

DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRE-PRODUCTION

The first thing you need to do when making a short documentary is to view a number of other short documentary films with a variety of styles and themes.

FILMS FOR VIEWING

Here is a link to featured documentary content on MYHERO:

<https://myhero.com/documentary>

Drop Box link for downloadable films from the MY HERO Film Festival:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tyw3vac5m6b9eox/AACdZxNh0ebkdKDZEtoWohHaa?dl=0>

Companion guide to DB films – this page has the films organized by theme:

<https://myhero.com/featured-documentary-films-by-theme>

Environmental - *Water Song*

Human Rights - *Us & Us*

Women's Rights - *Straw Hat*

Overcoming obstacles - *Cristian*

Humanitarian - *No Exit: Jordan's most vulnerable Refugees*

Personal Action - *Jody Wood: Beauty in Transition*

Global action - *Waves for Water*

Activism - *Educate Girls & Dirt - Hummingbird Excerpt*

Peace - *A Good American*

Arts - *Facebook Stories - The Conditioned*

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- The concept of 'MY' HERO with a focus on what matters to the filmmaker - who is 'their' hero - what issues do 'they' care about?
- What stories are accessible in the surrounding area? Who is working towards solving the issues they care about? Who are the heroes in the surrounding area?

Casting - choose a hero to make a movie about. Consider the following:

- Do you have access to this person for interviewing?
- Are there interesting visuals about your hero's story?
- What do other people have to say about your hero?
- Is this person interesting to look at and listen to?
- How does your hero inspire you?
- What locations will be part of this movie?

Documentary style - What type of Documentary film do you want to make?

Poetic Documentary – Focused on experiences and images, offering a new perspective.

Expository Documentary – Aimed to inform and persuade.

Observational Documentary – Simply Observing the world around you.

Participatory Documentary – These will include the filmmaker within the narrative.

Reflexive Documentary – Focused on the filmmaker's process of making the film.

Performative Documentary – Designed to share an emotional response and construct social truths.

Writing a script - keep it simple.

- Use a Story Board Template to visually plot out your ideas.
- Outline the main points you are interested in.
- Make a list of questions.
- Structure the beginning, middle, and end.
- Write, re-write, and re-write some more.
- Get feedback.

Get a crew - keep it basic (one person can do many positions).

- Director
- Producer
- Camera Person
- Sound Person (Production and Post-Production)
- Editor

Make a schedule - plan ahead!

- Set shooting dates.
- Work with a deadline and stick to it.
- Plan plenty of time for editing.

Location scouting

- **Choose an interesting Location** - You hear it all the time: Location Location Location! It is true. An interesting background for your scenes and interviews can really make your movie stand apart. Take your time to visit many locations. Be determined to find something unusual and interesting.
- **Listen to the Sound** - When location scouting, ALWAYS listen to the ambient noise in the location. Sometimes great locations don't get picked because they are next to a train track, airport, or freeway. Seriously, it won't work. LISTEN at different times of the day to know what to expect.
- **Watch the Light** - Visit the location during the time of day you plan to shoot. Be sure to notice the position of the sun and where there are shadows. Spend some time at the location watching and listening.
- **Location is a Character** - The best movies find ways to introduce the locations as if they were characters themselves with changing moods that reflect the moods of the characters in the story
- **Beware** - Beaches are beautiful, but VERY difficult for any dialogue because of the sound of the ocean. Generally, use beaches for scenes and shots that don't require dialogue.

FILMMAKING RESOURCES

Lucas on Cinematic Language pdf

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=19jmlcNWzEYAvXiS3r3PU5BZogvkqaodw>

Bruce Block book: The Visual Story

www.amazon.com/Visual-Story-Second-Creating-Structure