

Project 6

Commercials

Timing: 10 to 13 hours

Project overview

Commercials are short, stylistic, impactful videos used to sell products, goods, services, and even political campaigns. In this project, students work with a client to create a commercial: identifying the goals, audience, and purpose for the commercial based on their client's wishes. Students, working in teams, undergo a formal review and redesign cycle with their client and produce a final commercial that will be deployed on the web. In the process, students learn to create composited video using creative lighting techniques and special effects. You might choose to limit the scope of this project by being the client or by selecting a client in the school for each student group. Another alternative is to ask students to engage with local businesses and create a commercial for them.

Student product: Commercial

Note: Portions of the Portfolios project align to the Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam are referenced with the following format: ^{1.1}

Project objectives

At the completion of the project, students will have developed the following skills:

Project management skills

- Creating a project plan, milestones, and roles
- Identifying client needs and goals
- Selecting actors
- Directing actors

Design skills

- Designing and creating rough cuts and assembly cuts to communicate ideas to clients
- Considering the technical and design impact of commercials deployed on the web
- Setting up creative lighting
- Compositing video
- Working with chroma key sets
- Using action videography

Research and communication skills

- Gathering content and synthesizing ideas for commercials

- Pitching to a client
- Reviewing and revising with clients
- Creating a script
- Reflecting on production and group process

Technical skills

Adobe Premiere Pro

- Using slow-motion and fast-motion tools
- Working with keying effects
- Exporting to web

Audition

- Editing audio
- Applying effects to audio clips

After Effects

- Understanding the interface
- Creating animated text
- Creating special video effects
- Rotoscoping

Project materials

- Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Audition CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe After Effects CS6 installed on all machines
- Worksheet: Client interview: Commercial
- Worksheet: Treatment
- Worksheet: Shot list
- Story guide: How to use Adobe Story to write scripts
- Worksheet: Student project proposal
- Guide: Tips for effective chroma key shots
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to change clip speed and direction
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to apply and adjust video keying effects
- Worksheet: Review and redesign of commercials
- Adobe Premiere Pro and Audition guide: How to work with audio
- Audition guide: How to record narration
- Audition guide: How to compose multiple-track recordings
- Audition guide: How to edit audio tracks
- After Effects guide: Overview of Adobe After Effects CS6 workspace
- After Effects guide: How to animate text and create video effects
- After Effects guide: How to rotoscope in Adobe After Effects
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to use the Adobe Media Encoder
- Worksheet: Client debriefing

Background preparation resources

- [Technical and content information](#)
- [Key terms](#)
- [ISTE NETS*S Standard for Students](#)
- [Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication objectives](#)

Project steps

Planning a commercial

(Suggested time: 100–150 minutes)

1. Discuss the goals of this project:
 - Work with a client to create a commercial.
 - Create a project plan and schedule by interviewing a client.
 - Work with composited video.
 - Create motion and text animation and video special effects.
2. Share examples of TV and online commercials and discuss the audience, purpose, and effectiveness of each video advertisement.^{1.1, 1.2} Make sure to include commercials with the following techniques and discuss how each technique enhances the commercial:^{2.3}
 - Compositing
 - Musical score integrated with the script throughout the commercial
 - Motion graphics and visual effects

Note: You might want to gather a variety of examples prior to this activity.

3. Form student teams of two or three people. Where possible, mix members with different strengths, such as visual design or technical skill. Discuss the concept of working as a team.
4. Introduce the project, with information about the client organizations, such as the following:
 - Name of organization and its website
 - Organization mission and goals
 - Product or service provided by the organization
 - Reasons the organization needs an advertising team

Note: If it is difficult to find clients, you can use the ideas in the client scenarios section of the extension activities to help create client profiles.

5. In preparation for the client interview, discuss the kind of information teams need from a client about the client's goals and target audience. Have each team meet to research the client and discuss the interview questions and to add other questions they feel might be necessary to build their understanding of their client's needs.^{1.1, 1.2}

Note: Depending on the level of your students, you might want to review and approve the interview questions or ask students to practice interviewing to refine their interview style and questions. You might also choose to sit in on and facilitate interviews that are conducted with clients outside the school.

