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The Canadian Children's Book Centre
Le Centre du livre jeunesse canadien

Canada Council
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How to Record a High-Quality Video at Home

A tipsheet created by Bibliovideo, the YouTube Channel all about Canadian kids' books

Clear and crisp audio is key



Speak clearly and loudly (but don't shout!) into the camera.



Eliminate any possible background noises. Close your door; silence your phone or computer; film in an empty room away from pets and family members; turn off fans, heaters, or air conditioners; and if outside, watch out for wind.



Position yourself to be no more than an arm's length away from the computer or phone.



Always test your audio. Record a sample, play it back, and see how you can improve on the next try.



If you're committed to filming several videos, consider investing in a lavalier or condenser microphone. Mics are a relatively inexpensive way to take your videos from amateur to professional by ensuring high-quality audio every time you film.

Connect with your audience



Look into the camera lens (not elsewhere on the screen).

Speak directly to viewers. Don't be afraid to be conversational or casual—be yourself! If you're feeling stiff or awkward in front of the camera, start again. Speak as though you're speaking to a friend.

Record in landscape mode



If you're recording on your phone, always hold your phone horizontally when recording a video, never vertically. This eliminates the two black vertical bars that appear along the sides of videos that are filmed in portrait mode. Turning your phone on its side allows you to fit more on your screen, resulting in a more detailed shot and a professional-looking finished product.

Use natural lighting



If you can, always film in natural light. If you're inside, record while facing a window that's in shadows—this will give you the balanced lighting you're looking for.



Never film with a window behind you or else you'll be in silhouette.

Avoid windows flooded by sunlight as this can result in dark shadows on your face.



If you're outside, avoid harsh sunlight on your face. Position yourself so the sun hits the back of your head. Or choose a day that's overcast but not too gloomy for an even white light.



Consider filming outside during “Magic Hour” (the hour leading up to sunset or just after sunrise) for warm, forgiving light that softens your video and makes it glow.



If filming indoors at night, turn on a lamp. Place the lamp at eye level or just above your head. Keep it quite close—if it's too far away, it will cast shadows on your face.

Be aware of your background

Choose your background carefully. Nothing is more distracting than a messy or ill-chosen background.

Try filming against solid-coloured or brick walls, a sheet, or even a large sheet of backdrop paper.

Film a few feet away from your background to avoid casting shadows.

If you can't find a solid background, get creative and find a feature in your home or yard that will look attractive on camera but won't distract the viewer. Try using your bookshelves, plants, garden, gallery wall, or even a wooden fence.

Go the extra mile



Edit your video to remove long pauses, awkward transitions, and accidental segues. A little bit of cleanup can go a long way.

Free video editing software such as iMovie is easy to use, even for beginners. Or, enlist a family member or friend who can quickly pick up the basics.

Add photos, cutaways, captions, music, and text to your video using video editing software.

Please ensure you own the rights to any additional content or are using royalty-free images and music—otherwise we will not be able to use your video on Bibliovideo.

Submit your video



Submit your video to Bibliovideo! If you already have a YouTube or Vimeo account, upload your video file (in public or “unlisted” mode). Or upload your video to Google Drive for us to review. Send YouTube, Vimeo, or Google Drive links to **spencer@bibliovideo.ca**.

If you don't have a Google Drive, YouTube, or Vimeo account, send your video file to **spencer@bibliovideo.ca** using Dropbox, WeTransfer, or Hightail.

We prefer **.mp4** files with a minimum resolution of **720p** (standard HD). We will review your video and add it to our database. If it is chosen for use on Bibliovideo, you will receive an email with a letter of permission to sign and send back.

Questions?

We're here to help. Email **spencer@bibliovideo.ca** if you have any questions about creating your video or sending it to us for review.

Good luck and have fun!

Helpful links:

[Total Beginner's Guide to Video Equipment](#)

[Total Beginner's Guide to Video Editing](#)

[Camera Framing and Motion ft. Squaresville](#)

[How to make professional videos at home without pro gear](#)

With funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, Bibliovideo is the first step in a long-range digital strategy being developed by a consortium of organizations led by the Canadian Children's Book Centre that includes the Association of Canadian Publishers/49thKids, Canadian School Libraries, CANSCAIP, Communication-Jeunesse and IBBY Canada.



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