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Overview

A documentary usually a one sided presentation of a point of view. It is always based on fact; and it usually involves a variety of discussions with people from their personal point of view. The difference between a news story and a documentary is a news story tells you about a story, while a documentary shows you. In a documentary the one who presents the story, whether they are on camera or off, is secondary to the people who are involved in the story. The content is based on reality, as opposed to hearsay or unsubstantiated speculation, although not all documentaries adhere to such standards. They are true stories that document real events and actual facts. If such facts are questionable, so to is the integrity of documentary. Topics may include a specific topic, a unique person, an event, an incident, a relationship, or everyone's favourite, something controversial.

There is always a persuasive element in a documentary. It may present a reality or point of view in which the public is largely unaware. For instance, the public may be aware that many teenagers like to be fashion conscience, but they unaware of how many hours a teen may work each week just to keep up with his or her peers. A documentary may change our point of view. A good documentary will, however, bring about a new awareness of a topic that would remain, otherwise, hidden.

Gathering footage is the beginning point of creating a documentary. One important tool for collecting footage is the interview. If you conduct your interview properly, you will have a lot of meaningful content that will help tell your story. In addition to people speaking, you will want to gather footage of actual events as they take place, much like a journalist would do to cover a news event. Again, you want to protect the integrity of your final documentary, so it is important not to stage the footage that you are filming. With good footage, you can assemble the information in your editing to tell an effective story.

The preproduction of a documentary is different than making a fiction piece. Since your final product is based on footage that you will acquire, you are not required to write a screenplay and storyboard. This does not negate the necessity of planning and using good filming technique. Your preparation will be in the form of the completing a proposal.

Permissible footage gathering and Permissible content

You may not conduct yourself while shooting footage in a way which breaks the law, contravenes school policy, or jeopardizes the physical and mental well being of any individual, including yourself. Be particularly mindful of the legal issue of libel, the presenting of misinformation which can damage the reputation of an individual. This kind of content may not be used.

The Art of Interviewing

Closed Ended Vs. Open Ended Questions

There are two kinds of questions that you would ask, open ended and close ended. The easier question to ask is the close ended question. The response of which is minimal, usually one word like “yes” or “no”. Any questions which start with “Do you” will almost always end up with a yes/no response, unless you ask the person to explain.

- Do you like riding a bike? “Yes”
- Is your project finished? “No”
- What is your favourite colour? “Blue”
- What is the average velocity of an unladen swallow? “I dunno.”

The more skilful technique which solicits more information in its response is the open ended question. They allow the person being interviewed to speak more freely.

- How did you fix car without any tools when you were stranded on the highway?
- What happened when the police questioned you?

Similar to open ended questions is a command which will encourage dialogue.

- Tell me about your knitting needles.

You may wish to make a statement or recite a fact, and immediately followed it by a question about it. The statement or fact is usually something that you have researched ahead of time. The answer that you are after will have something to do with the fact.

- I understand that there was no water available for the cycling race. How did you cope with that?

Interview Pitfalls: The Double Question

Out of nervousness or lack of assuredness people will ask a question and without waiting for a response, will follow that up with a second question. This is called the double question. Usually the person will respond to the last question, while the first one could have been more meaningful.

- How does the style of the car that you bought suit your lifestyle? What car did you buy?

The *Dance* of the Interview

The goal of an interview is to collect as much meaningful information that will support your point of view. A good interview will combine open-ended questions, close-ended questions and make statements. In a great interview an appropriate question will be asked at the right time. Knowing *when* to ask a question or make a statement is as important as *what* to ask. It can make or break an interview.

Having prepared for an interview, you will have a set number of questions that you have at your disposal. An inexperienced interviewer will tend to ask these questions and only these questions, and only in the order that they were written down. You are free to change the order of the questions, provided that it is getting the information that you want; and, you are free to to ask questions that weren't written down, or make statements that will encourage dialogue. The dance of the interview also entails knowing when to ask a pre-formulated question an one that is spontaneous.

Proposal (Thinking and Inquiry)

- Submit the proposal before gathering any video footage.
- Please use the same subtitles to organize your work.

Part A - Background

Copy/paste the questions, and answer them in paragraph form.

1. What is the topic of your documentary, and more importantly what is its purpose?
2. What do you hope to convince people or reveal? Support your answer with examples of the content that you will gather, filming techniques that you will use, and how it will be edited.
3. Who is your target audience? Why would people find this interesting?

Part B - Footage

Write in complete sentences. Double space between list items.

Specifically list all of the possible footage that you will collect to tell your story, including the people you wish to interview. For each item, justify why it will enhance the purpose of your documentary?

Part C - Interview Questions

Double space between questions.

List all the possible questions you will ask people in an interview. Include prompting statements and statements followed by the question.

