

Project 7

Mini-documentaries

Timing: 13 to 16 hours

Project overview

Documentaries attempt to represent reality rather than tell a fictional story. Documentaries are essentially nonfiction film. In this project, students work in teams to create a mini-documentary: identifying the theme, audience, and goals for a particular topic. Within each team, students manage tasks from a particular filmmaking role perspective. In the process of making a mini-documentary, students learn to create advanced motion and color effects, use audio-editing techniques, and compose a musical score. Finally, each team will present their film in a student film festival.

Student product: Mini-documentary

Note: Portions of the Portfolios project align to the Adobe Certified Associate, Visual 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
- Managing tasks related to roles
- Planning and managing concurrent editing by multiple editors
- Planning for contingencies

Design skills

- Identifying documentary theme, audience, and goals
- Understanding image file types and resolutions for video
- Using color effects in documentaries
- Using motion effects in documentaries
- Directing shots
- Understanding impacts of visual compositions that include picture-in-picture

Research and communication skills

- Conducting research
- Understanding copyright issues

- Writing scripts
- Conducting peer reviews
- Presenting films

Technical skills

General

- Scanning
- Taking pictures

Adobe Premiere Pro

- Creating transitions, borders, sepia tones, and soft-focus effects
- Using keyframes for motion effects
- Using picture-in-picture
- Using a nested sequences editing technique
- Creating titles and rolling credits

Encore

- Creating a DVD

Audition

- Editing audio
- Applying effects to audio clips

- Using loops, music beds, and sound effects

Project materials

- Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Encore CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Audition CS6 installed on all machines
- Guide: Story creation tips
- Worksheet: Treatment
- Guide: Introduction to digital photography
- Worksheet: Shot list
- Worksheet: Student project proposal
- Guide: Writing tips
- Story guide: How to use Adobe Story to write scripts
- Guide: Peer review
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to use nested sequences
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to work with other motion effects and features
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to work with temporal and spatial keyframe interpolation
- Audition guide: How to edit audio tracks
- Audition guide: How to apply Adobe Audition sound effects
- Audition guide: How to use loops, music beds, and sound effects
- Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to make text roll and crawl
- Encore guide: How to author a single-menu DVD in Adobe Encore

Background preparation resources

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

Project steps

Planning a mini-documentary

(Suggested time: 200–250 minutes)

1. Discuss the goals of this project:
 - Work in teams to create a short documentary.
 - Identify the documentary theme, audience, and goals.
 - Work with still images and apply special transitions and effects.
 - Learn editing and audio-effect techniques in Audition.
 - Create a DVD.
2. Share examples of short documentaries and discuss theme, audience, and goals.^{1,2} Discuss the elements that make a film a documentary. Finally, as students watch the documentaries, discuss the following:
 - How color, motion, and audio effects are used to affect tone and mood.^{2,3}
 - How music is used throughout the documentary and its effect on the tone and purpose.^{2,4}

- How still images are used within a film and how effects and transitions affect their impact.^{2.5}
- Importance of credits.

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 and roles in filmmaking.^{1.4} Role to cover include:

- Directors
- Editors
- Writers
- Camerapersons
- Musical directors

Note: Remind students that in a particular role, they are simply the task manager for that role. Students work cooperatively on all tasks, with each team member responsible for tracking quality and completeness based on their role. You can combine or split roles as necessary to accommodate the number of members on a team.

4. Introduce the project by explaining the guidelines for the mini-documentaries. Guidelines might include:

- Length should be 5–10 minutes.
- Can use footage from previous projects.
- Include still images that incorporate transitions and effects.
- Include at least one color, one picture-in-picture, one motion effect, and one audio effect.
- Include a musical score they create in Audition.
- Include a full menu of credits.
- Apply copyright citation and fair use guidelines where applicable.
- Follow the journalistic code of ethics.

Note: If resources are available, have teams conduct a multi-camera shoot and demonstrate how to edit footage in Adobe Premiere Pro by using the multi-camera feature.

5. Allow teams time to assign roles and brainstorm the theme, audience, and goals for their mini-documentary.^{1.1} Additionally, using what they learned in previous projects, each team should determine if and how they will use lighting, shot selection, b-roll footage, interviews, voiceover narration, compositing shots, and visual effects to impact the mood and intention of their documentaries.^{2.2, 2.3}

6. Allow students time to research their mini-documentary topic. Explain that if necessary they should contact (via e-mail, phone, web conferencing, and so on) any individuals or organizations that will help them gather information.

Note: Remind students to assess the appropriateness of the information they gather and collect.

7. Review the script-writing techniques covered in Project 2 and discuss how the script for a documentary might be different from other scripts students have written.^{2.1} Allow each group time to write a treatment for their documentary and submit it for instructor approval.