Worksheet: Client interview: Commercial

6. Allow each team time to interview their client. The interview is best if done in person; however, if that is not possible, students can conduct the interview by phone or web conferencing.
7. Have each team review any commercials and advertisements recommended by the client. Encourage teams to collect design ideas as they review commercials.
8. Introduce aspects of project management and how to work with clients.^{1.4} Suggested topics to cover include:
 - Identifying roles, especially the person who will communicate directly with the client. Decide how information will be relayed back to the group.
 - Identifying the necessary project steps.
 - Creating a timeline with specific deliverables and due dates.
 - Understanding and clarifying client expectations.
 - Communication and dialog with a client—students are encouraged to use e-mail, web conferencing (such as Adobe Connect), Adobe Acrobat X Pro and Acrobat.com, and other online collaborative tools to review design with their client.

Designing a commercial

(Suggested time: 150–200 minutes)

9. Have each group discuss the information gathered from their client and synthesize that information. Have them brainstorm two ideas for the commercial and create two treatment documents that take into account the following:

- Concept
- Scene description
- Approach

Worksheet: Treatment^{1.4}

10. Instruct each group to do the following for each of their two ideas:

- Take photographs or scan images of products, services, and people to help the client visualize the commercial.
- Identify any needed assets.

Note: Remind students to secure permission for any photos or images.^{1.3}

11. Explain that in an *assembly cut*, most or all clips are in the video but still need to be edited and refined. Explain that they will use an assembly cut to communicate their two concept ideas to the client, using still images and assets before they spend time shooting video. Have each group create an assembly cut using the still images and assets they created and collected.^{2.1}

Note: You might instruct the teams to save their assembly cut to CD or DVD then assess each team's progress.

12. Instruct each team to present and explain their two ideas to their client, using the visual aid of the assembly cuts (you might recommend that the client liaison conduct this meeting).^{2.6}

Note: You might ask students to practice their “pitches” prior to meeting with the client.

13. Using client feedback, each team will select one idea and revise their assembly cut accordingly. Instruct them to resubmit the assembly cut (depending on the client's wishes) and continue this cycle until the client approves a single commercial concept.

Note: Ask students to check in with their project proposals as they engage in multiple cycles of the review and redesign process to be sure they can still make all deadlines. You might ask students to update and communicate to clients the impacts to the schedule if review cycles go too long and to formulate strategies for keeping the project from slipping, such as reducing project scope with clients, limiting review cycles, or re-addressing deadlines.

14. As the students prepare to plan their shot selections for the commercial, discuss techniques such as chroma keys and compositing that can help them create commercials and other types of video projects without needing to be on location (for instance, placing an actor in an action scene that would be too expensive or dangerous to film). You might want to discuss the following terms to help them understand these concepts.^{2.3, 4.6}

- *Compositing:* Process of combining two or more video images into one.
- *Chroma key:* (also referred to as *blue screen* or *green screen*): Shooting a person or object in front of a colored screen and replacing the colored screen with a substitute background.

- *Keying*: Postproduction process in which the color of the blue or green screen in a shot is identified and then removed. When you key out a color, it becomes transparent.
- *Rotoscoping*: An animation technique in which you draw, paint, or add other visual effects in a layer over live-action film or video, one frame at a time.

15. Once the client has given final approval for the team’s commercial idea, instruct students to create the following and hand it in for instructor approval:

- Shot list, with at least one composited video shot
- Draft of script ^{2.1}
- Project proposal with talent (actors) identified, if applicable

Worksheet: Shot list ^{1.4}

Story guide: How to use Adobe Story to write scripts

Worksheet: Student project proposal ^{1.4, 2.1}

Building a commercial

(Suggested time: 250–300 minutes)

16. Instruct each group to assemble any needed assets (images, logos, audio, video clips).

Note: Remind students to get permission for media assets. ^{1.3}

17. As students begin to shoot footage for their commercials, discuss the importance of and how to shoot for composited (layered) videos and chroma key shots. ^{2.3} Some things to include are:

- Even backlighting helps ensure a solid-color background without shadows and facilitates keying out one color rather than multiple colors.
- Light your actors and position them at least 4 feet from the screen. Make sure actors aren’t wearing clothing with colors that match the background.
- To create a specific effect where you need to remove a particular body part, have the actor use background colored clothing for that particular body part.
- Use content that matches the background to be keyed in. For instance, if the person is to be outside, have clothing that matches the environment.
- Consider the framing and camera angle of your shot and how it will match your intended background.
- High-contrast scenes lend themselves to making either the dark or light portions transparent. The same holds true for shooting light objects against a dark background or vice versa.
- For most keying shots, you need to use a tripod and lock down your camera. Viewers are distracted when keyed objects bounce. The exception to this is when you’re keying in wild, animated backgrounds; then camera movement is not a problem.

