

Contents

What Leaders Need to Know

A Little History	131
Why Learn About Video, Media & Technology?	131
Where Do You Start?	131
Video Production Glossary	132
Internet Glossary	133
Basic Communication Processes Still Apply!	135
Video, Media & Technology Planning Form	136
Life Skills	137
Self-Assessment & Evaluation	137
Beyond the Toolkit: More Ideas & Resources	137

Skill Sheets

Shooting Your Videos	139
Video Editing	140
Writing Skills for Video	142
Speaking Skills for Video	146
Graphics for Video	147
Interviewing Skills for Video	148
Make the Media Your Partner	149
Safety Rules for Online Time	151

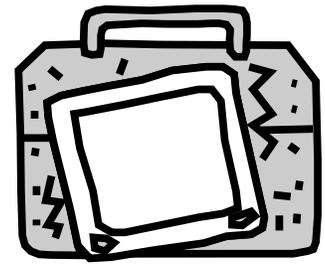
Icebreakers

Communication Treasure Hunt	152
Video Introductions	154

Activities & Projects

Create a Video Treatment	155
Create a Commercial	158
Create a Talk Show	160
Get Real! Produce a Documentary	162
Offline Chat About Online Time	166
Electronic Pen Pals	170

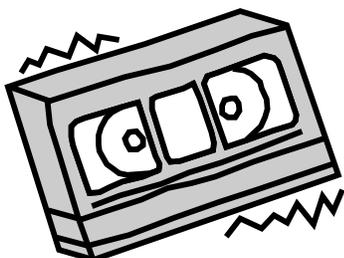
What Leaders Need to Know



A Little History

Technology is a part of just about every home and office these days. Since we use high-tech equipment of some kind each day, most of us don't realize that these inventions have been around for only a couple of hundred years or less. The kids in your group would probably find it hard to imagine themselves living in the early 1800s. At that time, there was no way for people to transmit a message quickly over long distances. Samuel F.B. Morse then invented the telegraph, a system of instant electronic communication. That incredible advance in technology might seem almost trivial to kids today when people can easily communicate with people all over the world.

Since the 1800s, we've welcomed the inventions of the telephone, camera, phonograph, radio, motion pictures, television, videocassette recorders (VCRs) and compact discs (CDs). Besides the impact of these inventions, the television cable industry and satellites have made the world a smaller place. Cable and satellites provide powerful, collective media experiences for people across the country and around the world. Computers are also an important aid in communication. People now instantly "talk" to each other through computer messages and electronic mail (email). Computers make it possible for us gather information and communicate with people anywhere



in the world without ever leaving our home, business or school computers! We've come a long way from the telegraph days to the laser discs, two-way interactive video, CD-ROM, hypermedia, desktop video conferencing (DVC) and digital versatile disc (DVD) of the 1980s, 1990s and beyond.

Why Learn About Video, Media & Technology?

Video, media and technology touch almost everyone's life in some way daily. The equipment mentioned above is commonplace in schools, homes and businesses. Kids need to understand these technologies so that they are well prepared for their futures as workers and citizens in a high-tech world.

Where Do You Start?

Giving kids hands-on experience using video, media and technology is the best way to build skills in these areas. Think about the technologies that are available to you and the young people in your group.

Video & Audio Production

Do you have access to a camcorder for video production? If you have cable television, then you probably have community access through your cable station. Find out what they provide in terms of equipment and training in video production.

(Cable companies are required by law to provide access to equipment and programming for people who live in the communities they serve.) A glossary of video production terms is available on page 132 to help you become more familiar with some of the concepts that are unique to this area.

What about an audiotape recorder/player? Kids can create mock radio talk shows, or practice being disc jockeys by using simple household tape recorders. They may also be able to access a computer equipped with microphone, speakers and audio editing software in order to record and edit their project digitally.

Computers & the Internet

Your group can get access to computer programs and the Internet in many ways. Families of kids in your group may have computers at home. Your local library may have computers and access to the Internet available for public use. What about businesses in your community? Ask about their interest in helping young people use and experience technologies in the workplace. Do you or a member of your group know someone who is particularly skilled in computers who would be willing to share his or her expertise? Don't overlook young people! Kids tend to learn quickly and often are more computer literate than the adults in a family! Ask high school or college students to serve as computer resource people to your youth group.

Video Production Glossary

“Action” – The director’s cue to begin taping

Audience – Everyone who will view a particular videotape

Audio – The sound portion of a videotape

Camcorder – A small one-piece video camera

Close-up (CU) – A camera shot in which a person or object is seen very close and fills the frame

Director – The person who gives leadership to the location video shooting by giving directions and calling out cues to on-camera talent, camera operators, props people and others

Documentary – A type of film or video that illustrates a real situation or issue, or tells the story of real people; a nonfiction story that is shot with the real people involved in the situation or story, no actors are used

Edit – To select and electronically assemble two or more audio and video segments

Edit in the camera – To create an illusion of an edited program by carefully planning an overall tape and then shooting the segments in the order in which they are to appear in the final program

Extreme close-up (ECU) – A very close shot of a portion of an object or person

Fade in or out – Audio: To gradually increase or decrease the volume of the sound; Video: To push a button on the camera that makes the picture slowly appear from black or disappear to black

Focus – The sharpness and clarity of the picture

Monitor – A television set that can transmit audio and video signals from videotape

Pan – To move the camera from left to right or from right to left while shooting

Postproduction – The process of editing, adding graphics, music and special effects to a tape after all the footage has been shot

Pre-production – The planning stages of video production; usually involves identifying the message and audience; outlining and script writing; research; scheduling; rehearsing; and budget planning

Producer – The person who gives overall leadership to the production of a tape, including message, audience, content, scheduling, budget and making sure deadlines are met

Special effects – Transitional effects such as fades, wipes, dissolves;

digital effects such as flips or flying video scenes

“Stand by” – The director’s cue that everyone should ready themselves to begin shooting video

Talent – The people whose voices are heard or whose faces appear in front of the camera

Teamwork – In a video production, crew members working together effectively to complete a tape

Theme – The overall idea for a program

Tilt – To move the camera up and down while shooting

Time cues “5, 4, 3, 2, 1” – The director’s cues that the action and taping will begin in five counts

Titles – Any graphic material or words that are shown on camera

Two-shot – Framing two people or objects with the camera lens

Video – The picture portion of the videotape

Videotape – Magnetic tape that can record a television signal

Zoom in or out – The gradual getting closer or widening of the camera shot accomplished by using the camera’s toggle button to zoom in (get closer) or zoom out (get farther away)

Just What Is the Internet?

The Internet offers computer users a way to communicate worldwide (for example, through email) and find information on any topic, organization, government or business (for example, through the World Wide Web or WWW).

This worldwide network consists of thousands of connected computer networks using the same language or “protocol” to communicate. (See page 133 for a glossary of Internet terms.) What sets the Internet apart from more traditional forms of publishing is that it offers immediate two-way communication in a way

that print and broadcast media never could before. For example, the Internet allows you to watch a television show or read a newspaper and immediately “visit” the related Web site or Internet address and offer feedback to the media outlet on what you have seen or read.

Internet Glossary

Address – The unique location of an information site on the Internet, a specific file (for example, a Web page) or an email user

Bookmark – A saved link to a Web site that has been added to a list of saved links so that you can simply click on it rather than having to retype the address when visiting the site again; also called “favorites”

Browser – A software program that lets you find, see and hear material on the World Wide Web, including text, graphics, sound and video; most online services have their own browsers; also called “Web browser”

Chat – The “live” exchange of typed email messages between two or more computer users, generally using a protocol or set of rules called “Internet Relay Chat” (IRC); despite the name, online “chatting” is generally done with a keyboard, rather than verbally

Domain name – An Internet address that usually contains some version of the organization’s name and an ending indicating the type of organization such as .com (corporations or commercial entities), .edu (educational institutions), .org (nonprofit organizations), .mil (military organization), .net (network provider), and .gov (government institution)

Download – To copy a file from one computer system to another; from the Internet user’s point of view, to download a file is to request it from another computer (or from a Web page on another computer) and to receive it

Email (Electronic mail) – A way of sending messages electronically from one computer to another, generally through a modem and telephone line connected to a computer

Emoticon – Computer users’ attempt to convey emotion with a keyboard; tip your head to the left to read the smiley :-) and wink ;-) and other emoticons

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) – A compilation of questions (and the answers to the questions) new participants in a newsgroup or visitors to a Web site most frequently ask; generally posted as time- and patience-savers for veteran participants and users, who often ask new users (or “newbies”) to check the FAQ before asking redundant questions

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) – A method for transferring files (for example, computer games and other software programs) across computer networks

Home page – The main or first page of a World Wide Web site that is the starting point for a particular person, group or organization; often includes an informal table of contents and links to other parts of the Web site

HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) – The standard computer language used to create World Wide Web (hypertext) documents; HTML code includes a set of tags or labels that indicate such things as whether a piece of text is a headline or part of a bulleted list, the size of a graphic or the cells of a table, and the Web page to which a link directs users

HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol) – The standard method comput-

EMOTICONS

Icon What it Means

:-)	Smile
;-)	Wink
:-(I’m sad
:-D	Laughing
:’-O	Crying
%(I’m Confused
:-o	I’m Surprised
:-O	I’m very surprised

ABBREVIATIONS

BTW = By The Way

CUL8R = See You Later

IMO = In My Opinion

IMHO = In My Humble Opinion

J/K = Just Kidding

LOL = Laughing Out Loud

ROFL = Rolling On the Floor Laughing

TTFN = Ta-Ta For Now

ers and networks use to transfer information over the Internet

Hypertext link – An easy method for retrieving information by choosing highlighted words or icons on the screen; the link will take you to related documents or sites

Internet – A worldwide collection of computer networks that allows people to find and use information and communicate with others

ISP (Internet Service Provider) – A generic term for any company that can connect your computer directly to the Internet

Continued on page 134

Internet Glossary, continued

Netiquette – Rules or manners for interacting courteously with others online

Newsgroups – Online discussion groups categorized by specific subjects (not necessarily news) that allow readers to send or “post” messages

Online service – A company that provides its members access to the Internet through its own special user interface, as well as additional services such as chat

rooms, children’s areas, travel planning and financial management

Search engine – A program that performs keyword searches for information on the Internet

Spam – Unsolicited bulk email that can be sent to literally thousands of people at the click of a mouse; because it is often used to advertise get-rich-quick schemes, pornographic Web sites and various hoaxes, spam is one of the most despised forms of email on the Internet

URL (Uniform Resource Locator) – The World Wide Web address of a site on the Internet; for example, the URL for the White House is <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

World Wide Web (Web or WWW) – A hypertext-based system that allows you to browse through a variety of linked Internet resources organized by colorful, graphics-oriented home pages

When you’re helping kids develop communication skills, it’s important to know that the Internet — especially the World Wide Web — can provide them with opportunities to apply all of the skills introduced in this toolkit, including graphics, video, vocal and written. Young people can write text, create a graphic identity to make that text come alive, write a speech that explains the information they have written, and produce a video to more clearly illustrate their message. Then they can publish all of those pieces on a Web site and gain a worldwide audience.

Millions of young people are online in America today, using the Internet at school, at their local libraries, at home and as part of after-school activities. Young people are using the Internet to:

- Answer questions or do research.
- Publish their own unique ideas and creative works.
- Communicate with their peers by email.
- Join groups or clubs that meet online (“virtually”).
- Shop.
- Get directions and maps.
- Play games.

The Internet is a valuable medium for young people to explore as part of a communications project because:

• **It’s a great research tool** – Most forms of the communication processes covered in the toolkit require the person creating a message to conduct at least some research. The Internet offers easy access to:

- **Government** documents with information on demographics, statistics, history and a host of other topics that young people may need to know about.
- **Universities and other research organizations** that provide information on just about any subject your group may be interested in.
- **Organizations** whose ideas, products and networks may help young people complete a project, compare ideas and communicate with other people interested in their topic.
- **Newspapers, magazines, broadcast networks and other media outlets** that provide in-depth views of contemporary issues, ideas and opportunities.

• **It’s a good way to share your message** – The Internet can serve

as a communication or publishing medium that allows:

- Young people to have their message widely seen or heard with little or no duplication expense.
- Ideas and creative concepts to be immediately updated or tested and can provide ways to get feedback from a variety of audiences.
- Young people to use a wide range of communications media to express their ideas.

