

# Documentary Film Workshop



**Videography and editing**  
4 hours  
Storytelling

---

# Documentary film workshop



## What is a documentary?

“A movie or television programme that tells the facts about actual people and events.”  
Webster Dictionary.

## What do you need?

- Smartphone
- Laptop/computer/ipad
- Mobile phone video editing software (free software/apps are listed below)

A teenage filmmaker has made a documentary that explores life during the coronavirus pandemic. Emma Gray, 17, has spoken to friends and family for the documentary ‘Coronavirus: Life in Lockdown’, who have shared their experiences and the challenges they have faced.

Video: [youtu.be/cMl7EfiF9Mo](https://youtu.be/cMl7EfiF9Mo)



Video tutorial: [youtu.be/psR885OYUvI](https://youtu.be/psR885OYUvI)

Follow the link to watch the documentary workshop made for this project.

---

# The plan



Produce a documentary of your experience of the Covid-19 lockdown through your own words and imagery.

The documentary can be a “day in the life” style video where you document a typical day or you can focus on specific aspects of the lock down for example:

- Being away from your friends and family?
- Missing school?
- How you have remained connected to friends and family?
- The difficulties you have come up against during the lockdown?
- How have you coped?
- What have you been up to?

You can interview friends and family but please keep social distancing in mind. Your short documentary should be between 10 to 15 minutes long.

There’s such a wide variety of subjects related to the lockdown you can explore through your documentary. You will be narrating throughout the documentary detailing your experience.

---

# Key tips



## You'll need plenty of light

Phone cameras have very small sensors and struggle in low light situations, so try to film where there's plenty of light and it's not too contrasty (don't shoot into the light).

## Get the sound right

The other big drawback with shooting on a mobile phone is their tiny microphones. Get in close to make the most of the built-in mic, or use a separate microphone.

The easiest option is to create a documentary that doesn't need live sound: add a voiceover when you edit.

## Keep it still

Shaky footage looks terrible, and phones are hard to hold steady in horizontal (landscape) mode. Use a simple clamp like the Joby M-Pod, or a more solid one like the Shoulderpod. Learn to hold your phone steady (rest your upper arms against your body and try to be relaxed).

---

# Making your documentary



## Plan

Think about why you're making the documentary: to share your experience of the lockdown. To plan, you could start with a shot list or storyboard. Make sure you get enough shots to tell your story.

Storyboard link:

[bbc.co.uk/northernireland/myplacemyspace/downloads/promote-your-day-out/storyboard-template.pdf](https://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/myplacemyspace/downloads/promote-your-day-out/storyboard-template.pdf)

## Shoot

Check the phone settings to choose your recording quality. Ideally you would want to shoot at 1080p HD even though most smartphones can shoot at 4K. Put your phone into Airplane mode to avoid distractions.

Hold your device horizontally to shoot in landscape mode/wide angle

Make sure the camera is on video, not photograph, mode. Keep the device still. Use a grip, tripod or stabiliser if you can.

You could also rest your elbows on a table or the back of a chair, or lean against a wall.

Don't zoom the image (unless you have a dual lens device) because you'll lose quality.

---

# Making your documentary



## Sound

Record the sound separately if you can, for better sound quality (especially if you are shooting outside).

Unless you have a separate microphone, you'll only be able to record speech well if your phone/ipad is close to the sound. So you'll need to shoot closeups.

Film a bit then play it back (on headphones if possible). Does it sound OK?



Free Music: [freemusicarchive.org](https://freemusicarchive.org)

Images: [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

Free footage: [pexels.com/videos](https://pexels.com/videos)

## Edit

After planning your shoots, shooting all of the clips, interviews, and recording the sounds, it's now time to edit and bring your documentary to life.



How to edit on a smartphone:

[youtube.com/results?search\\_query=how+to+edit+a+shot+documentary+on+smartphone](https://youtube.com/results?search_query=how+to+edit+a+shot+documentary+on+smartphone)

---

# Free mobile phone software



## **Adobe Premiere Rush (Android & iPhone)**

The best video editing app for short videos.

## **KineMaster Pro (Android)**

The most professional video editing app for Android.

## **iMovie (iOS)**

The best free video editing app for iOS.

## **FilmoraGo (Android)**

The best free video editing app for Android.

## **Filmmaker Pro (iOS)**

Pro-level video editing app with some unique features.

## **Power Director (Android & iPhone)**

Solid, mid-level video editing app for both Android and iOS.

Ravensbourne Outreach tutors and students have produced a new series of online projects and courses to help you stay creative at home

If you'd like to find out more please visit our website [makeit.ravensbourne.ac.uk](http://makeit.ravensbourne.ac.uk) or email us at [outreach@rave.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@rave.ac.uk)

Instagram: [@raveoutreach](https://www.instagram.com/raveoutreach)

Twitter: [@ravensbourneWP](https://twitter.com/ravensbourneWP)

#letsmakeitcreative