Guide: Tips for effective chroma key shots ^{2.3}

18. Allow each team time to shoot the necessary footage from their shot list, using the equipment and locations identified in their project proposal.

Note: If teams are working with actors, you might want to discuss the importance of directing. You may also need to create a schedule for students to have access to blue/green screens for shooting composite shots.

19. Allow students time to record any necessary voiceover narration according to their scripts.
20. As students prepare to create their commercials in Adobe Premiere Pro, advanced editing techniques may be helpful. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate the following techniques in Adobe Premiere Pro to help students create a polished and professional-looking commercial:
- Speeding up/reversing clips
 - Layering clips
 - Compositing
 - Masking

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to change clip speed and direction ^{4.6}

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to apply and adjust video keying effects ^{4.6}

21. Using the footage and assets, instruct students to edit a rough cut. Explain that a rough cut does not have to be perfect but should be complete enough that they can share their commercial with others to solicit their feedback.

Note: Have the teams save their rough cut to CD or DVD then assess each team’s progress. Remind students of the discussion in Project 2 about the ethical responsibility of editors.

22. Pair student groups and conduct a review and redesign cycle of their commercials. Because students will learn about advanced audio mixing and motion effect techniques later in the project, have them include anticipated information in their worksheets.

Worksheet: Review and redesign of commercials

23. Allow students time to redesign their commercials and prepare the rough cut so they feel confident showing it to their client.

24. Have the students show the rough cut to their client and solicit feedback. ^{2.6}

25. Once students have approval to proceed with the rough cut, they should continue to edit and modify the commercial according to client feedback and determine what audio to use. Discuss the option of creating or obtaining a musical score that fits the tone of their commercial and that they can integrate with any script dialog (voiceover narration, actor dialog, etc.) where appropriate. Demonstrate how to edit audio tracks in Audition.

Adobe Premiere Pro and Audition guide: How to work with audio ^{4.4}

Audition guide: How to record narration

Audition guide: How to compose multiple-track recordings

Audition guide: How to edit audio tracks

26. Introduce students to the After Effects workspace. Explain that although they can create some motion and text effects in Adobe Premiere Pro, it’s primarily a video-editing program and has limitations in creating effects. After Effects is specifically designed to produce graphics and visual effects and allows greater control and options than Adobe Premiere Pro.

After Effects guide: Overview of Adobe After Effects CS6 workspace

27. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how to create video effects, text animation, and rotoscope using the Roto Brush tool in After Effects.

After Effects guide: How to animate text and create video effects

After Effects guide: How to rotoscope in Adobe After Effects

28. Allow each team time to create graphic and visual effects for their commercial in After Effects and to finalize their commercial.

29. Instruct students to publish their commercials ready to play on the web.^{5.1}

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to use the Adobe Media Encoder ^{5.2}

Reviewing a commercial

(Suggested time: 100–150 minutes)

30. Advise the students to have a debriefing session with their client to review the final commercial and discuss the experience. Some areas you might ask students to focus on include:
- *Communication:* Was the client satisfied with the frequency and level of communication? Of the methods of communication used (face-to-face meeting, phone, e-mail, web conference, etc.), which did the client find most effective? In what ways were communication challenges resolved? In what ways should communication with clients change (or not) for future projects?
 - *Deliverables:* Was the schedule of deliverables complete enough? Did the client receive the expected deliverables on time? Were the deliverables the quality they expected? Were they in a format they expected? Do they think the process of delivering materials could be improved?
 - *Feedback:* Was the client given enough time to provide feedback? Did the design team consider their feedback? How could the feedback process be improved?
 - *Final product:* Does the final product address the target audience? Is the final commercial what the client expected? Why or why not?

Worksheet: Client debriefing ^{2.6}

Extension activities

You can extend the project in the following ways:

- *Professional video producer or advertiser:* You might ask a professional video producer or advertiser to come to class and talk about creating commercials and supporting documentation, explaining how they are helpful in the production process and as a tool for communicating with the client.
- *Simulated clients:* If the project does not involve an external client, you can take one of the following approaches:
 - Have each student team present its needs for a commercial to the class. Have the class act as a client, giving feedback and assessing the commercial.
 - Pair two student teams together to serve as clients for each other.
 - You serve as the client and give feedback to student teams.