What Leaders Need to Know About Internet Safety

When working with young people on the Internet, keep in mind that – just like in the real world – there are places that are appropriate to go and others that are inappropriate. Online interactions with strangers can pose risks to children who are trusting and curious. As young people become more skilled at using the World Wide Web, email and other forms of online communication, situations may arise that they will need help clarifying and dealing with. So, it’s extremely important for young people and the parents and volunteers who work with them to be aware of some basic Internet

safety practices. You must also be able to respond to questions young people may ask as situations arise.

Here are some ways you can ensure the safety of the young people you work with as they explore the Internet:

Review Internet safety guidelines with kids before they get involved in online activities.

Review the “Safety Rules for Online Time” skill sheet (on pg. 151) with kids before going online.

Following are the URLs (Universal Resource Locator or Internet address) of sites on the World Wide Web that provide safety rules and links to other Internet safety information:

- **“Child Safety on the Information Highway,”** *National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.* (<http://www.missingkids.org/>)

An online brochure containing information for parents on reducing online risks to children as well as online safety rules for families and children.

- **“Staying Street Smart on the Web,”** *Yahooligans, in cooperation with The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Interactive Services Association.* (<http://www3.yahooligans.com/docs/safety/>)

Provides guidelines for young people and links to information parents should know about online safety.



- **“Parents Guide to the Internet,”** *U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C.* (<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/internet>)

A 16-page booklet (available in Adobe Acrobat format) that provides basic information for parents on Internet use and tips for ensuring that children have safe, productive and enjoyable experiences on the Internet.

Involve parents from the start. Before going online with young people, let parents or guardians know that their children will be using the Internet and that it will be a supervised educational experience. Think about providing a permission slip for parents or guardians to sign if you will be using an Internet browser without “parental controls.” Permissions slips are often required for classroom Internet use in schools. This could also contain Internet safety and behavior guidelines (such as the “Safety Rules for Online Time” skill sheet on pg. 151) for the child to read, discuss with a parent and both sign.

Use “parental controls” or Internet filtering software when possible. Many Internet service providers allow subscribers to activate “parental controls” for their online accounts. These controls offer a range of options such as closing off specific chat areas and communication features like “instant messages” or limiting access to the World Wide Web. Software is also available for purchase and use with Internet browsers that will make sites containing objectionable words or phrases inaccessible. *Keep in mind that automated parental controls and Internet filtering software are not foolproof and should never take the place of adult supervision.* It is important that you stay involved with your group as they are online and talk with them about their experiences.

Use role-plays and guided discussion to help kids anticipate how to respond to Internet situations they may encounter. Even though young people may be familiar with general guidelines for Internet safety, it still may not be easy for them to come up with appropriate responses to some of the real-life situations they may encounter online. The “Offline Chat About Online Time” activity on page 166 can help your group think through, discuss and make good decisions about situations that might come up while they are online.

Basic Communication Processes Still Apply!

Whether you’re writing a speech for student council elections, creating a videotape for mass distribution or making a Web page to display on the World Wide Web, the basic principles of communication apply. You must have something to say! And you must consider your audience very carefully. Craft your message so that it is directed to the specific group or kind of individuals you’re trying to reach. You can use the Video, Media and Technology Planning Form on page 136 to help your group get started on a project they’ve identified.

When beginning a **video project**, for example, you must ask and answer these basic questions:

- What is our message? (for example, “Don’t Drink and Drive”)
- Who is our audience? (for example, young people aged 16 to 21)
- How will we reach them? (for example, produce a video for use in high school classrooms)

Video, Media & Technology Planning Form

All video, media and technology projects require careful planning. To produce a project that has meaning for the users, the following questions must be asked and answered before you get started.

1. What is our goal? What are we trying to say or accomplish with this project? (For example: inform, entertain, demonstrate, sell a product or program, create awareness of an issue)

2. Who is our audience? Who do we really want to reach with our message? Be as specific as possible. (For example: young people aged 5 to 9 or 14 to 19; all adults, parents, teachers, community leaders)

3. What is our specific message or objective? What exactly are we trying to communicate through this project and what do we hope people learn from it?

4. How long should this video, media or technology project be? (For example: Many television and radio commercials last 30 seconds, news stories no more than 2 minutes, interviews or profiles no more than 5 minutes, television sitcoms 30 minutes [with commercials], and Web sites may contain one or hundreds of pages.)

5. What are the possibilities for how this project could look (for example, like a news program, advertisement, funny skit, powerful drama, interview with interesting people)? Use the space below (and on the back of this sheet, if necessary) to brainstorm as many ways as you can to create a video, media or technology project that fits with your answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 above.

6. Determine what your budget and timeline are. What costs will you incur in the development of the project? (Think about the costs such as audiotapes, videotapes or CD-ROMs, renting equipment, making or buying props, creating or commissioning graphics and any other expenses you might incur.) What is your targeted goal for completion of this project?

Budget: _____ Deadline for completion: _____

7. Decide how you'll proceed and get started! Decide on the elements your project will feature (video projects, for example, may require on-air talent, a narrator, live action, interviews, location shooting, props, music, graphics). Decide who will do what in your group. Create an outline, script or storyboard, pull it all together and create it! See the skill sheets, activities and project ideas in this section of the *Communications Toolkit* for more information.

- How can we structure the message? (for example, produce a documentary that includes testimonials by teens and parents who have lost friends or children to drunk driving)

Once you've answered these basic yet important questions, you can begin the process of creating your video project.

Life Skills

What life skills do kids and adults learn by participating in video, media and technology projects?

- Teamwork
- Leadership (particularly through the roles of producer and director)
- Time management and reliability
- Decision-making and creative problem-solving
- The ability to plan and research a project, and then organize the information
- The ability to use resources wisely
- Resiliency (for example, when a shoot doesn't go well the first time)
- Useful and marketable technical skills
- Self-confidence and self-esteem (through understanding one's abilities and having an opportunity to experience success)
- Evaluation skills and the ability to set goals for improvement
- Career exploration skills and school-to-work transitions

Self-Assessment & Evaluation

After each activity or project you lead with young people, please help them think about what they learned. Make copies of the "What I Learned" self-evaluation form on page 8 and distribute them to your group. Ask them to think quietly about the

questions and make notes about what they learned, how they feel about their skills in that area and what they'd like to learn more about. Then lead a discussion with the whole group and ask if anyone wants to share what they came up with. Young people may want to keep their "What I Learned" forms to refer to later and as a way to document their learning process.

Beyond the Toolkit: More Ideas & Resources

The activities in this section of the *Communications Toolkit* are starting points for helping kids learn about communicating through video, media and technology. Here are some ideas for learning more and taking your projects further.

Local Cable Television Companies

If you have cable television in your area, then you have access to a community resource that can help you with your video projects. Cable companies provide training and equipment for shooting video "in the field" (also called "on-location") as well as in-studio productions and editing. Call to find out what's available to you and your group. Cable companies are *required by law* to provide access to their equipment and facilities at no charge to people in their communities. Usually all they require is that the video you produce be aired on their local channel - which is probably a plus!

Businesses

Ask for help from the video production facilities in your area. (Look in the yellow pages of your phone directory under "video production.") Some companies will open their

doors to young people who want to learn more about the business. Ask your local video rental store if they have cameras and other equipment your group can rent. Perhaps they'd lend equipment at no charge if they were asked to support a creative project that involved kids in producing something like a documentary about their community.

Many Internet Service Providers around the U.S. offer free email or Web page hosting as a way to promote their advertisers. Some local companies may also offer free Web page hosting for public service organizations.

Colleges & Universities

Find out if any colleges or universities in your area have film, video, multimedia or telecommunications departments. Students are excellent resource people, and working with a youth group gives them a chance to gain valuable hands-on experience themselves. Perhaps they could get course or independent study credits if they help young people create videos, Web pages or other media projects for a semester. College students may also be interested in community service and having meaningful volunteer experiences.

Schools

Don't overlook the local school's media department, computer labs or library. They vary from area to area, but some school districts have cameras, editing equipment, multimedia computer equipment, digital cameras or other communications technology available for student use. Some even have television studios and two-way video interactive classrooms. Do some investigating, find out what's available and explore how your group can learn from and use the resources in your community.

More Ideas!

The beauty of using video, media and technology to enhance communication skills is that there is unlimited potential for creativity. Allow the kids time to brainstorm as many possibilities for activities and projects as they can. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Interview people on audio or video tape to allow them to share different points of view on a topic or to give testimonials. Try a talk show format.

- Create a video or CD-ROM “family photo album.” Record interviews with elderly family members that document their life, history and family memories. Apply your production skills to a family history project. (Be sure to make an extra copy of such a project as a safety precaution.)

- Create a Web site or CD-ROM with information about your family history.

- Create a video that resembles a news segment or program.

- Create videos that reflect important issues in the lives of children, youth and families in your community. Use the tapes in civic and other community groups to focus people’s attention on issues of importance to your group.

- Write and read a poem on camera. For more visual effect, have the reader stand near the camera microphone but off-camera. Have others act out the poem on camera, and shoot graphics or other props or visuals that illustrate the words of the poem. Music playing softly in the background may add to the dramatic effect, too.

- Create a story or play and videotape it in sequence to create a dramatic production or role-play. (See the “Video Editing” skill sheet on

pg. 140 for information on how to edit in the camera.)

- Write and perform a song or rap and record it on audio or video tape.

- Create a video or multimedia yearbook that features classmates in action.

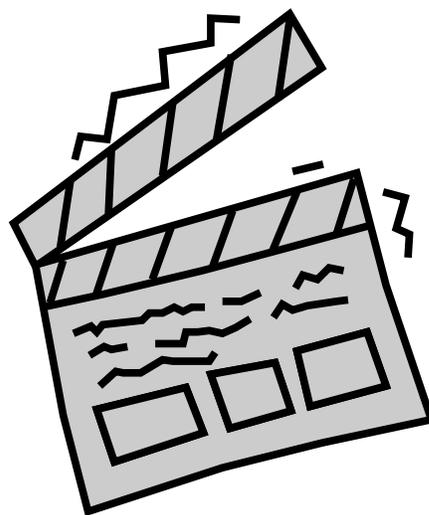
- Conceptualize, plan and storyboard a video even if you don’t have access to video equipment! The process itself is an excellent exercise in creative and critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork.

Keep in mind that this project can be more than just a learning opportunity. It can also be a way to get your message into the media. (See the “Make the Media Your Partner” skill sheet on pg. 149 to learn more about how to work effectively with the media. Local radio and TV stations may welcome the opportunity to air public service messages created by young people.

Explore Careers!

Video and media—Many diverse career opportunities are available to people interested in video and multimedia production. The “Video Production Roles” handout on page 165 describes several key video-related jobs. Kids in your group could investigate the types of career opportunities that are available in industries, companies and organizations such as:

- Commercial television stations
- Cable television stations
- Public television stations
- Video production companies
- Business and corporate video production departments
- K–12 school media departments
- College and university telecommunications departments
- Satellite television and videoconferencing organizations
- CD-ROM and video laser disk production companies



Internet—Businesses, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations use the World Wide Web to distribute information and conduct business. Web site designers work both “in-house” within organizations, or as independent contractors on projects. Many of the jobs that are available in this growing communications area are posted either on the Web sites of the employers or on Internet “job boards” that provide searchable “help wanted” listings.

Books

- *KIDVID: Fun-damentals of Video Instruction*, by Kaye Black. Tucson, Arizona: Zephyr Press, 1989.

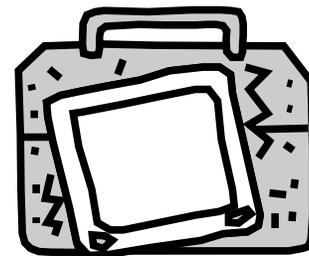
- *How to Make Your Own Video*, by Perry Schwartz. Minneapolis, Minnesota: First Avenue Editions, 1991.

- *Lights, Camera, Action! A Guide to Video Instruction and Production in the Classroom*, by Bruce Limpus. Waco, Texas: Prufrock Press, 1994.

