

# Video Production: Producing a Video Commercial

## Introduction

Graphic Communications Technology includes all of the technologies used to communicate a **message** that will inform or influence people into taking some action. The message may be communicated in many different ways, or media; however, one of the most influential technologies in today's technical world is the **medium** of television.

Imagine a politician who could not use television to tell the public about his or her campaign. What would be the chance of success in today's society, where constant exposure to the media is a fact of life? Why do you think a national television network can charge ten thousand dollars a second for commercial television time during events like the Super Bowl? What impact does the media, particularly television, have on our society?

In this activity you will discover the elements of a television commercial and the technologies involved in producing a short video **commercial**. The production of a short television commercial is much more complicated than you may think. It involves more than placing a video camera in front of an actor and taping the commercial as the actor performs. You will learn how to write an audio script; visualize the video portion; and combine the special effects, titles, and stills you will produce. Then you will use a camera and "studio" to tape your video. You will also have to learn how to edit and produce a finished version ready for the market.

For this activity you will be working with a "production crew" of four students who will need to work cooperatively in order to produce the video. Your team will be producing a video program

that will be used to promote Technology Education in your school. You may also choose to enter your video in the Promotional Communications Competitive event for the Technology Student Association chapter in your school.

## Job Description

You are a member of a **production crew** whose task is to develop a three-minute video commercial that can be used to promote either the technology education program at your school or technology education in general. The commercial should inform the **audience** as to what technology education is all about. It may also be used to influence students to select a technology education course as part of their schedule for the following school year. If you are going to enter your video production in the TSA Promotional Communications event, your video will need to promote the Technology Student Association.

## Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

For this activity you will need the following equipment, materials, and supplies:

video camera	blank audio tape
blank VHS tape	stop watch
VCR and monitor	formatting the
video editing deck	program form
studio lighting	sample program script
(optional)	sample drop cards
cassette tape recorder	blank drop cards

## Getting Started

You will receive examples of production material that will give you an idea how a production script

looks. Review these materials; see how the sequence of events developed and how the **visual** (picture) and **audio** (sound) portions were created. The sample materials included in the handouts show you a way to develop your ideas. They include the following:

- Sequence of Events
- Program Outline
- Detailed Sentence Outline
- Fully Scripted Program

## Formatting Your Production

1. Decide the type of **program** you want to produce. What is the purpose of your video? What do you want to communicate?

2. On a blank sheet of notebook paper, prepare an outline of the **sequence of events**. Describe the action. Study the sample on the handout to see what a sequence of events should look like.

3. Discuss the ideas you have with your production crew. Are your ideas compatible with the **theme** or purpose of your video?

4. Now you must prepare a **program outline**. Once again, refer to your handout to see a sample outline. Notice that it contains both visual and audio elements. Will your video require music, scripted dialogue, still pictures, titles, or action sequences?

5. After you have the program outline, prepare a **detailed sentence outline**. These are sentences (complete thoughts) that describe the action, music, and visuals that will appear in your production. Refer to the sample on the handout.

6. If you are doing the video for the TSA competition, what are the specific requirements? What is the maximum length of the **spot**?

## Writing Your Program Content

1. Read through your sentence outline. Discuss your ideas with your production crew. Omit ideas that don't seem to fit, or, if necessary, add ideas. The **content** (ideas and action) should flow smoothly from one idea to another. Make sure these transitions are logical.

2. Study the handout for a sample of a written content. Your director will assign each member one sequence from the outline. Begin expanding your outline into the first rough draft with sentences and paragraphs for each idea in your outline.

3. Rework and revise the drafted content. Read the ideas in your group. Make any changes or corrections suggested by the crew.

4. Rewrite the copy, making sure all sequences are logical and that the action flows from idea to idea.

## Visualizing the Content

1. Study the sample **script** on the handout; it contains the video and the audio portions of the program. Use the video content in the left column as a guide in writing your visual script. Study your written content, listing each character, performer, or object that will be shown. Anything the audience will see should be listed.

2. Figure 1 contains sample **drop cards**; these are drawn illustrations, titles, or visuals that you might create for your production. If you will be using drop cards, these should be produced next.