- *Original visuals:* Ask students to use products such as Photoshop and Illustrator to create any still images or enhance any photos taken and used in the commercial. You can use resources from the Visual Design curriculum to help students learn the basics of image composition and illustration.
- *Blue sky client scenario:* Have each student group create an exaggerated and fun organization and product that needs to be advertised. Have each team place their idea in a hat, and then have teams draw an idea to determine who will be their client. Encourage your students be creative and take advantage of the features and effects in Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects.
- *Teacher-led client scenario:* If outside clients are not available, you can be the client mimicking a local business such as a restaurant. Ask students to design an advertisement for the restaurant highlighting ways they would use the menu choices and restaurant type to persuade the audience to come to the restaurant.

Assessment

- [Project rubric](#)

Background preparation resources

- Review the student step-by-step guides referenced in this project.
- For more advanced video production resources, including sample projects with multimedia assets and video tutorials, visit the Video Production Resource Center: www.adobe.com/go/hedvideoresources
- To view video tutorials aligned with the skills required to complete this project, visit the Digital Video CS6 show on Adobe TV: <http://tv.adobe.com/show/digital-video-cs6/>
- For more teaching and learning resources on commercials, video production, and other topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: <http://edexchange.adobe.com>
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Adobe Premiere Pro, see Adobe Premiere Pro Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Audition, see Audition Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of After Effects, see After Effects Help.
- You might supplement this project with the following video production books:
 - Aronson, I. (2006). *DV Filmmaking from Start to Finish*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, Inc.
 - Millerson, G. (2008). *Video Production Handbook, Fourth Edition*. Burlington, MA: Focal Press.

Commercials

- The process of making a humorous commercial: www.videomaker.com/article/7460/.
- The process of making a commercial and includes an example of a script and storyboard for a 30-second commercial: www.videomaker.com/article/3327/.
- Production techniques used in shooting documentaries, commercials, action events, training videos, promotional videos, and TV programs: www.videomaker.com/article/1395/.
- This article offers tips and tricks in creating a video ad: <http://adwords.blogspot.com/2006/09/video-ads-tips-and-tricks-part-1-of-3.html>

Compositing, chroma keying, and rotoscoping

- Basics of video compositing, including lighting: www.eventdv.net/Articles/ReadArticle.aspx?ArticleID=8596.
- How to light a chroma key shot: www.signvideo.com/ltchromky.htm.
- Ten tips for using chroma key: www.3dvideobackgrounds.com/chromaakey.html.
- Lighting for compositing: www.videomaker.com/article/10914/.
- Techniques for compositing video and chroma key: www.videomaker.com/article/8307/.
- Simple to complex compositing and planning for compositing: www.videomaker.com/article/7648/.
- How to use rotoscoping to fix goofs, change virtual sets, or make a hero fly: www.videomaker.com/article/14057/

Audio clips

- Soundzabound.com provides cutting-edge, copyright safe audio for podcasts, videos and all forms of media. To learn more about obtaining a Soundzabound license of your own, please visit www.soundzabound.com.

Key terms

- assembly cut
- compositing
- chroma key
- final cut
- keying effects
- layering
- masking
- rotoscoping
- rough cut
- treatment

ISTE NETS*S Standard for Students

This project is aligned to the ISTE NETS*S Technology Standards. Depending on the subject and content area the student selects you may research your own state content standards to see how this project aligns to your state requirements.

ISTE NETS*S: Curriculum and Content Area Standards – NETS for Students

1. Creativity and Innovation

Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
- b. create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

2. Communication and Collaboration

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- d. contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.

3. Research and Information Retrieval

Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students:

- a. plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
- c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.

4. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:

- a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
- b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.

5. Digital Citizenship

Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

- a. understand and use technology systems.
- b. select and use applications effectively and productively.

Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication objectives

- 1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing video.
- 1.2 Identify video content that is relevant to the project purpose and appropriate for the target audience.
- 1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of standard copyright rules (related terms, obtaining permission, and citing copyrighted material).
- 1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of the production planning and management process.
- 2.1 Demonstrate knowledge of how to organize and plan a video sequence.
- 2.3 Demonstrate knowledge of visual techniques for enhancing video content.
- 2.6 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design and content plans.
- 4.4 Manage sound in a video sequence.
- 4.6 Add and manage effects and transitions in a video sequence.
- 5.1 Demonstrate knowledge of export options for video.
- 5.2 Demonstrate knowledge of how to export video from Adobe Premiere Pro.