- *Complete Communication Skills Activities Kit*, by Leroy Hay, Ph.D., and Richard Zboray. West Nyack, New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1992. This book contains a section on conceptualizing videos and activities that focus on listening, speaking, writing, organizing information, using and interpreting body language and more.

SKILL SHEET:

Shooting Your Videos



Have you ever sat down in front of the television to watch your own videos and been disappointed with the results? Most people new to a camcorder have. Here are several tips to help you improve the quality of the videotapes you shoot.

Planning

Think through your goals and what you want to have on tape. Shoot only those scenes that you really want or need. Shooting miles of wild footage that no one will ever want to watch is a waste of time and money. Be selective and resist the temptation to turn the camera on and record *everything* that's happening.

Lighting

The single most important thing you can do to improve the look of your videos is to improve your lighting.



A video shot in poor light looks dark and grainy. Pay attention to the light source (Is it from overhead? Lamp? Sun?) and try to place your subject so that the light falls evenly across it. Never shoot into the sunlight or into a window unless you're trying to make a dark silhouette of your subject. Shoot so that your back or side is to the light source and your subject is facing the light. Use a lamp or other filler to shed more light on your subject, if possible.

Sound

In most shooting situations, the audio (sound) is just as important as the video (picture). Most camcorders have built-in microphones that work fine for recording room or ambient sound. They're also acceptable for recording subjects if the subjects are no more than 9 to 12 feet away from the camera and if the room is very quiet. You can greatly improve your audio quality by using an external microphone. You can buy or lease hand-held (like news reporters use) or lavalier (clip-on) microphones from stores that sell video equipment. Remember, if you really want the sound on your tape to be good, you need to pay attention to where the microphone is in relation to your subject. It's also important that you eliminate distracting room noise (such as blowers, voices and equipment).

Camera Technique

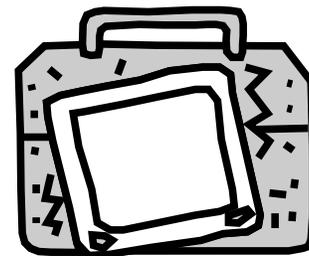
The biggest mistakes people make when using camcorders are overusing the zoom function and moving the camera erratically. Use the telephoto (zoom) lens only when you really want to get close and intimate with your subject and to create dramatic effect. But be careful. It's nearly impossible to get a stable shot without a tripod when you're zoomed in close. If you have a tripod, use it. If not, you may want to stick with medium and wide shots. When shooting without a tripod, hold the camera with two hands and plant your feet firmly, shoulder-width apart. Keep the camera as steady as possible and turn your whole body with the camera when you want to "pan" or move the camera left or right.

Have Fun!

Now that you know some of the basics of video production, go out and play with your camera! It's the best way to learn. Shoot scenes in a variety of situations and then play back and critique your results. Experiment with some of the tips given here – and then try *breaking* the rules to see what you can learn from that experience. (For example, someone decided awhile back that shaky camera movement is "in," so now we see it all the time on national television advertisements and programs.)

SKILL SHEET:

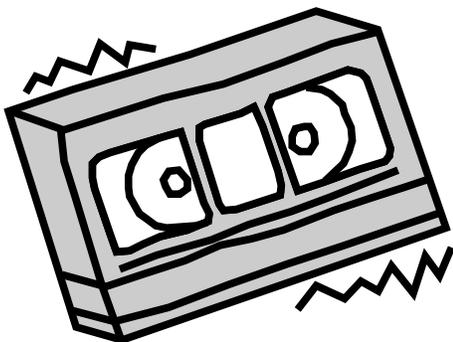
Video Editing



Editing is the art of assembling scenes to create a meaningful story or message on film or video. In the “real world” of video production, editing is a complex process with unlimited creative possibilities. The process of video editing allows you to add elements like computer graphics and music.

When editing, you can arrange the scenes you’ve shot in any order you want with creative transitions and special effects. You may be surprised to learn that, unlike film editing, there is no splicing or touching the tape in video editing. The video editing process is completely electronic. It’s accomplished through multiple tape machines, computers and an operator or “editor” who pushes buttons.

Today, the world of video editing is being completely transformed by new and changing technologies. “Nonlinear editing” has totally revolutionized the way people edit video projects. Nonlinear, computer-based editing allows you to edit high-end, broadcast quality, sophisticated video projects right out of a computer! Video production is an extremely exciting and constantly changing profession!



Getting Started: Editing in the Camera

If you are a beginner or don’t have access to video editing equipment, you can shoot your program in a way that makes it seem edited. This technique is a little tricky because you can’t change your mind once you’ve shot a scene. Preproduction planning and rehearsing are very important.

Editing in the camera means that, after carefully planning your entire video program, you shoot each scene in the order you want it to appear on the finished tape. Every scene is carefully set up so there is no extra or wild footage between shots. Here’s what you do:

1. Carefully plan your video and write a script or storyboard that describes each scene, who will be featured, narration, props and other elements.
2. Before you start taping, have the on-air talent and videographer rehearse each scene to make sure they all know exactly what will happen in every scene. You must begin taping from the beginning of your script and then add each scene in the order that you want it to appear.
3. When you’re ready to “roll tape,” the director alerts everyone by calling out, “Quiet on the set!” The videographer then puts the camera in standby mode so he or she only has to press the record/pause button to begin recording. Then the director says, “Stand by,” and counts down slowly, “Five, four, three...” The director should NOT say “two

and one.” Instead, he or she should hold up those fingers to cue the talent to begin. The camera operator pushes the record button after the director says “three” and begins taping. This ensures that you don’t hear the director counting down on tape. It also ensures that you have the 2-second pause you need for the tape to thread properly before the talent begins to talk.

Be sure the camera operator and talent know what the ending statement or action (called an “out-cue”) is for the scene. The camera operator presses the pause button at that point to stop taping and end the scene.

4. Now you’re ready to shoot the next scene. Leave the camera off until everyone is in place and ready for the next shot. (This works best if it’s within just a few minutes so that the camera stays in **pause** mode.) When you press the record/pause button again to start recording, the next scene will be added on to the last one seamlessly. (If you take a lot of time between scenes, the camera will shut off. Then when you play back your tape, you may see flashes or glitches between scenes.)
5. Don’t shoot anything you don’t want in the final program. Repeat the process of rehearsing and rolling tape only when everyone is prepared and ready to do his or her part. If people make mistakes, try to keep going because you can’t go back and retape scenes when you’re editing in the camera. Use your group’s mistakes or “out-takes” as learning tools so you can all do better next time!

Shooting Techniques

- Shoot only as much of each scene as you really need to get your point across – no more, no less.
- “Match action” between shots or scenes. This means that if you are shooting a wide shot of a scene and then you shoot a close-up or medium shot of the same scene, the positioning of people or props must be the same. For example, if you’re shooting a wide shot of a group of people and then the next scene you want to shoot is a close-up of one of those people, be sure that the person’s body positioning is exactly the same for the close-up as it was in the wide shot. Have you ever noticed mismatched shots in television programs or movies? Just for fun, watch carefully when viewing television programs to see if the director or “continuity” person made sure that the action from one scene to the next is carefully matched. For example, you might see an actor’s arm on the table in one shot, then in the next shot it’s in his or her lap. This looks quite humorous in

dialogue sequences where there are several cuts back and forth between angles.

- Cutaways are another option for adding visual appeal and interest to your tape. A cutaway is a shot that is very different than what was in the previous scene. For example, in one scene the viewer sees a young person on-camera talking about his or her pet. In the next scene, the viewer sees a close-up of the animal and hears the voice of the young person talking about the pet. (To accomplish this, the young person would need to stay off camera but very close to the microphone.)
- Remember that the sound or background noise will cut off every time you press the pause button on the camera to end a scene. If you’re in a noisy environment for one scene and then a quiet one for the next, your tape will sound abrupt at those points. Also, if you have music in one scene and pause the camera while you move into another scene (with or without music), the sound will be choppy and clipped. If you want to have music playing in a scene, have someone slowly fade the music out as part of the scene *be-*

Video Editing Skill Sheet continued

fore you pause the camera to end the scene. It will sound more natural and appealing.

- You can create simple transitions between scenes while editing in the camera. For example, use the fade in and out function on your camera when you want a softer in or out point to a scene.

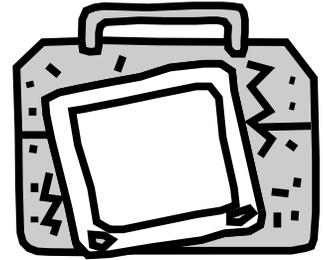
You can also use the manual focus knob to “rack focus” in or out of a scene. A rack focus is when the scene either goes from being clear and in-focus to being blurred, or from blurred to in-focus.

Another transition is a “swish pan.” This is a very quick side-to-side movement of the camera either away from the on-camera action or from the pan to the on-camera action. A slower pan from one person or object to the on-camera action also works as a softer transition between scenes. All of these transition effects can help create a sense of change or of time passing.

(See the “Shooting Your Videos” skill sheet on pg. 139 for more information on lighting, camera movement and sound.)

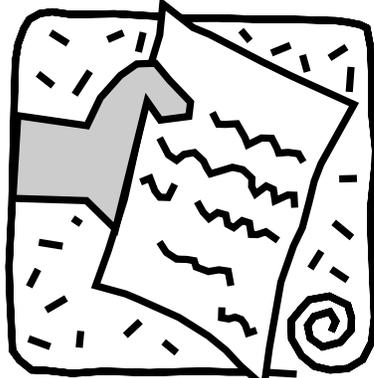
SKILL SHEET:

Writing Skills for Video



This sheet will help you adapt your writing styles to the medium of video. The “Written Communications” section of the **Communications Toolkit** has more in-depth information about improving your written communication skills.

Most of the rules of good writing apply to video scriptwriting. The information written for a narrator to read on tape is called “copy.” The copy can be read from off-camera, so that viewers see some other scene while they hear the narrator. Or the copy can be memorized or read (using cue cards or a cueing device such as a TelePrompTer) so that viewers see the “talent” on-camera as he or she talks. A few tips for adapting writing for video follow. (**Note:** The same rules apply if you’re adapting activities for audiocassette recordings or radio production.)

- 
- A simple line drawing of a hand holding a piece of paper. The hand is on the left side, and the paper is on the right. The paper has some wavy lines representing text. The drawing is done in a sketchy, hand-drawn style.
- Write clearly and simply. Write to be heard.
 - Write in a conversational tone.
 - Keep your sentences short.
 - Use first and second person (for example, “**You** can make a difference...”).
 - Use action verbs such as “join,” “come,” “write” and “buy.”
 - Use words that clearly communicate and conjure up powerful emotional images. Use comparisons and metaphors.
 - Edit your copy. Take out unnecessary words and change verbs to communicate action and present tense.
 - Use a stopwatch to time yourself or your narrator reading the copy. Limit the number of words so that the narrator can easily read the copy within the number of seconds you need. For example, for a 60-second spot or commercial, you’ll probably need to limit the script to about 75 to 100 words. Eliminate words or sentences if the narrator cannot read the copy clearly within the amount of time you want.
 - Read the script aloud and rehearse it before you do any taping. Listen to be sure it’s clear and easy to understand. Read it aloud to someone else and ask if he or she can understand your message. Make any changes you need to keep the message clear, simple, understandable and as powerful as possible.

Sample Video Script

Video scripts typically are sheets of paper divided down the middle. The left column is "Video" (what you see) and the right column is "Audio" (what you hear).

Teens Tell All

VIDEO	AUDIO
Fade in to medium shot of Stephanie in front of school She walks out of shot toward front door of school.	STEPHANIE ON-CAMERA: Hello and welcome to our show, "Teens Tell All." I'm Stephanie and today I'll be taking you on a video tour of Hazelton Middle School. That's where I go, and I know a lot of kids who are anxious to tell you what it's like to go to school here. Well, it's 7:55 on a cold November morning, and our first class starts in 5 minutes. We'd better get inside.
Shot in the hallway with lots of kids milling around at lockers. Close-up of Mark, who's being interviewed by Stephanie	STEPHANIE VOICE-OVER: (MUST SPEAK LOUDLY DIRECTLY INTO MICROPHONE TO BE HEARD OVER BACKGROUND NOISE.) This is the craziest part of middle school. We call it "locker madness." We have to get our books and things before every class and it seems like there's never enough time. MARK: (Mark explains in his own words his feelings about the little time he has once he gets off the bus, gets in school and tries to get what he needs from his locker in time to get to his first class on time. He will try to make his answer about 30 seconds long.)
Stephanie on-camera outside her first class.	STEPHANIE ON-CAMERA: You know, a lot of kids feel that way. Our days start off feeling kind of crazy because we're rushing and worried about being late for our first class. I wonder if they could start school even five minutes later so we'd have time to slow down, say "hi" to our friends for a minute, and ease into our day...? Bell rings and she turns and hurriedly walks into the classroom.