3. Assign numbers in sequence to pictures or information mounted on drop cards. (Example: P #1, P #2)

4. Give slides (color transparencies) or **stills** a separate number sequence. (Example: S #1, S #2)

5. Action sequences should also be given a separate number sequence. (Example: A #1, A #2)

6. Estimate the time in seconds each visual will be shown and mark accordingly.



Figure 1 - Sample Drop Cards

## Writing the Audio Script

1. Study the sample script again. Review the written content for your program. Next, review the video portion of your written script.
2. On blank paper, write the **dialogue** for any performers or narrators required for your program.
3. Check the content of your program and identify any **sound effects** or music required. Depending on your requirements, record sound effects or music segments onto a cassette tape.

## Timing Sound Elements

1. The director will use a stopwatch to time any of the audio elements prepared. Read the dialogue aloud, timing each segment. Play back sound effects and music segments, timing each.
2. The running time of your audio including music, sound effects, dialogue, and narration will give you a good idea of the length of your video. Add up the audio elements. Remember you have a three-minute time limit.

If your timing exceeds the three minute limit, you must edit the content or quicken the pace.

## Writing the Production Script

The **production script** contains the audio and video portions, but adds the camera techniques and special instructions. Here is where you plan what the camera will capture on your tape.

1. Study the sample production script on the handout. Notice it contains the directions for the audio technician and the camera angle and location. In the column titled **shot** is a description of what the camera operator will shoot. You can also describe the location of the shot in this column if you are going to take shots outside the studio.
2. Complete a production script for your video. Plan the location of each camera shot. Refer to Figure 2 for basic camera shots; these should appear in your script.

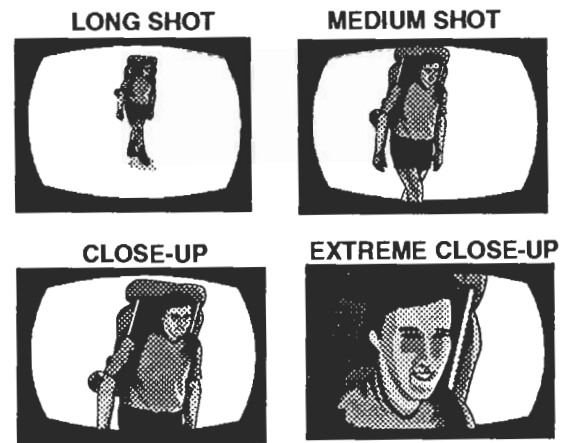


Figure 2 - Basic Camera Shots

3. Study Figure 3 on the direction of camera movement. Think about the position of the camera for each of your shots. What will be in the background?

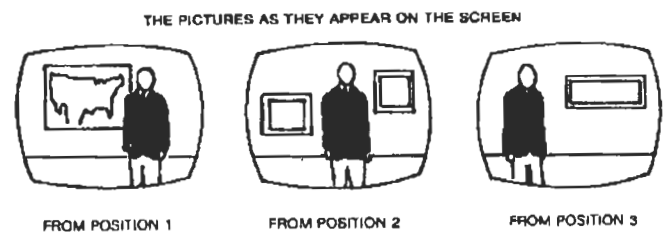
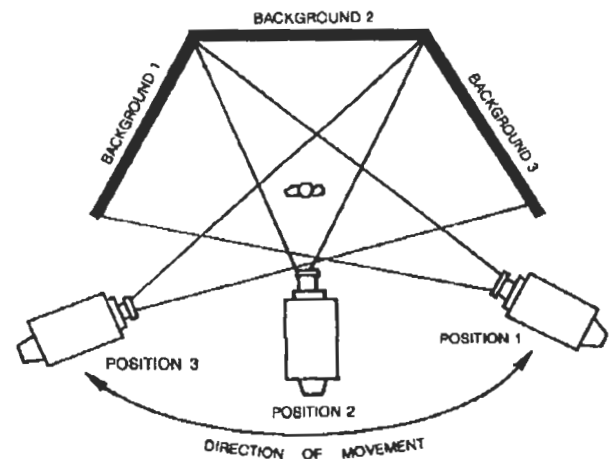


Figure 3 - Camera Movement

4. If you are using a studio, you can use two cameras to tape. Study Figure 3 related to camera position and angle of view. Two cameras are shown in position with the angle of view covered in each. Various shots can be switched from camera to camera. One camera may be positioned for a medium shot as the second camera moves in to get an extreme close-up. When the second camera is in position, the shot can then be switched so the viewer sees the extreme close-up.