Thinking and Inquiry

Proposal Part A - Background

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Limited paragraph and sentence structure; Limited use of good grammar; Limited investigation in the answers	Paragraphs and sentences are somewhat well structured; Somewhat good use of grammar; Answers somewhat thorough	Paragraphs and sentences are considerably well structured; Considerably good use of grammar; Answers considerably thorough	Paragraphs and sentences are well structured; Good use of grammar; Answers thoroughly investigated

Proposal Part B - Footage

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Limited sentence structure; Limited use of good grammar; Limited investigation in the answers	Sentences are somewhat well structured; Somewhat good use of grammar; Answers somewhat thorough	Sentences are considerably well structured; Considerably good use of grammar; Answers considerably thorough	Sentences are well structured; Good use of grammar; Answers thoroughly investigated

Proposal Part C - Interview Questions

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Questions support the premise in a limited way; Limited number of good questions which support the scope of the documentary; Questioning techniques are limited	Questions somewhat good quality; Some good questions which support the scope of the documentary; Some variety in questioning techniques	Questions considerably good quality; Considerable number of good questions which support the scope of the documentary; Considerable variety in questioning techniques	Quality of questions support the documentary's premise in a meaningful way; Abundant number of good questions which support the scope of the documentary; Various questioning techniques well employed

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Communication

Message Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Clarity of message is limited	Message of the edited documentary is somewhat clear	Message of the edited documentary is considerably clear	Message of the edited documentary is very clear

Impact Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
<p>Edited footage carefully chosen and backs up intended point of view in a limited way;</p> <p>Footage supports your point of view in a limited way;</p> <p>Considerable footage detracts from your point of view;</p> <p>Limited in its persuasion; Viewer is convinced of your viewpoint in a limited way</p>	<p>Edited footage carefully chosen and somewhat backs up intended point of view;</p> <p>Footage somewhat supports your point of view;</p> <p>Some footage detracts from your point of view; somewhat persuasive;</p> <p>Viewer is somewhat convinced of your viewpoint</p>	<p>Edited footage carefully chosen and considerably backs up intended point of view;</p> <p>Footage considerably supports your point of view;</p> <p>Little footage detracts from your point of view; considerably persuasive;</p> <p>Viewer is considerably convinced of your viewpoint</p>	<p>Edited footage carefully chosen and strongly backs up the intended point of view;</p> <p>All footage strongly supports your point of view;</p> <p>No footage detracts from your point of view; strongly persuasive;</p> <p>Viewer is strongly convinced of your viewpoint</p>

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Application

Content of Footage Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
The content of the chosen footage is enhances the purpose of your documentary in a limited way; The integrity of the footage puts the credibility of the documentary in question	The content of the chosen footage somewhat enhances the purpose of your documentary throughout the entire production; The integrity of the footage is somewhat strong	The content of the chosen footage is considerably enhances the purpose of your documentary throughout the entire production; The integrity of the footage is considerably strong	The content of the footage is carefully chosen and enhances the purpose of your documentary throughout the entire production; The integrity* of all the footage is strong

*The integrity of the footage means that the content is true; and hasn't been deliberately misrepresented.

Editing (Sequencing) Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Sequence of story has limited interest; Facts do little to convince; Presented is limited in its logic; Changes attracts and maintains audience's interest in a limited way	Sequence of story is somewhat interesting; Facts somewhat convincing; Some logic in the presentation; Changes somewhat attracts and maintains audience's interest	Sequence of story considerably interesting; Facts considerably convincing; Considerable logic in presentation; Changes considerably attracts and maintains audience's interest	Sequence of story very interesting; Facts very convincing; Logically presented; Abundant changes attracts and maintains audience's interest

Visual Enhancements Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10 11	12 13	14 15	16 18 20
Limited use of cutaways to enhance dialogue; Visual enhancements coincides and augments the purpose of the video in a limited way	Moderate use of cutaways to enhance dialogue; Visual enhancements somewhat coincides and augments the purpose of the video	Considerable use of cutaways to enhance dialogue; Visual enhancements considerably coincides and augments the purpose of the video	Abundant use of cutaways to enhance dialogue; Visual enhancements strongly coincides and augments the purpose of the video

Composition (Subject placement, camera angle, field of view, camera handling)

Subjects are properly composed throughout the entire video production. They are properly framed within the video frame, using the rule of thirds as a guideline. There is a proper amount of headroom and lead room. Single or multiple character arrangements are properly placed within the video frame. The head is oriented in a proper direction, for example, 3/4 head position in a conversation or interview situation.

The field of view for each shot is properly chosen: Long shots for an establishing shot to show context, medium shot or closer for conversations, extreme close-up for intimacy or intensity. Most importantly, video is portrayed as a close up medium.

Each shot is to be done using proper camera handling techniques. Still shots have a completely still background. Pan and tilt shots are decisive, and character remains within the frame.

Composition Rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
5	5	7	8 9 10
All aspects of composition are adhered to in a limited way	All aspects of composition are somewhat adhered to	All aspects of composition are considerably adhered to	All aspects of composition are consistently and accurately adhered to

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