Sample Video Storyboard

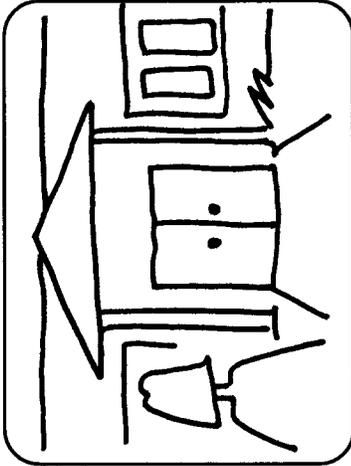
A storyboard is a tool that can help you visualize the action described in your script. It will also help keep you organized as you tape your video. You can put rough sketches in the boxes to represent how each different camera shot will look on screen. Notes describing the shots and transitions can go between the boxes. Write the audio for each shot on the lines below.



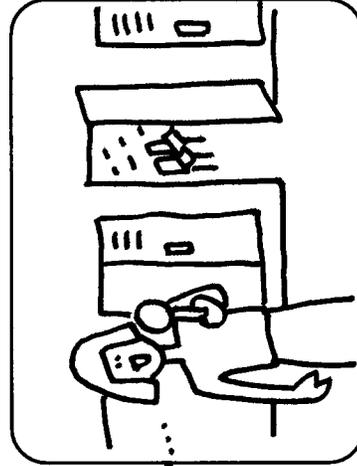
AUDIO: Hello, and welcome to our show, "Teens Tell All." I'm Stephanie and today I'll be taking you on a video tour of Hazelton Middle School.



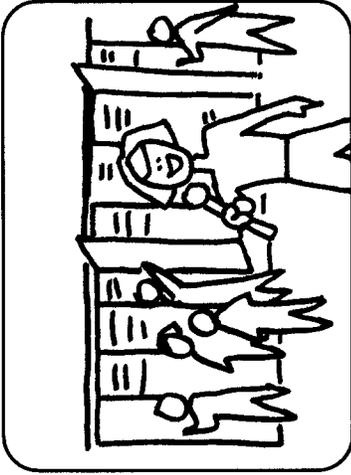
AUDIO: Mark explains feelings about time, bus, locker, 1st class. (30 second interview).



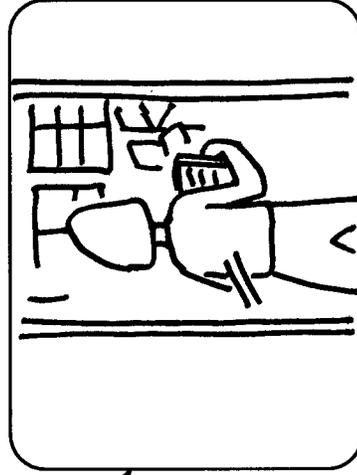
AUDIO: Well, it's 7:55 on a cold Nov. morning, and our first class starts in 5 minutes. We'd better get inside. (walks toward front door)



AUDIO: You know, a lot of kids feel that way... (more thoughts.)



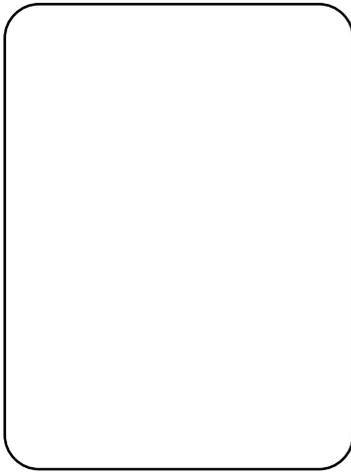
AUDIO: This is the craziest part of middle school. We call it "locker madness." We have to get our books & things before every class & there's never enough time.



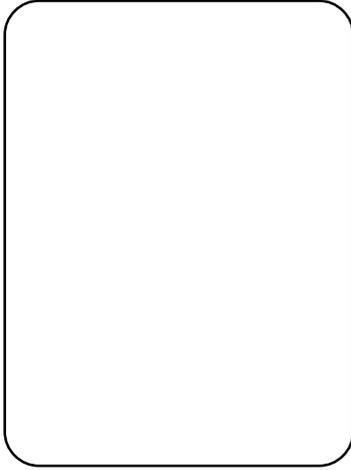
AUDIO: (Bell rings.)

Video Storyboard

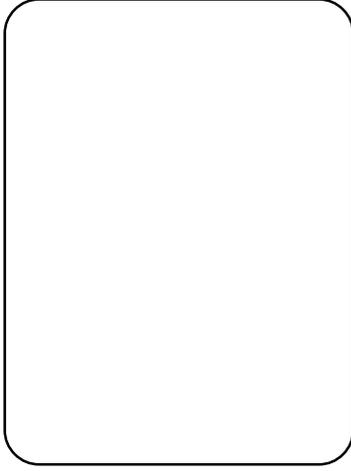
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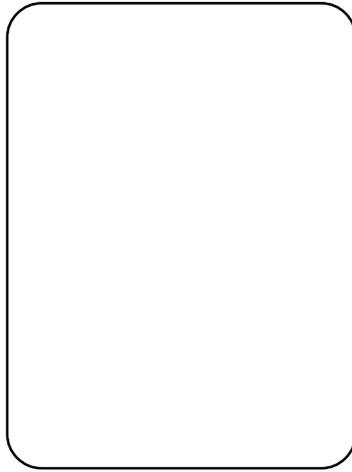
AUDIO: _____



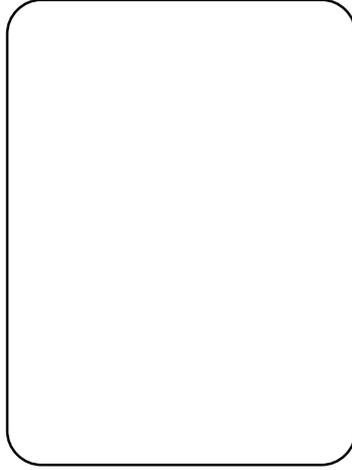
AUDIO: _____



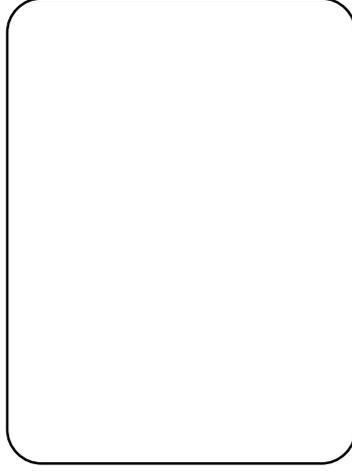
AUDIO: _____



AUDIO: _____



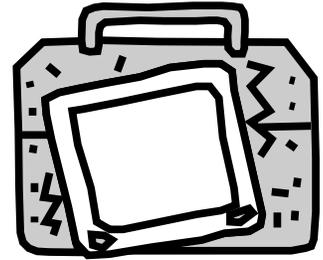
AUDIO: _____



AUDIO: _____

SKILL SHEET:

Speaking Skills for Video



This sheet is designed to help you adapt your speaking style to video. See the “Vocal Expression and Public Speaking” section of the **Communications Toolkit** for more in-depth information about improving your verbal communication skills.

Most of the rules of good speaking and presentation skills apply to video as well. Here are a few tips to help you become a better on-camera presenter, or “talent”:

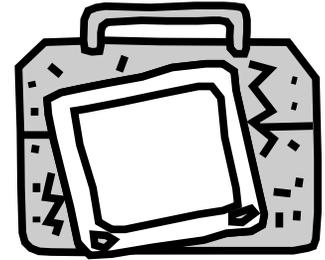
- A strong, confident voice will make your message more believable. Speak up!
- How do you make your voice sound strong and confident? Relax, breath deep, lower your voice and project from your diaphragm. (The diaphragm is the area between your chest and stomach.)
- Vary your pitch, volume and pacing to hold viewers’ interest.
- Try to sound like yourself! Imagine that you’re speaking to a friend rather than to a microphone. Try to avoid sounding like you’re reading a book, monotonous or singsongy.
- Enunciate and speak very clearly.
- Find a comfortable, medium speed. Don’t talk too fast or too slow.
- Exaggerate your delivery and put strong emphasis on key words. Be dramatic!
- Your facial expressions should be appropriate to your words. That is, don’t smile or smirk if the message is serious. Smile and look joyful if the message is positive or heartwarming.

- Stand up straight, look people in the eye and don’t fidget.
- Eye contact is extremely important and powerful. If you want to look directly at your video audience, look at the camera lens as if it were the familiar eyes of your best friend. Don’t let your eyes stray away from the camera lens while it’s recording. Wandering eyes make you look shifty and insecure. Practice by saying your script as you look at an eye-level mark on the wall. As with most things in life, the more you practice, the better you will become at this.
- Use hand gestures only if appropriate. Effective hand gestures come from being relaxed and spontaneous. (Playing with your hair, scratching and rubbing your knuckles are **not** effective hand gestures!)
- If you’re using a hand-held microphone, hold it about four inches away from your mouth.
- *Just do it!* Almost everyone is nervous about speaking in front of groups (and cameras)! The more you do it, the better and the easier it gets. Really!

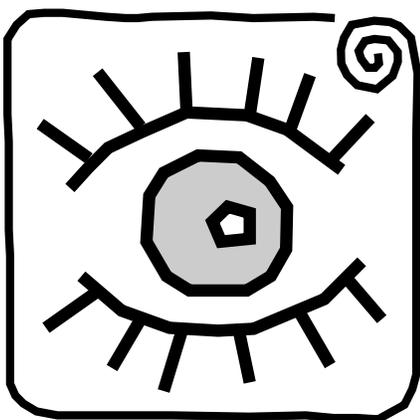


SKILL SHEET:

Graphics for Video



This sheet is designed to give you an idea of how video graphics can be used to get a message across and how the design process works. Read it with your production team, then decide as a group who will be responsible for designing graphics for your video. See the “Visual Communication and Graphic Design” section of the **Communications Toolkit** for more in-depth information about improving your visual communication skills.



The “job” of a video graphic

Video graphics can help reinforce:

- The visual identity for a product so it can be “picked out of the crowd.”
- Where you need to go or call to find the product or service.
- An image for the product or message that is geared to a target audience.
- Identification of the “talent” if it is important to show names.

The Design Process

1. Define the “design problem.” Research and organize the key points you wish to communicate in the graphic.
2. Make “thumbnail” sketches or “roughs.”
3. Get group opinions.
4. Produce final art. (Proofread carefully!)
5. Evaluate how well it worked.

Type Tips

- Medium-weight, sans-serif and thick serif typefaces read best.
- Use small “chunks” of type at a time – don’t overload the screen with information.
- Use upper and lower case – not all upper case.
- Be sure type color and weight contrasts well with the background.
- Choose colors that reinforce your message or product image.
- Use only one type “family” if possible.

- Avoid stacking type vertically or diagonally if you want maximum readability.

Logos and Symbols

You may wish to design a logo or symbol to identify your product. A good logo or symbol:

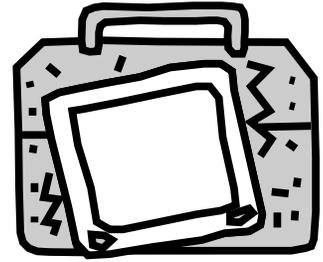
- Has positive associations.
- Provides quick and easy information.
- Can be reduced without losing effectiveness.
- Works in one color.
- Uses negative space well.
- Has “heavy” weight for good contrast with the background and other design elements.
- Shows action or flow (upwards and to the right is the most positive direction.)

And Finally...

- Keep artwork proportional to the video camera image area.
- Be sure to leave enough of a border around the artwork so the paper edge doesn’t show in the shot.