5. Using the studio layout provided on the hand-out and the audio and video portions of your script, plan the location of each shot. Decide where the action will take place; which **flat** (background) you will use; where the camera should be positioned if it is a studio shot; and which camera would be used.

## Scheduling Production

1. Titles, stills, and drop cards can be filmed separately, or onto the master tape when you begin the editing portion, providing you have an editor. If you are going to shoot all your sequences live and in proper sequence, then you will need to plan your shooting schedule accordingly.

2. Review the script. If you are going to record live on location, film all of your remote location materials first.

3. Review the script. Decide what backgrounds or studio flats are required. Film your studio segments next.

## Obtaining Equipment and Props

1. Review your script again, making a list of all the materials, props, sound effects, music, and other materials you will need. How are titles and other visuals going to be developed? What resources do you have available? Do you have an editor or visual generation equipment? Can you use still slides?

2. Obtain all the necessary materials, props, and equipment before you begin production.

## Casting and Staging

1. Review your script. What actors or other personnel will be required? Make arrangements for these.

2. Will you need to make arrangements to shoot live on location? Do you need backdrops or flats prepared? What backgrounds are required?

3. Will you require talent such as a narrator, actor, or equipment operators?

## Production

Obtain your camera and crew. Follow your **production schedule** and begin taping. Remember if you do not have editing equipment, your production must be done in the proper sequence. However, shooting need not be done all in one session.

## Editing

If you have access to editing equipment, you can create a master tape from the **segments** you have taped, and add your titles and special effects to the master. Audio may also be **dubbed** in over the video if you have the proper equipment.

## Vocabulary

message	script	copy
medium	sound effects	close-up
commercial	drop card	flat
angle shot	backdrop	stills

## Safety

Be careful with cables, wires, and extension cords in your studio. Tape down with duct tape any cords on the floor. Mount lights on tripod stands that are stable.

## On Your Own

Use the Survey Form provided to record your viewings of television programs during the next week. After recording all the information, total the number of hours you spent watching television during the week. Be prepared to discuss what types of programs you watched. Also, be able to give reasons for your television viewing.



Office of Vocational, Adult, Career,  
and Community Education  
Technology Education  
Dade County Public Schools • Miami, Florida

## **TEACHER GUIDE**

### **VIDEO PRODUCTION: PRODUCING A VIDEO COMMERCIAL**

Objectives: Upon completion of this assignment, students will be able to:

- Describe an idea for a video program.
- Write a program description, program outline, and sentence outline for the program.
- Write a program content description.
- Prepare an audio and visual script.
- Prepare a production script.
- Schedule production, obtain equipment and props, and direct and produce a three minute promotional communications video.

#### **Helpful Hints:**

1. This activity is best accomplished using small cooperative groups. Students should be grouped into production crews of four to five students. They can be given specific tasks in the groups, or groups can be given the option of deciding who will perform which required function.
2. The activity also requires the use of a video camera, a VCR for review of completed tapes, and a TV monitor. If available, a TV studio with editing equipment is also desirable, but it is not essential to the completion of the basic objectives. If you do not have editing equipment, you can produce a video; however, scheduling the sequences in proper order and shooting sequence to sequence will be required.
3. You can do some editing by setting up two VCRs using the record function to record from one tape to the master.
4. A good resource for this activity is *Television Production Handbook*, fourth edition by Herbert Zettl. ISBN# 0-534-0146-X
5. A studio set up in a corner of the classroom, with a three panel backdrop, will be very helpful. Flats can be made or even borrowed from your drama department.
6. If you are in a senior high school with a TV production facility, use the resource person as a facilitator. He or she can be very helpful in assisting with the production of the video.
7. Get a copy of the *TSA Curricular Resources Guide* if your students are going to enter the TSA Promotional Communication competition. Read all rules carefully.