Guide: Story creation tips

Worksheet: Treatment

8. While they are awaiting approval, have each team identify assets (such as audio, images, interviews, and narration) needed for their documentary.^{1.2} Each team should also identify any needed participants to interview.

Note: Ask students to properly apply copyright citation and fair use guidelines to any visual or audio assets they use. If necessary, review copyright and fair use guidelines from Project 1.

9. Remind students about the use of still images in the examples of documentaries and discuss the basics of shooting pictures and the importance of image resolution so they can take and prepare their own images for use in the documentary. Review the appropriate image formats for video.^{2.4}

Guide: Introduction to digital photography

Note: For more information on shooting pictures and image resolution see the *Background preparation resources* section.

10. Once they receive their approved treatment, allow each team time to create the following that will also be handed in for instructor approval:

- Shot list
- Draft of script
- Draft of interview questions for participants
- Project proposal with actors identified, if applicable

Worksheet: Shot list ^{1.4}

Worksheet: Student project proposal ^{1.4}

Guide: Writing tips ^{2.1}

Story guide: How to use Adobe Story to write scripts

Note: Encourage student teams to work collaboratively on written documents such as scripts and interview questions and then review them together to improve them.

Creating a mini-documentary

(Suggested time: 450–500 minutes)

11. Pair two groups so they can conduct a peer review with each other's scripts and then finalize the scripts based on recommended changes.

Guide: Peer review

12. Allow each team time to shoot the necessary footage and interviews from their shot list, using the equipment and locations identified in their project proposal. Allow each team time to record any necessary voiceover narration.

Note: After selecting clips, shots, and assets, teams may want to go back to their approved draft scripts and interview questions and make any necessary revisions based on their selected assets. Some groups may also need to revise and submit their scripts again for approval. Remind students that any changes that require more footage will impact their schedules.

13. Because students are comfortable with various editing techniques in Adobe Premiere Pro, they can use an advanced editing method with complex projects. For example, they might separate nested sequences, breaking projects into segments they can edit concurrently to create challenging effects. Explain that this is especially helpful in large projects with multiple editors.^{1.4}

14. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how use separate nested sequences to apply effects and transitions to a group of layered clips, creating separate complex sequences to enable concurrent editing.

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to use nested sequences ^{1.4, 4.2, 4.6}

15. Remind students of the still images in the examples of documentaries. Demonstrate how to import still images, including Adobe Photoshop PSD files.^{4.1} To create compelling still images, editors use picture-in-picture, beveled edges and shadows, and other special effects. Also explain that they will learn about basic 3D effects for use in their mini-documentaries. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how to create color, picture-in-picture, and basic 3D effects in Adobe Premiere Pro.

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to work with other motion effects and features ^{4.6}

16. Explain that because students now know how to create motion effects in both Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects, they will learn one final high-level method to make their effects look more realistic and behave the way they want them to. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how to use keyframe manipulation to create motion effects.

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to work with temporal and spatial keyframe interpolation ^{4.6}

17. Instruct students to use their footage and assets to edit a rough cut of the documentary. Have teams pair up and conduct a review and redesign process.

Note: Have teams save their rough cut to CD or DVD so they can see each team’s progress. Remind students of the discussion in Project 2 about the ethical responsibility of editors as they prepare their mini-documentary.

18. Ask students to check in with their project proposals as they engage in the review and redesign process to be sure they can still make all deadlines. Re-address deadlines if they will not be able to meet them.

19. Explain that students will edit and apply audio effects to the audio from their footage. They will use the available loops, music beds, and sound effects in Adobe Audition to create a soundtrack for their mini-documentaries. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how to create a soundtrack using the audio assets available in Audition.

Audition guide: How to edit audio tracks

Audition guide: How to apply Adobe Audition sound effects

Audition guide: How to use loops, music beds, and sound effects

20. Using their revised films, allow each team time to continue to edit and modify their documentaries by using Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects. Also allow each team time to create a musical soundtrack and other musical elements for their documentaries in Audition.

21. Using the “I do, we do, you do” method, demonstrate how to create rolling credits in Adobe Premiere Pro and allow students time to create credits for their documentary films.

Adobe Premiere Pro guide: How to make text roll and crawl ^{4.5}

22. Instruct students to export their videos to DVD format ^{5.1, 5.2} and create a single-menu DVD by using Encore.

Encore guide: How to author a single-menu DVD in Adobe Encore

Participating in a film festival

(Suggested time: 150–200 minutes)

23. Explain that the class will conduct a film festival. As a class, define the awards categories and create an awards list with criteria for each category. Some things to include might be:

- Writing
- Film editing
- Sound editing
- Visual effects
- Musical direction
- Direction
- Cinematography

24. Have each team screen their documentary for the class. At the conclusion of the film, have each student complete an award sheet for that documentary.^{2.6}

25. Collect the award sheets and hold a class ceremony honoring each of the films.

Note: It is recommended to try to have each team win at least one award.