SKILL SHEET:

Interviewing Skills for Video



When you are being interviewed:

- Prepare carefully. Anticipate and be prepared to answer the questions you'll probably be asked.
 - Practice answering questions out loud before the interview. This will help you make sure you like the way your answers sound. Try to keep your answers to 30 seconds or less.
 - Speak at a pace that is neither too fast nor too slow. Find a medium pace that sounds enthusiastic but not hyper.
 - Speak up, articulate each word and don't mumble.
 - Be brief, get to the point quickly and don't ramble.
 - Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions and reactions to your answers. Don't fall into the trap of thinking about what you're going to say next instead of listening.
 - Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. "Speak" with your eyes and facial expressions.
 - Appear confident and relaxed. The best way to accomplish this is by being prepared and by practicing.
- Establish a connection or rapport with the person you're interviewing. Work to gain his or her trust and help him or her feel at ease.
 - Start out with general questions and then move toward more specific, detailed questions.
 - Ask open-ended questions that require longer answers. Avoid questions with "yes" or "no" answers.
 - Whenever you're confused about a response to a question, don't be afraid to ask for clarification. If you're confused, chances are viewers will be confused, too.
 - Listen carefully and maintain eye contact. Give the person enough time to answer your questions. Don't jump in and try to answer questions for the person you're interviewing. Be quiet, nod your head and react with your eyes and facial expressions to what he or she is saying. (Don't let your voice "run over" the interviewee's voice.)

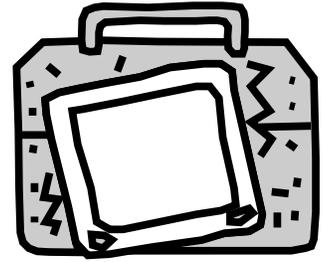
When you're the interviewer:

- Prepare carefully. Gather some background information about the person you're interviewing and prepare questions that help ensure you'll get interesting answers on tape.



SKILL SHEET:

Make the Media Your Partner



Young people who are interested in developing media relations skills have the potential to succeed at getting media attention, because the fact that they are doing the communicating is new and unique in itself. It's important, though, that young people have and use the basic skills they need to be successful. By following these guidelines, young people can increase the chances of the media becoming a partner in helping communicate the messages kids need others to hear, read or see.

Determine Your Audience, Then Find the Best Media Outlets to Reach Them

Once you know who you most need to communicate with, identify the media outlets best suited to help you get your message to that audience. For example, if kids are your primary audience, then you should have a list of all media outlets that cater to youth audiences. Some daily and weekly newspapers have special sections for kids and young people; some broadcast outlets have certain times of the day or special programs when their broadcast offerings cater primarily to kids. Use the same process if your audience is parents, teachers, or other groups. For general news that affects the wider community, most media outlets will be your target.

Identify the Outlet's Most Important Decision-Maker

Remember, you're looking for the person who either writes about your area of interest or edits the section that features your area of interest. Make a list of specific contact people (editors and reporters) for each media outlet that includes:

- Contact person's name
- Accurate mailing address
- Phone number
- Email address
- Title
- Daily, hourly and weekly deadlines
- Best times to reach or call the person

- The way the person prefers to receive information from you

Much of this information can be gained from a phone call or visit once you've identified a specific contact.

Determine the News Value of Your Story

Before contacting media outlets or specific media contacts, make sure your story is news. Ask yourself whether the story is timely, local, important to the larger community, will improve people's lives, is unusual and represents conflict. These are the things that determine what is and isn't news. The most newsworthy story is the one that meets at least one, and preferably more, of these criteria.

Just How Newsy Is It?

- Your youth group had a meeting. *No news value if a routine meeting.*
- Your youth group will have a meeting. *Little or no news value except to participants. Best placed in your group's newsletter and maybe in the community calendar, depending on the size of your group.*
- Your youth group is calling a meeting with city council representatives to discuss the need for a youth center. *Significant news value because of the importance of the topic and the fact that young people are calling the meeting.*
- Two members will represent your club at a state or national meeting. *May be of interest to local media, but would be of more interest depending on purpose of conference or role of the two members at the conference.*

(For more information on deciding news value, see the "News Writing" skill sheet on pg. 20.)

Plan Your Pitch

Before picking up the phone to make your media contact, you should:

- Write out your critical points – the 5 W's and the H (who, what, when, where, why and how), and be sure to localize the topic or issue.
- Identify others who can speak on the topic and be interviewed, if needed.
- Anticipate the questions. Once you've answered the who, what, when, where, why and how, ask yourself what other questions this information might generate and be prepared to answer them. For instance, you might be asked questions such as, "Can you provide proof of your statements?" "Who else is affected by or agrees with your statements?" and "What, if any, time frames affect your story?"
- Have materials available you can share immediately if asked, such as a news release, fact sheets and other background information.
- Practice your pitch to build your confidence in your ability to get your key ideas across quickly.

Make the Pitch

- Make sure you are respecting the media outlet's deadline times. It is best to call or phone after deadline or more than three hours before deadline to be sure the reporter or editor has time to listen to your pitch.
- Be brief! Try to craft your information delivery to take no more than two minutes.

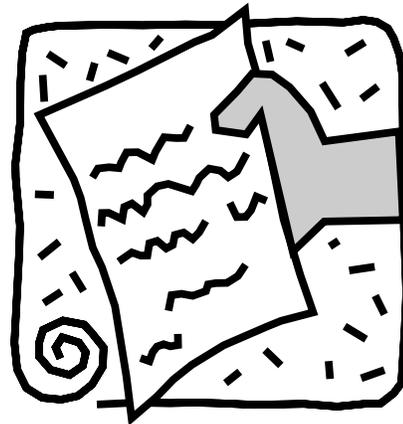
- Be accurate and factual. Never lie to the media. If you make a mistake, be sure to follow up with the reporter or editor quickly to clarify your error. But it's best to be prepared to avoid mistakes.

Be Available

Provide the media with the names and phone numbers of people who can talk to them about your story, day or night. If there are specific times when a contact can best be reached, indicate that information when communicating with your media contacts. Once you've invited the media to be involved with your story, be sure you or someone else can be available to help them get all the information they need.

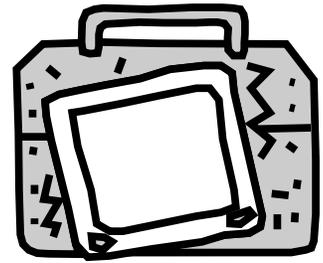
Say Thank You!

When you get great media coverage for your story, take the time to thank the reporter and the editor for the visibility they gave your issue or story. This simple courtesy will help strengthen your media relationships and make you stand out. Surprisingly, reporters and editors don't hear "thank you" enough when they write great stories, so your courtesy would be memorable.



SKILL SHEET:

Safety Rules for Online Time



- I will not send by email or chat, or post on a Web page, personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' or guardians' work address or telephone number, the name and location of my school or my photograph without my parents' permission.
- I will tell my parents or other supervising adult right away if I run into any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents or guardians. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother, father or guardian along.
- I will not answer any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. I will show the message to my parents or other supervising adult right away.
- I will talk with my parents or guardians about setting up rules for going online.
- I will never use bad language or send mean messages online.
- I will never share my password with anyone but my parents or guardians.
- I will not download or copy any files, games or software to my computer without permission from a supervising adult.

Signature

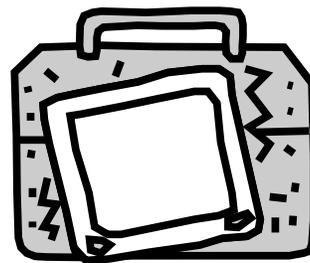
Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Date

ICEBREAKER:

Communication Treasure Hunt



FOCUS:

Building friendships and group cohesiveness

PURPOSE:

- To get kids feeling comfortable with one another
- To assess the group's experiences in various areas of communication
- To explore communication areas the group would like to learn more about

MATERIALS:

- "Find Someone Who..." handout (on pg. 153; one per person)
- Pencils (one per person)

SETTING:

Any

TIME:

10–15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

Review the "Find Someone Who..." handout and decide if you want to make any additions to the handout to accommodate the size of your group.

During the meeting:

1. Tell the kids they're going on a human "communication treasure hunt." Pass out pencils and the "Find Someone Who..." handout and tell them they have about 10 minutes to find people in the group who fit the description listed. Tell them they can use each person only once. (Unless your group is very small.)
2. After about 10 minutes, stop the search and have the kids sit in a circle. Ask if anyone found people for all the descriptions. Ask them to share some of the special things they found out about the communication experiences of people in the group. (For example, ask whether anyone found a person who has sent an email message. If someone has, let that person talk about using email. Find out things like who they sent the message to, what system they used, how hard it was.)
3. Point out that your group has lots of "resource people" who have had a wide variety of experiences in the various communication areas. (If very few young people have had experiences in the areas listed, ask the group if they're interested in learning more about some of the areas.) Use this activity as a springboard into specific areas of communication that your group would like to explore.



(Adapted with permission from the "A Human Treasure Hunt" icebreaker in 4-H 1492, *Inner Space: Interacting with Others*, © 1991 Michigan State University.)

COMMUNICATION TREASURE HUNT HANDOUT:

Find Someone Who...

Find someone in your group who matches these descriptions. Fill in his or her name and the other information that's requested. Remember, you can only use each person once.

Find someone who...

- Has made a speech in front of a group.
- Has created a flier or poster.
- Has written a newspaper article.
- Has been on television.
- Has helped friends resolve a conflict.
- Has been part of a discussion at a meeting.
- Has used a computer to draw a picture.
- Has written a letter to the editor of a newspaper.
- Has sent an email (electronic mail) message.
- Has introduced a guest or speaker at a banquet or event.
- Has written a letter to someone famous.
- Has written a letter to a friend.
- Has been involved in making a video.
- Has used a computer to write a paper for school.

Name:

Group name: _____

Topic: _____

Headline: _____

Program name: _____

Outcome: _____

Discussion topic: _____

Picture subject: _____

Letter topic: _____

Message recipient: _____

Guest's name: _____

Letter recipient: _____

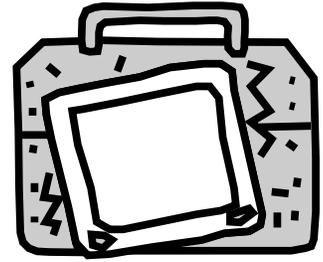
Letter recipient: _____

Video title or subject: _____

Paper topic: _____

ICEBREAKER:

Video Introductions



FOCUS:

- To help the group get to know each other
- To help the kids begin to feel comfortable seeing or hearing themselves on tape

PURPOSE:

- To give kids the chance to introduce themselves to the group
- To incorporate technology into the introduction process
- To give participants the opportunity to see or hear themselves on tape

MATERIALS:

- Camcorder and monitor or audiotape recorder
- Video or audiotape

SETTING:

Any

TIME:

10–15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.

- Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
- Provide feedback in a positive way.
- Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
- Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
- Be considerate of other people's feelings.
- Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.

During the meeting:

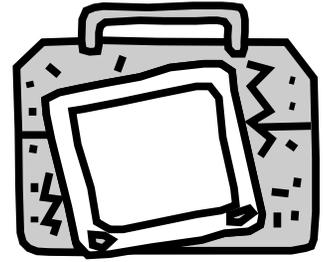
Note to Leaders: This is written as a videotape activity. If you are using an audiocassette recorder, the procedure is the same, except that you'll be using different equipment.

1. Have the group sit in a circle. Explain briefly how to turn the equipment on and off and how to pause the tape. This will help the participants begin to feel comfortable handling the equipment themselves. Tell the group that everyone will have a chance to tape and be taped.
2. Start the group off by asking the person next to you to videotape you. Talk directly to the camera and introduce yourself by saying a few things about your interests or hobbies. Then videotape the person who videotaped you doing the same thing.
3. Continue passing the camera around the circle until everyone has had the chance to tape and be taped.
4. When everyone is on tape, rewind the tape and play it back through the television or monitor. Encourage a quick round of applause after each person appears on camera to help the young people feel good about what they did.