**LANGUAGE ARTS APPLICATION  
VIDEO PRODUCTION: PRODUCING A VIDEO COMMERCIAL**

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Name

In all types of jobs you will find that you need the ability to communicate your ideas effectively. Writing skills are necessary in all occupations. Here are a few examples of how communication and writing skills are related to this activity.

Your school wants to produce a video commercial about Technology Education to show parents and students at other schools. What messages could you come up with that would tell the community something positive about your school's program? Write five ideas.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Your school wants to send student reporters to record, on video, school events to share with the student body over the closed circuit television system. List five different events that you would like to see during morning announcements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

You are asked to promote global environmental awareness to the students at your school. How could the video camera be used to promote awareness? Describe your ideas below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**LANGUAGE ARTS APPLICATION**  
**VIDEO PRODUCTION: PRODUCING A VIDEO COMMERCIAL (Cont'd.)**

What are some positive and negative impacts that have resulted from the increased use of video technology? Write a brief statement of your opinion below.

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How would our lives be changed if modern communication devices such as television, radio, and video cameras were taken away? Describe your ideas below.

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Conversation, television, body language, books, magazines, and newspapers are all types of communication. List five more examples of communication.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_





**MATH APPLICATION**  
**VIDEO PRODUCTION: PRODUCING A VIDEO COMMERCIAL (Cont'd.)**

- |   |                     |       |
|---|---------------------|-------|
| 3. \$10,000 at 13% for 1 year                                       | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 4. \$5,000 at 10% for 1 year  | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 5. \$1,500 at 15% for 1 year  | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 6. \$400 at 6% for 1 year<br>(hint: 6% = 0.06 in decimal form)      | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 7. \$500 at 8.5% for 1 year<br>(hint: 8.5% = 0.085 in decimal form) | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 8. \$1,200 at 9.5% for 6 months                                     | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 9. \$7,500 at 8% for 3 months                                       | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |
| 10. \$15,000 at 12% for 9 months                                    | simple interest     | _____ |
|   | amount to be repaid | _____ |

**QUIZ**  
**VIDEO PRODUCTION: PRODUCING A VIDEO COMMERCIAL**

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Student Name

**True or False:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. As a member of a production crew you would be responsible for producing the commercial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A script of the program is written after all the production work is complete.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The theme of the video deals with only the background music or sounds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. You can record visual elements onto an audio tape.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The content of the video production refers to both the ideas and
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The production script contains the audio and video portions, but not the camera techniques and special instructions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A shot is a description of what the camera operator will shoot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. A script contains the video and the audio portions of the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Casting should be completed before the script is complete.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Drop cards contain sample illustrations, titles, or visuals that you might create for your production.

## Television Program Survey

Program Title	Program Type	Day of Week	Time of Day	Length of Program in Hours (1/4, 1/2, 1, 2)	Frequency (Check One Column)		
					Daily	Weekly	Special
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							
14.							
15.							
16.							
17.							
18.							
19.							
20.							
21.							
22.							
23.							
24.							
25.							

**Total Viewing Hours** \_\_\_\_\_

## Sequence of Fully Scripted Program Events

- A. Opening credits and theme music.
- B. Snail is drawn on chalkboard.
- C. Sam Snail contemplates his problem of not being a "winner."
- D. The angel appears (as Sam's conscience) and tries to get him to think positively about himself.
- E. The trophy is presented as a symbol of victory.
- F. Examples of "winners" are shown.

## Program Outline

- A. Opening Credits
  - 1. Producer-director
  - 2. Title of show
  - 3. Art credits
- B. The Snail
  - 1. Is drawn on chalkboard.
  - 2. Music while drawing is completed.
  - 3. Snail talks about his problem.
- C. The Angel
  - 1. Appears to snail's right.
  - 2. Tells Sam to check his attitude about winning.
  - 3. Presents his name as "Angel of Victory."
- D. The Trophy
  - 1. Is used as symbol of victory.
  - 2. There are other kinds of victory.
- E. Examples of winners
  - 1. Female Golfer
  - 2. Baseball player
  - 3. Technology Student Association Winner