Extension activities

You can extend the project in the following ways:

- *Ancillary materials:* After students have completed their mini-documentaries, have them design and create other materials they might need to promote the films, such as a short movie trailer.
- *Cross-curricular extension:* Work with a content area teacher (for instance, science, English, or social studies) and support the teacher and students as they create a documentary film as a class project in that subject.

Assessment

- Project rubric

Background preparation resources

- Review the student step-by-step guides referenced in this project.
- Review Projects 1 and 2 of the Visual Design curriculum to help students learn how to take photographs and understand the importance of image resolution.
- 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 documentaries, 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 After Effects, see After Effects 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 Encore, see Encore 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.
 - Dancyger, K. (1991). *Broadcast Writing: Dramas, Comedies, and Documentaries*. Burlington, MA: Focal Press.

Documentaries

- What makes a film a documentary: <http://documentaries.about.com/od/basics/a/whatisdoc.htm>.
- Advice on directing and fundraising for a documentary film: www.creativehat.com/Filmmaking/a020501a.htm.
- Shooting tips for making a documentary: www.dvworkshops.com/newsletters/shootingdynamicdoc.html#article2.
- Free access to documentaries: www.snagfilms.com/.

Photography

- Information on image composition for beginners: www.connectedphotographer.com/issues/issue200411/00001426001.html.
- Tips on digital photography composition: <http://digital-photography-school.com/blog/digital-photography-composition-tips>.
- Tips for taking great pictures: www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=2/3/38&pq-locale=en_US.

Audio clips

- Adobe Audition loops, music beds, and sound effects for download: www.adobe.com/special/products/audition/loopology.html

- 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, visit www.soundzabound.com.

Key terms

- credits
- keyframe interpolation
- loop
- music bed
- nested sequences
- picture-in-picture
- sound effect

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:

- apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
- 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:

- interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- 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:

- plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
- 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:

- identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
- 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. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.

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.
- 1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of the production planning and management process.
- 2.1 Demonstrate knowledge of how to organize and plan a video sequence.
- 2.2 Identify general principles for video shooting.
- 2.3 Demonstrate knowledge of visual techniques for enhancing video content.
- 2.4 Demonstrate knowledge of using audio to enhance video content.
- 2.5 Demonstrate knowledge of using still images to enhance video content.
- 2.6 Communicate with others (such as peers and clients) about design and content plans.
- 4.1 Import media assets (video, images, and audio files).
- 4.2 Organize and manage video clips in a sequence.
- 4.5 Manage superimposed text and shapes 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
Treatment	Absent or incomplete.	Treatment includes concept, scene description, and approach for a documentary that identifies an issue and raises significant questions for investigation.	Treatment clearly and succinctly details the concept, scene description, and approach for a documentary that identifies an issue and raises significant questions for investigation.
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 that will guide inquiry on a documentary topic. Project proposal serves as a planning and management tool for the equipment needed, filming locations, schedule of deliverables, distribution format, and crew.	Project proposal specifically identifies purpose, audience, genre, and elements that will guide inquiry on a documentary topic. Project proposal serves as a planning and management tool for the equipment needed, filming locations, schedule of deliverables, distribution format, and crew. In identifying each element, the proposal draws on knowledge and techniques learned thus far in the curriculum.
Rough cut	Absent or incomplete.	Rough cut includes edited footage, some image stills, and some effects.	Rough cut begins to create a story structure. Rough cut includes edited footage, some image stills, and various effects.
Mini-documentary - content	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Documentary is 5–10 minutes in length and includes still images. The documentary story uses research and interviews to support the content and engages multiple audiences.	Documentary is 5–10 minutes in length and clearly and effectively tells the “real” story on a topic that engages multiple audiences. The documentary topic is clearly and fully researched, tells multiple sides of the story, and the interviews support the content. The documentary is engaging and uses still images.

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Mini-documentary - technical		The documentary uses at least one each of a motion, color, and picture-in-picture effect. Documentary has an original musical soundtrack and a full menu of credits. Documentary is in DVD format.	The documentary includes one or more each of a motion, color, and picture-in-picture effect and each has a clear impact on the mood of the film. The documentary includes an original musical soundtrack and a full menu of credits. It is in DVD format with a template menu.
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 rough cut and final mini-documentary. Teams plan and manage a project proposal with a schedule of deliverables. 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. 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.