ACTIVITY:

Create a Video Treatment



FOCUS:

Building communication and conceptualizing skills

PURPOSE:

- To help kids learn to work as a team to create a video plan or “treatment.” (You don’t have to actually create the videos unless your group wants to. Simply working on the planning process is a good exercise for the kids!)
- To give kids a chance to practice their writing skills
- To give kids a chance to practice their presentation skills

MATERIALS:

- Paper and pens or pencils (one per person)
- “Create a Video Treatment” handout (on pg. 157; one per person)
- “What I Learned” self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

TIME:

30–60 minutes (depending on the size of your group)

SETTING:

A comfortable room with space for three- to five-person teams

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.

- Listen carefully to other people’s presentations.
- Provide feedback in a positive way.
- Don’t be rude, critical or hurtful.
- Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
- Be considerate of other people’s feelings.
- Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.

During the meeting:

1. Explain to the young people that most film and video programs begin with a “treatment” (a plan or concept). Video treatments are usually created by a team of people who share different perspectives on a topic. Review the “Video, Media and Technology Planning Form” (on pg. 136). Then share something like the following with the group about what video plans or treatments include:

*Video treatments must specify the **objective**, or message you’re trying to convey to your audience. As you develop the treatment, you must work out the concept, or information on how you plan to approach the video. This includes the kinds of images, interviews, spokespersons, story line, music, historic photos and more that you will assemble to craft your message effectively. At this stage, you should try to stay open to creative ideas. (If you’re working on a mock or practice video treatment, the possibilities for what you can plan are virtually limitless!)*

*Ask yourself what the appropriate **length** is for your video to convey your message and meet the needs of your target audience. You also must envision the possible uses for your finished video. Think about who will use it or see it. Will it air on television or be shown at school, club or group meetings? Think about all the ways in which this video could be used.*

2. Divide the group into three- to five-person teams. Pass out pencils or pens and the “Create a Video Treatment” handout.
3. Tell the kids they will have 30 to 40 minutes to create a video treatment. You can either assign them all the same treatment to work on, such as “create a video that helps people get to know our school or club,” or let each group decide what they want to do. (Allow extra

time if they will choose their own topics.) Remind them that they may need to brainstorm on a variety of topics to get started.

LEADERS' HINT: Have the kids follow these rules as they do their brainstorming:

Rule 1: Do not judge ideas!

Rule 2: It's okay to be far-out!

Rule 3: Think of as many ideas as you can.

Rule 4: Piggyback on someone else's ideas.

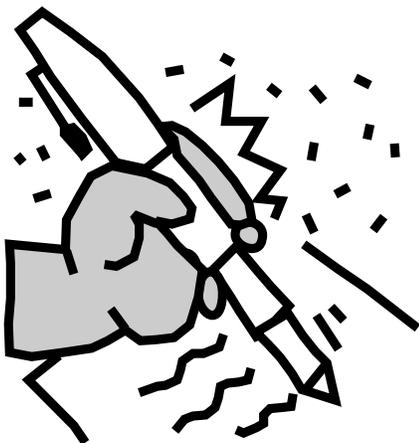
You may want to write these rules on a sheet of newsprint and display it where all the kids can see it.

4. Encourage the groups to work as teams and explain that they should try to reach consensus (group agreement) on their decisions before filling in their forms. Tell them to write their ideas down carefully and completely so someone else reading their treatment would be able to understand it.
5. Explain that when time is up, each group will be asked to present their video treatment to the whole group. Encourage each team member to present a piece of the treatment plan. Explain that they shouldn't simply read from their plan, but should embellish and give more detail than may be given in the written plan.
6. After the teams have finished their video treatments, call the teams together and ask each team to share their plans with the whole group. After each team has presented their treatment, give the other teams a chance to ask questions. Encourage positive feedback and create a fun, nonthreatening environment.

TALKING IT OVER:

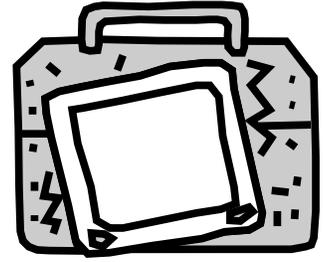
After all the presentations have been completed, ask the kids the following questions:

1. What are the advantages of working as a team to create a video plan or treatment?
2. What are some of the disadvantages?
3. What was it like trying to visualize what your video might look like? Was it easy or hard to do? Why?
4. What did you find interesting about this activity?
5. What were some of the similarities and differences among the video treatments? (The answer to this question can be especially interesting if all the groups worked on the same topic.)
6. If this was an imaginary project: Would your video treatment be different if you were actually going to produce the video? If so, how?
7. If this was an imaginary project: Are you interested in using the same process to begin planning a real video project? (If the answer is yes, set a date and get started!)



VIDEO TREATMENT HANDOUT:

Create a Video Treatment



A treatment is the first step in planning a video project. Work with your group to think through and clarify the following points.

OBJECTIVE:

(What's your message?)

AUDIENCE:

(Whom are you trying to reach?)

CONCEPT:

(What approach will you take?)

LENGTH:

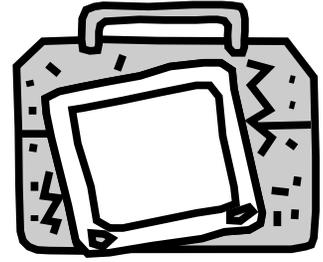
(How long should the video be?)

USES:

(How will this video be used?)

ACTIVITY:

Create a Commercial



FOCUS:

Building communication skills

PURPOSE:

- To introduce kids to the art and technology of video production
- To give kids opportunities to practice writing and speaking skills
- To give kids the opportunity to work in teams
- To give kids opportunities for creative expression

MATERIALS:

- Video camera/camcorder (one is enough but one per group is best)
- Video cassette recorder (VCR) and monitor
- Blank videotapes
- "Writing Skills for Video" skill sheet (on pg. 142; one per team)
- Paper
- Pencils
- Newsprint or other large paper
- Assortment of colored markers
- Masking tape
- Popcorn (optional)
- "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

TIME:

90–120 minutes

SETTING:

A room large enough for small groups to spread out, make noise and work comfortably; break-out rooms or other areas for small groups work best; an extra, quiet room if you have only one camcorder

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

1. This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.
 - Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
 - Provide feedback in a positive way.
 - Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
 - Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
 - Be considerate of other people's feelings.
 - Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.
2. Read through the information related to video provided in "What Leaders Need to Know" and the skills sheets in this section to learn more about video production terms; planning; shooting and editing techniques; and writing, speaking, graphics skills for video. A handout on video production roles is also available on page 165.
3. Decide whether you'll have the group produce short commercials on serious issues they're concerned about, or give them a looser rein to have fun and be wildly creative. (Both options work very well. Consider letting the group decide which direction to pursue.)
4. Make enough copies for each team of the "Writing Skills for Video" skill sheet including the sample script and storyboard forms and extra blank storyboards, or provide blank paper for making scripts and storyboards.
5. Be sure your video camera batteries are charged, that all equipment is in good working order and that you or someone else is very comfortable using the equipment.

During the meeting:

1. Explain to the kids that they will form production teams to create television commercials. Explain that most commercials are 15, 30 or 60 seconds long, and that they quickly, succinctly and creatively sell a product, service or idea. Briefly explain the principles of script writing, speaking and graphics for video. (See the skill sheets on pp. 142, 146 and 147.)
2. Have the group divide into four- to six-person teams. Explain the team approach to video production and that team members will have to decide what specific responsibilities they want to accept.

No Video Equipment?

If you don't have access to a video camera (or just want to start off with a simplified activity), use an audiocassette recorder to do this activity. Talk about radio commercials instead of television. Explain to the kids that they will use their voices, sound effects, music, and more to create a commercial. No need to worry about the visuals or pictures with this version!

Tell them that some possibilities are to write the script, be the director or producer, or be part of the on-air talent.

3. If you're going to let the teams decide the focus of their videos, tell them to decide as a team whether they want to create a public service announcement on a serious issue such as teen violence or pregnancy prevention, or come up with a commercial for a product.
4. Hand out blank paper for script writing, "Writing Skills for Video" skill sheets with storyboard forms, paper and pencils to each team. Tell the teams they're working "on deadline"; they'll have a set amount of time (45 or 60 minutes - your choice) to plan, write, rehearse and tape their videos.
5. If each team has a camera, send them off to quiet spots to plan and produce their videos. If you only have one camera, set up the camera in a "studio" (a quiet room) and have the teams take turns going into the studio when they're ready for taping.
6. After all the teams have taped their videos, have them gather in the larger group. Have the teams take turns playing their videos for the whole group. Ask a representative from each team to introduce their tape and briefly explain what the issue or product is that they are "selling" in the commercial. Provide popcorn if you want to create a fun "premiere" atmosphere. Encourage clapping and positive feedback after each commercial is shown.

TALKING IT OVER:

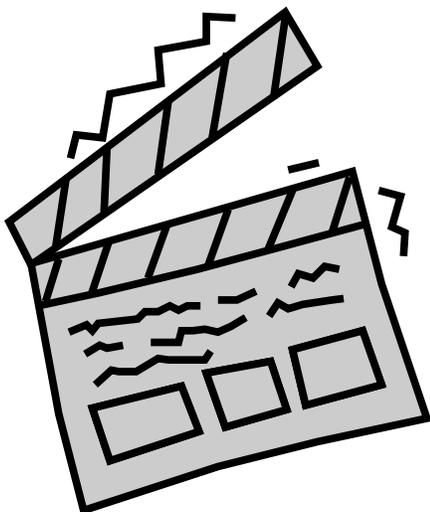
After all the videos have been premiered, encourage the kids to share how they felt about the experience and what they learned from it. Ask the group the following questions:

1. What did you enjoy most about this experience?
2. What things were most challenging?
3. Did anything surprise you about what it's like to work on a team to create a videotape?
4. Would you do anything differently if you were to do it over again?
5. Are you interested in working on other video projects in the future? If so, what kinds of things would you like to do?

TRY THIS, TOO:

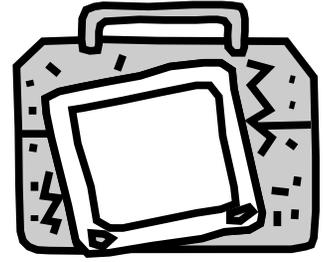
Check out the "Combining and Synthesizing" activity in *Outer Space: Discovering the Inventor in Me* (4-H 1490), which is available for purchase from the Michigan State University Bulletin Office, 10B Agriculture Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1039. The activity has kids combine two unrelated objects, like a tennis ball and a shoe, to create a totally new and different "product." After the teams have created their products, have them create commercials to advertise them.

If your group is interested in creating a video project around a public service issue, contact your local television station and explore the possibility of having them work with your group to get their video project aired. See the "Make the Media Your Partner" skill sheet on page 149 to learn more about how to work effectively with the media.



ACTIVITY:

Create a Talk Show



FOCUS:

Building communication skills

PURPOSE:

- To give kids the opportunity to create a mock television talk show
- To help kids develop interviewing skills
- To give kids the chance to be interviewed on tape and critique their own performances

MATERIALS:

- Video camera/camcorder (one is enough but one per group is best)
- Tripods (optional)
- Hand-held microphones (optional)
- Video cassette recorder (VCR) and monitor
- Blank videotapes (one per team)
- Paper
- Pencils (one per person)
- "Interviewing Skills for Video" skill sheet (on pg. 148; one per person)
- "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

TIME:

45 minutes (longer for large groups)

SETTING:

A room large enough for groups to spread out and work comfortably, and a separate, quiet room for videotaping

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

1. This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.
 - Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
 - Provide feedback in a positive way.
 - Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
 - Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
 - Be considerate of other people's feelings.
 - Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.
2. Read through the activity and familiarize yourself with the "Interviewing Skills for Video" skill sheet. Make enough copies of it to distribute to your group. You may also wish to review the information related to video provided in "What Leaders Need to Know" and the skills sheets in this section to learn more about video production terms; planning; shooting and editing techniques; and writing, speaking, graphics skills for video. A handout on video production roles is also available on page 165.
3. Be sure your video camera batteries are charged, that all equipment is in good working order and that you or someone else is very comfortable using the equipment. Kids love using hand-held external microphones for interviews, so use them if you have them. You will need to have one person per camera to serve as camera operator. Don't forget that teen leaders make great videographers!