Assessment

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Interview	Absent or incomplete.	The interview identifies the client's goals, the target audience, and the intended purpose of the commercial. The interview identifies the content and information crucial to the commercial. The interview identifies the client's preferred design requirements and includes any additional relevant questions.	The interview clearly identifies the client's goals, the target audience, and the intended purpose of the commercial. The interview clearly identifies the content (both original and repurposed) and information crucial to the commercial. The interview identifies the client's preferred design requirements and documents specific examples. The interview includes additional relevant and thorough questions to get or clarify specific information.
Treatment	Absent or incomplete.	Treatment includes concept, scene description, and approach for two commercial ideas.	Treatment clearly and succinctly details the concept, scene description, and approach for two commercial ideas.
Shot list	Absent or incomplete.	Provides a shot list with documentation of any new shots taken in the moment of filming.	Provides a complete shot list with documentation and explanation of any new shots taken in the moment of filming.
Student project proposal	Absent or incomplete.	Project proposal identifies purpose, audience, genre, and elements. Project proposal serves as a planning and management tool for equipment, filming locations, schedule of deliverables, distribution format, and crew. Students track and deliver most intended milestones on time.	Project proposal specifically identifies purpose, audience, genre, and elements. Project proposal serves as a planning and management tool for equipment, filming locations, schedule of deliverables, distribution format, and crew. In identifying specific elements, the proposal draws on knowledge and techniques learned thus far in the curriculum. Students track and deliver all intended milestones on time, adjusting schedules with the client as needed.

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Review and redesign	Absent or incomplete.	Review and redesign identifies how the rough-cut commercial meets the initial purpose and proposes necessary changes. Review and redesign identifies the video production techniques used, their effect, and new techniques that can enhance the commercial. The review and redesign process details redesign changes for the final commercial.	Review and redesign examines in detail how the rough-cut commercial meets the initial purpose and proposes necessary changes. Review and redesign examines in detail the video production techniques used and their effect, identifying new techniques that can enhance the commercial. In reviewing assembly and rough cuts, students collect and organize feedback to help them select the final commercial content.
Assembly cut	Absent or incomplete.	Assembly cut uses still images and other assets to convey two commercial ideas for client approval.	Assembly cut uses still images and other assets to effectively and clearly convey two commercial ideas for client approval.
Rough cut	Absent or incomplete.	Rough cut includes edited footage and some effects, conveying the commercial idea and concept.	Rough cut effectively and clearly conveys a story structure for the commercial. Rough cut includes edited footage and uses some effects.
Commercial – content	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Commercial is 30–60 seconds long and communicates information to the target audience(s).	Commercial is 30–60 seconds long and clearly and effectively communicates about a product or service to sell to the target audience(s). The commercial is original, concise, and attention-grabbing.

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Commercial – technical		Commercial includes at least one instance of composited video using chroma key. Commercial includes advanced editing techniques such as layering and masking and at least one text or motion effect created in After Effects. Commercial includes an edited musical score and is in a web file format that can be streamed on the web.	Commercial includes one or more instances of composited video using chroma key. Commercial includes advanced editing techniques such as layering and masking and at least two text or motion animations or effects created in After Effects. Commercial includes an edited musical score and is in a web file format that can be streamed on the web.
Time management		Student allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes most phases on schedule.	Student thoughtfully and effectively allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes all phases on schedule.
Teamwork	Absent or incomplete.	Student teams collaborate and interact with peers, experts, or others to create assembly cut, rough cut, and final commercial. Teams plan and manage a project proposal with a schedule of deliverables to ensure delivery and approval for commercial idea, assembly cut, rough cut, content, and final product to client. Teams assess deliverable schedule and re-address deadlines where applicable. Student fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Student sometimes consults with other team members on major project decisions but makes minimal effort to help others build skills.	Student teams expressly collaborate and interact with peers, experts, or others to create assembly cut, rough cut, and final commercial. Teams expertly and efficiently plan and manage a project proposal with a schedule of deliverables to ensure delivery and approval for commercial idea, assembly cut, rough cut, content, and final product to client. Teams assess deliverable schedule and re-address deadlines where applicable. Student fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Student consults with other team members on major project decisions and voluntarily helps others build skills to complete the project.

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Client debriefing	Absent or incomplete.	Teams debrief with the client to assess the level and degree of communication, the satisfaction with deliverables, the experience with feedback, and perceptions of the final product.	Teams debrief with client and assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective forms and appropriate level of communication • Communication challenges and ways to improve communication • Schedule and expectation of deliverables • Ways to improve deliverable process • Time and ability to give and receive feedback • Expectations of the final product