
Use your aperture setting to control how much of your background you want to keep in focus. This is a powerful storytelling element that lets you set the mood for your vlog. Even though having a lot of bokeh can look cool, it may not always work with your story.

_Pro Tip: The lower the number, the more out of focus the background and foreground will be. The higher the number, the more will be in focus._

exposure
As you’re filming, be aware of the camera’s exposure settings (whether too bright or too dark) by using your histogram setting, which pops up when you select INFO a few times. You can adjust it by using Exposure Compensation or changing your ISO.

audio
Make sure you set your sound volume manually on the camera to ensure your voice is not too loud or too low. You want your natural voice to be around -12 db – which will be at the point where the white bars go into yellow on the audio meter located on your LCD.

_Pro Tip: Use a pair of headphones to monitor the audio volume after your first shot._

b-roll
B-roll is supplemental footage that can be intercut with your main shot to break it up and make your video more interesting. When you think you have taken enough clips to be used as B-roll, take even more. You’ll always use much more B-Roll than you think you will.

composition
Be mindful of where you place yourself and other elements within the frame. Photography composition guidelines like the “rule of thirds” are applicable to video as well.
POST-PRODUCTION

music
Adding a musical score behind your dialogue can convey emotion and provide important context. Don’t be afraid of using more than one song or snippets of songs in your vlogs. Switch it up when you come to a new topic or scene.

**Pro Tip:** Typical audio levels for vlogs are as follows: dialogue is normally at the loudest level at approximately -12 db; foley (i.e. sound effects) should be -10 db quieter than the dialogue; the music track should then be -10 db lower than the foley; and ambient sounds should be -10 db lower than the music track.

video cuts
Change up your footage every 3-7 seconds to keep your vlog interesting. It can be as simple as using some of your B-roll footage to break up your video a little.

transcribing
After you’re finished editing the video, review it one last time to make sure you don’t have any duplicated footage or other mistakes. While you are doing that, it’s a great time to type up a reproduction of your dialogue and then export it as a video transcription, so that people who have hearing disabilities can also enjoy your content!
posting
Be consistent with when you post your vlog so your subscribers know when they should tune in. If you don’t think you can keep up with a specific schedule, it’s good to have backup vlogs filmed in advance, so that you can set up your next post at your usual time.

engagement
Avoid videos that cover multiple topics that are unrelated to each other. Sticking to one topic allows for more content for future videos. Plus, if your vlog becomes too long, a two-part video or series is a great way to keep subscribers coming back for more.

titles
Take the time to write a title and description that tells viewers exactly what they should expect of your video. Don’t write misleading or clickbait titles which can actually end up hurting your chances of being recommended to more viewers. Remember, you want to entice people to watch your videos, but you don’t want the title to be deceptive.

thumbnails
Don’t forget to create a custom thumbnail for your video. Viewers should have a clear understanding of what they will watch when looking at your thumbnail and reading the title.