Leader's Hint: This activity can be as simple or as complex as you and your group want to make it. For example, the kids may want to create sets, costumes, masks and graphics, or use music to add fun and creativity to the experience.

During the meeting:

1. Explain to the group that they will each have the opportunity to be the interviewer and the guest on a television talk show that they will create. Tell them that they will need to decide whether they will portray themselves, another person (such as a politician, sports figure or actor) or a completely fictional character. Ask them to think about what television talk shows typically look like and to be creative as they plan and design theirs.



No Video Equipment?

If you don't have access to a video camera (or just want to start off with a simplified activity), use an audiocassette recorder to do this activity. Talk about using their voices, sound effects, music, and more to give clues about who is being interviewed! No need to worry about the visuals or pictures with this version!

2. Distribute the "Interviewing Skills for Video" skill sheet and briefly discuss the key points. Explain that their interviews will be done in a television talk show type setting. The interviews will help to establish who the guest is and explore interesting things about the guest. Each interview should be about 2 minutes long.
3. Ask the kids to choose a partner (preferably someone they don't know very well) and decide who will be the interviewer first. Give them about 10 minutes of "think time" for the guests to decide on their characters and for the hosts to develop questions for the interview. Both people need to prepare to be the interviewer and the guest because they will switch roles.
4. Have the teams take turns videotaping their interviews in the "studio" (a quiet room) so the other teams can't see or hear the taping sessions. If you have several cameras, set up several taping areas to save time. Give both partners a chance to be the host (interviewer) and the guest. Remember to limit each interview to 2 minutes.
5. When all of the teams have been taped, call the whole group together and distribute the "What I Learned" self-evaluation forms. Tell the kids that when their segments are shown, they should watch themselves and make a few quick notes on their handout. (Tell them that this self-evaluation is for their eyes only. It is just a way to help them focus on and think about their own presentation and interviewing skills, and to identify possible areas of improvement.)
6. Play back the interviews one at a time. After each interview, have one of the partners ask the whole group to first guess whether the characters are "fact or fiction" (real or made-up) and then to guess who they are supposed to be. Encourage clapping and positive feedback after each segment.

TALKING IT OVER:

After all the interviews have been aired, ask the group the following questions:

1. Did you enjoy the experience? Why or why not?
2. Which did you enjoy best - being the interviewer or the guest?
3. Did anything surprise you about how you looked and sounded on tape?
4. What kinds of real-life situations might you find yourself in where you are either the interviewer or the one being interviewed?
5. Did you learn anything new about being in these kinds of situations?

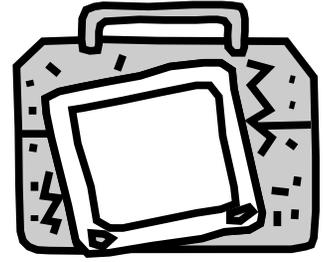
TRY THIS, TOO:

Your group may be interested in exploring other video and television possibilities. For example, many youth groups produce television talk shows that air on local cable access stations. (Cable access stations are required by law to provide equipment, training, studios and air time to local groups that want their voices heard through television in the community.) Your group may want to produce shows that explore issues that concern kids their age, promote community activities for kids, or do something you've never thought of! See the "Make the Media Your Partner" skill sheet on page 149 to learn more about how to work effectively with the media.

PROJECT:

Get Real!

Produce a Documentary



FOCUS:

Building communication skills

PURPOSE:

- To increase kids' knowledge and experience in video production
- To give kids experience producing a documentary
- To help kids produce a videotape that can be used as a project
- To give kids the opportunity to express themselves in creative ways
- To give kids the opportunity to work in teams to complete a task

MATERIALS:

- Video camera/camcorder
- Blank videotapes
- "Video Editing" skill sheet (on pg. 140; one per person)
- "Writing Skills for Video" skill sheet (on pg. 142; one per person)
- "Video Production Roles" handout (on pg. 165; one per person)
- Paper
- Newsprint (large paper) and markers
- Pens or pencils (one per person)
- Paper
- "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

1. Read through the information related to video provided in the introduction and skills sheets in this section to learn more about video production terms; planning; shooting and editing techniques; and writing, speaking and graphics skills for video. A handout on video production roles is also available on page 165. The "Video Editing" skill sheet will help familiarize you with how to edit in your camera.
2. Read the "How to Brainstorm" information found on page 5 and familiarize yourself with the process.
3. Make enough copies for each team of the sample script and storyboard forms and extra blank storyboards, or provide blank paper for making scripts and storyboards.
4. Be sure your video camera batteries are charged and that all equipment is in good working order. You or someone else should be very comfortable using the equipment.

During the meeting:

BRAINSTORMING

1. Explain to the group that they will be working together to produce a documentary. A documentary presentation is a film or video that shares information or tells a story of real people and situations. (A documentary typically uses no actors or rehearsed lines.) Ask the group to brainstorm as many ideas for their documentary as possible. If they need help getting their creative juices flowing, here are some possibilities to help them get started:
 - Our Community: Is There Enough for Kids to Do?
 - Love/Hate: What Kids Think About School
 - How to Be a Better Parent: A Kid's Perspective
 - How to Be a Better Teacher: Kids' Advice for Teachers
 - Public Art in Our Community: Where Is It? What Does It Mean?
 - The History of Our Community
 - The Story of Our Town's Oldest Citizen
 - The Power of Computers: How Are They Being Used in Our Community?
 - A Day in the Life of a Dog
 - A Day in the Life of a Student at (Your) School
 - What Kids Can Learn Through 4-H
 - We're Off to the Fair: The Experiences of (Any) Club

TIME:

At least one or two planning meetings and a day or two for shooting scenes; a follow-up meeting is needed to view and discuss the final product and process

SETTING:

The planning meeting can be in any quiet room large enough to accommodate your group. The video shoots will most likely take place out in the community, wherever the group decides will work best for their production.



- Are We Safe? The Real Story About Violence in Our Community
- On the Job: A Look at (Any) Profession

After spending 15 to 30 minutes brainstorming and discussing ideas, help the group choose one topic that they're all interested in working on. If the group cannot reach consensus, they may need to vote or pull a topic from a hat.

PLANNING

2. Have the young people work together to plan their documentary. They'll need to talk about and decide on the following:

- What are the "big ideas" or questions they'd like to answer in their video? (For example, if the subject is violence in the community, the areas that they might choose from are violence against kids, violence by kids, real and perceived threats, how violence is perpetuated, violence in the media or how kids and others can help increase the peace and stop the violence in their communities.) It's best to focus on three or four main ideas rather than to try to say everything there is to say about a topic.
- What kinds of people or perspectives should they include in the video to help share information and tell the story? (For example, in a video about violence, the young people could interview a local police officer or sheriff, crime victims, parents of crime victims, mall security guards, criminal justice people, prevention-focused experts who have ideas about stopping violence, and, of course, other young people.)
- Should the video include narration or a voice-over to help tell the story? On- or off-camera narration can help bridge ideas and settings. If there will be narration, who will write it and who will say it? Will they say it on or off camera? Where within the overall documentary will it be best to add narration?

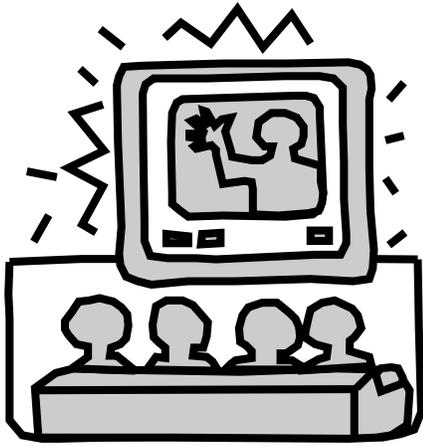
PRODUCTION ROLES

3. Distribute the "Video Production Roles" handout and review it with the group. Have the group decide which jobs or roles each person will accept. If your group is small, each person may need to take on several roles.

SCRIPTING AND STORYBOARDING

4. All film-making and video production requires careful planning. Some producers create outlines. Others create scripts or storyboards. All of these are tools to help producers put ideas on paper and create a plan for getting the film or tape completed. Your group can choose any of these options. Hand out blank paper for script writing or outlines, the "Writing Skills for Video" skill sheets containing storyboard forms, and paper and pencils to your group.

Typically, in documentary production, a complete and detailed outline is created and then all video interviews and scenes are shot. Afterwards, the writer or editor looks at everything on tape and decides how the many pieces can be put together – along with narration, music and graphics – to present the story effectively. If you



have access to editing equipment (many local cable access companies will provide people with free training and equipment), that's how you can proceed. For a more simplified project, "editing in the camera" is an option. (See the "Video Editing" skill sheet on pg. 140.) When this technique is used, the program is complete when you finish shooting the last scene. (Consider using editing in the camera as an introductory experience with documentary and other video production. If this technique piques your group's interest, perhaps they can move into more advanced projects that involve editing and post-production work. See "Beyond the Toolkit: More Ideas and Resources" on pg. 137 for ideas on how to take your video projects further.)

SHOOTING THE VIDEO

5. When the group has clearly defined what people, places and narration (if any) will be in their tape and has created a script or storyboard, then they are ready to begin scheduling one or more shooting days. If your group is editing in the camera, they will need to shoot the scenes, add narration, and tape all interviews in the order in which they want those features to appear on the tape. The "Video Editing" skill sheet discusses how to shoot so that the tape has an edited "feel" to it even though it is not edited.

WHEN THE VIDEO IS DONE

6. Creating a movie "premiere" atmosphere is always lots of fun. Consider serving popcorn or other treats and celebrate the group's accomplishment. See if the group is interested in sharing the tape with parents, friends, teachers and others.
7. Have the kids fill out the "What I Learned" self-evaluation form on page 8. Ask them to reflect privately on what they learned in producing their documentary.

TALKING IT OVER:

Ask for volunteers to share what they learned with others in the group. Ask the group the following questions:

- What would you do differently if you were beginning again?
- Would you like to "begin again" by planning to produce more videos in the future?
- How could this documentary be used as a communication or teaching tool?
- Would the topic of the documentary interest parent or teacher groups?
- Would you like to enter your documentary in the county fair or other contest?

TRY THIS, TOO:

- Contact a local television station or cable access station to see whether they would be interested in airing the documentary. See the "Make the Media Your Partner" skill sheet on page 149 to learn more about how to work effectively with the media.
- Contact your county Extension office to see if they would be interested in incorporating the video into training for adults that helps them better understand kids' perspectives.

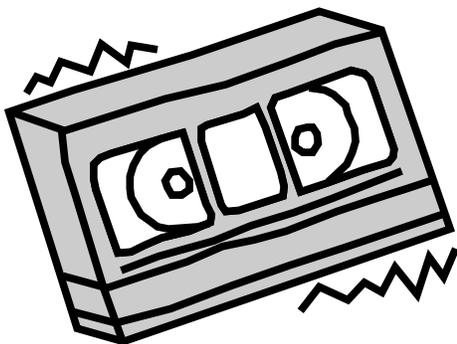
GET REAL! PRODUCE A DOCUMENTARY HANDOUT:

Video Production Roles

The following roles or jobs are part of most video production projects. As you work together to create your video, you will need to decide who will do what, so that all tasks are accomplished. If your group is small, each person may need to have more than one job. (This isn't unusual even in the "real world" of video production.)

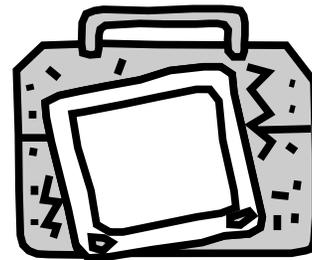
Some people are better suited to specific kinds of roles. For example, if someone in your group is artistic, that person may make a good graphic artist for your project. Allow the group members to experiment with roles and fill a variety of jobs.

- **Producer** – The person who gives overall leadership to the content, message, audience and objectives of the production. The producer coordinates many aspects of the production, such as setting up shoot days for taping on location and making sure that all the production tasks are assigned and completed. The producer also is responsible for the budget and timeline. It's his or her responsibility to see that the production is done on schedule and within a predetermined budget.
- **Director** – The person who gives overall leadership to the location video shooting. The director "directs" the on-air talent and instructs the person operating the camera (videographer) as to the type of shots to get and when to roll tape. The director is the person who calls out that most famous of movie-making lines, "Action!"
- **Scriptwriter** – The person who writes the script, copy, narration or voice-over for a film, commercial, television show or video.
- **Talent** – The people whose voices or faces appear on-camera; also called "on-air talent."
- **Graphic Artist** – The person who designs and creates visuals to enhance and support the message.
- **Videographer** – The person who operates the video camera.



ACTIVITY:

Offline Chat About Online Time



FOCUS:

Using the Internet safely and appropriately

PURPOSE:

To help participants learn to respond appropriately to situations that might arise while using the Internet

MATERIALS:

- "Internet Statements" handout (on pg. 168) copied onto scrap paper or 3-inch by 5-inch index cards
- 8½-inch by 11-inch "Agree" and "Disagree" signs (one of each per person; optional)
- "Safety Rules for Online Time" skill sheet (on pg.151; one per person)
- "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

SETTING:

Room with movable chairs

TIME:

15 to 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

1. Read the "Computers and the Internet" information on pages 131 to 135 of this section.
2. Copy the Internet Statements handout and cut out each of the statements or copy the statements onto 3-inch by 5-inch cards. Review the leader information for each statement.
3. Prepare "Agree" and "Disagree" signs (optional).

During the Meeting:

1. Arrange the group in a circle. Go around the circle and ask participants to say whether they have used the Internet before and what they used it for. (If participants have never used the Internet, you could ask if they know someone who has or if they have an idea what the Internet is and what they might use it for.)
2. Tell the group that they are going to get some statements about the Internet to read. Then they'll say whether they agree or disagree with the statements and why. Pass the statements around the group. Have each participant read and respond to a statement. Invite the rest of the group to respond to and discuss each statement after the individual presenting the statement has had a chance to do so.

TRY THIS, TOO:

Pass out one "Agree" and "Disagree" sign to each person. After an individual reads and responds to a statement, have the other participants hold up the sign that matches their opinion of the statement.

TALKING IT OVER:

Remind the group that the Internet is just like the "real world" – there are places that are educational and fun for young people to visit and others that are inappropriate. Just as they should be wary of strangers they meet face-to-face, they should also be wary of people they meet online. Ask them to brainstorm some rules they think families should have for online use and why. Pass out copies of the "Safety Rules for Online Time" skill sheet and read it together. Based on what they brainstormed, ask if there are any rules they think should be added to the list.

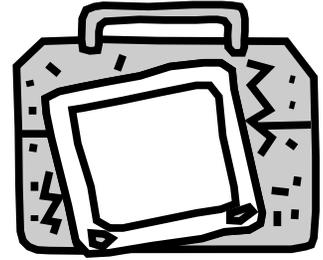
Remind the group that they also are responsible for their own behavior online and that using bad language or saying mean things to others online is irresponsible. (And could cause their Internet privileges to be cut off!) Ask them to brainstorm some situations where behavior on the Internet could create bad feelings or be a problem.



WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Have your group look for and discuss current news stories on Internet safety involving young people. Have your group investigate ways that people who violate the safety of children on the Internet can be reported. The group could create a public service announcement, poster, flier, Web page or other communications piece that informs kids about Internet safety issues.

OFFLINE CHAT ABOUT ONLINE TIME HANDOUT: Internet Statements



STATEMENT 1:

People can say anything they want when they're on the Internet because nobody really knows who they are or can find them. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Statement 1 Leader Information:

False! Every computer has a unique numerical address (called an Internet Protocol or "IP" address) that can be traced. The IP address is transmitted as part of any Internet message that is sent. One way that people who have sent objectionable material over the Internet have been caught is by the authorities using the IP address to trace the computer they used. This can help "narrow the list of suspects," and in many cases, has led to the culprit being identified and caught.

STATEMENT 2:

All information on the World Wide Web is checked by the U.S. government to make sure it's factual. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Statement 2 Leader Information:

False! The World Wide Web contains information created by individuals, educational institutions, businesses, organizations and governments all over the world. Anyone with a computer, the appropriate software and server space can put a Web page online. The reader is responsible for judging whether the information is accurate or how it might be biased by looking at the source and deciding if it is credible or not. The last three digits of a URL or Web address can sometimes provide a clue to the source. For example, gov=government; edu=education; org=organization; com=commercial business; mil=military; net=network. Keep in mind that most college students can create personal Web pages with the "edu" ending on the URL, so "edu" doesn't necessarily mean educational content.

STATEMENT 3:

It's okay to tell someone my name and address or phone number or send someone my picture when I'm on the Internet. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Statement 3 Leader Information:

Young people should never send personal information without their parent's or guardian's permission! This also applies to posting personal contact information or photos on Web pages.

STATEMENT 4:

When I'm using the Internet, if someone sends me a message that makes me feel uncomfortable the first thing I should do is (pick one):

- Ignore it
- Tell my parent or supervising adult
- Respond and tell the person to stop bothering me
- Tell my friends

Statement 4 Leader Information:

*The first response should be to tell a parent or supervising adult. **Never** respond in any way to messages that make you feel uncomfortable. Paying attention to the sender may escalate his or her messages.*

STATEMENT 5:

It's okay to let my best friends know my password. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Statement 5 Leader Information:

False! Just as you would never share a credit card number, never share your password. Having your password will give another person access to your email and Web privileges.

STATEMENT 6:

When I run into things on the Internet that are offensive I should (pick one or more):
a. Get out of the offensive area
b. Tell my parent or other supervising adult
c. Tell my friends

Statement 6 Leader Information:

The best response is to immediately leave the offensive area (don't click on any links that would go further) and to tell a parent or supervising adult what happened.

STATEMENT 7:

I can copy anything (for example: text, graphics, games) I find on the Internet because it's all free information.

Statement 7 Leader Information:

False! Just because you can read it for free doesn't mean that you have the legal right to copy or use it on your personal Web page. Assume that everything on the Internet is copyrighted (that is, protected from copying by United States and international law, even if it doesn't have a copyright notice). Unless the person or organization posting it indicates you have permission to copy, assume that you will need to ask for permission!

STATEMENT 8:

It's okay to copy my friend's email message to me and send it to someone else.

Statement 8 Leader Information:

This is a great way to get in trouble with your friends! Only copy someone's personal correspondence to you and send it to someone else with permission from the original sender.

STATEMENT 9:

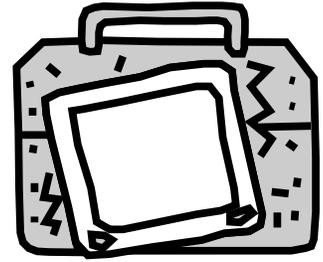
Email is private and nobody can find out what I say in it except the person who receives it.

Statement 9 Leader Information:

False! Don't assume that all email is private. For example, your message can easily be forwarded to others or printed and shared. The forward and reply features in many email programs put an automatic copy of the original message at the end of your forward or reply unless you turn off that feature. Try not to put anything in your email that you would be embarrassed to share with others!

PROJECT:

Electronic Pen Pals



FOCUS:

Using technology to practice communications skills and build friendships

PURPOSE:

- To get kids thinking about communication technologies available to them
- To give kids creative ways to practice writing and speaking skills
- To give kids opportunities to build new friendships with young people living in other parts of their state, country or world

EQUIPMENT:

The equipment you'll need will depend on the technology you and the kids decide to use or what is available to your group. Consider one or more of the following:

- Audiocassette recorder and blank audiotapes
- Camcorder, VCR/monitor and blank videotapes
- Computer with telephone hookup or modem and Internet access with email communications software
- Interactive video classroom (Many schools, community colleges and intermediate school districts [ISDs] have access)

MATERIALS:

- Newsprint or other large paper
- Markers
- Paper
- Pencils
- "What Technology is Right for Your Project" leader background (on pg. 171)
- "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

PROCEDURE:

1. Several technologies are available to you for helping kids develop "electronic pen pals." Ask your group to brainstorm all the technologies they can think of that enable people to communicate with one another (some examples include telephones, computers, fax machines, videos, audiotapes, videophones; refer to the "What Technology is Right for Your Project" leader background on page 171). List them on newsprint or large paper.
2. Ask the kids the following questions:
 - What technologies would be most appropriate for building long-distance friendships?
 - What methods would work best for this group? (Suggest that they consider what equipment they have access to, the size of group, the time commitment needed to use a given technology, and so on.)
 - Does anyone in this group own or know someone who owns a video or still camera, a tape recorder or a computer?
 - Could the group borrow equipment from a friend or family member, from a school, from the county Extension office or from a local business?
3. Once the group has chosen a communication method and acquired the equipment they will use, give them opportunities to "play" (carefully!) with the equipment to become familiar and comfortable with using it.
4. Ask the young people from what area of the state, country or world they would like to meet other kids. Brainstorm with the kids ways in which they could find other kids their age to get to know electronically. Here are some ideas:
 - Extension offices in each county of the country have lists of 4-H clubs. A county staff person may be able to suggest an interested club. Extension has many international programs, and your county Extension staff may be able to help you connect with a youth group in another country. If your groups don't speak the same language, you'll need to arrange interpreters.
 - Contact the school district.
 - Contact other youth groups in your area, such as scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA or YWCA.
 - Design a newspaper ad inviting other kids to be involved in your electronic pen pal project. Ask the newspaper in the community where you are recruiting pen pals to donate space for your ad. If the paper is unable to donate space, ask a local business to sponsor your ad or conduct a fund-raiser to earn the money you need to buy space.
 - Network. Talk to relatives and other people you know in other cities for suggestions on links you could make with kids.

ELECTRONIC PEN PALS LEADER BACKGROUND:

What Technology Is Right for Your Project?

Audiotapes

Audiotapes are good tools for sharing among friends because the technology is familiar to most people and readily available. Your group could choose to interview each other on tape or simply share a minute or so about themselves. Have your group try ending the tape with questions directed at the friends on the receiving end. This will encourage a response and give them something with which to get started. Encourage your group to carefully think through how they want to present themselves on tape – how they will start and end the tape, what questions they want to ask of the other kids and so on. Having a plan is very important and will help ensure that they are pleased with their final tape. The cost of mailing an audiotape is very reasonable so this technology is appealing from a budget standpoint as well! You may want to make a copy of the tape before mailing it if you or the group wants to keep a record of your project.

Videotapes

Videos are good tools for exploring friendships at a distance because you can *see* one another and each others' surroundings. Video pen pals can be from across the world or across the county. Perhaps if your group lives in the city you would like to get to know and better understand kids who live on a farm or in a rural area, or vice versa. Once you've located another group that wants to build a friendship through video, write a list of questions that both groups can respond to on tape. Consider ending the tape with questions about things that the kids in your group want to know about the other group of kids. This will help encourage a return tape. When you get a tape from the other group, watch it with your group. Take time to reflect on and talk about what was shared. Have your group think about the answers to the following questions:

- What did you learn about the young people and their lives?
- How does this group seem similar to you?
- How are they different?
- What else would you like to know about them?

Video tours of homes, schools, communities ("a day in the life..." approach) might be a good way for

both groups to share. Perhaps the next step is an adult-supervised face-to-face meeting with your group's new friends!

Computer Networks

If you or anyone in your group has access to the Internet or a commercial computer network, it's easy to get to know people through a computer! Your group can have real-time online "chats" with young people across the country or across the world. An advantage of using computers for building electronic friendships is that everyone is kind of "on equal ground." You can't see or hear each other, so you can start to get to know each other without preconceived notions. You communicate using the computer keyboard and type your questions and answers as you go along. Commercial networks have "chat rooms" or directories that target kids. (Hint: This activity will work best if the young people in the group have some typing ability and good writing skills.)

SAFETY NOTE: Remember that kids should be supervised as they use computer networks, because they may be able to access information that's not intended for young people. Read the "What Leaders Need to Know About Internet Safety," information on page 134 and "Safety Rules for Online Time" skill sheet on page 151.

Have your group write a list of questions in advance and encourage another group to "meet" online at a particular date and time. (This meeting should be adult supervised.) Everyone in your group should have the chance to type and respond to questions.

Keep in mind a whole new language of words and icons has emerged on the "Net." People tend to communicate in short abbreviated ways on networks. (See the Internet Glossary on pages 133 and 134.) Ask for clarification if you don't understand a particular message. You could type, for example, "I'm new at this! What does that mean?"