## Detailed Sentence Outline

- A. Opening Credits
  - 1. Milestones 272 "The Swim Parade"
  - 2. Present title over an art frame of a water spout. Possible sound effects of someone diving into a pool.
  - 3. Super the title of the show, "Come On In, the Water's Fine," over the water spout. Begin the music intro.
- B. The Snail
  - 1. As the snail figure is drawn on the board, begin dialogue for Sam.
  - 2. "I know. Everyone's always telling me, 'Why don't you get in the swim of things--just dive right in.'"
  - 3. "Well, all that competition might be all right if you're a big guy with plenty of muscle."
  - 4. "But I'm only a snail. Just give me the sides of a fish tank to cling to." (Voice should sound depressed.)
  - 5. "I'll never win one of those bright, shiny trophies."
- C. The Angel
  - 1. The Angel of Victory appears to the right of Sam.
  - 2. Use a transition--fade to bring the angel in. (A puppet perhaps.)
  - 3. The angel speaks to Sam. "Sam Snail, you're thinking stupid again."
  - 4. Sam answers, "I am not! Hey! Who do you think you are anyway?"
  - 5. "I'm the Angel of Victory, and I know all about winning."

## Written Content: "Come On In, the Water's Fine"

After the standard opening, scene of old-time swim fashions, accompanied by period music. Mood is light and fanciful. Title comes in next "Come On in, the Water's Fine!"

A snail character, rather sad and dejected, talks about how people always want him to get into competition. However, he does not see himself as a winner. The snail's name is Sam.

An angel appears telling the snail he's not thinking right. She informs him she is the Angel of Victory and knows a great deal about winning. She offers to help him. She asks Sam to call her Vickie as her other friends do.

Vickie explains what the typical meaning of winning is. She shows him a trophy and talks about the kind of people who win trophies.

Sam is still not convinced. Vickie goes on to talk about those people who do not win trophies. She asks Sam whether he thinks all these people are losers. Sam gets the point.

Vickie tells Sam about Ralph, a boy who wanted to win a trophy very badly. He even dreamed about different ways he could be a winner. But Ralph knew that even though he might never get a trophy, he would get friendship and the joy of playing.

Sam and Vickie then talk about people who are afraid to try for fear of losing. They also talk about people who join in everything and those who participate only for their own benefit, never sharing.

Sam and Vickie talk about opportunities for participating and about the meanings of the words "victory" and "winning."

Vickie tells him good-bye. Sam's whole attitude is different now. His attitude is now upbeat, positive, triumphant.

## Television Production Script

VIDEO	CAMERA	SHOT	AUDIO
<b>What the camera is to focus on</b>	<b>Camera assigned to this shot</b>	<b>Type of shot to be arranged</b>	<b>Sound effect or dialogue to be presented</b>
Drop card #1 (opening credits)	1	#1 Close-up	Open Music B.G. #1
Drop card #2 (water Spout)	2	#2 Close-up	Tape music B.G. (Light) #2
Drop card #3 (Title: "Come On in, the Water's Fine")	1	#3 Close-up Super Title	
	1 & 2	#4 Dissolve to Black	
Magic Screen (chalkboard)	2	#5 MS, as snail is drawing on chalkboard	#3 Snail music <b>Snail:</b> I know—know—everyone's always telling me, "why don't you get in the swim of things? Just dive right in." Well, all that competition might be all right if you're a big guy with plenty of muscle but for Sam Snail—that's me—just give me the side of a fish tank to cling to. I'll never win one of those bright, shiny trophies.
#4 Insert angel cartoon to right of snail	2	#6 MS	Segue to S.E. tape #3 (Harp-10") Tape S.E. out  <b>Angel:</b> Sam Snail, you're thinking crooked again.  <b>Snail:</b> I am not thinking crooked—hey, who do you think you are to talk to me that way?  <b>Angel:</b> I'm the Angel of Victory— and I know quite a bit about winning games and winning trophies and winning in life.  <b>Snail:</b> Angel of Victory!  <b>Angel:</b> Yes, but my friends call me Vickie. Maybe I can help you understand something about winning.
Trophy (prop)	1	Close-up	Tape music B.G. #4 (light music)  This is a trophy, a token of victory. It is awarded to the top performer in the competition. The winner could be —
Drop card #5 of golfer (female)	2	Close-up	A champion golfer
Drop card #6 of baseball player	1	Close-up	A baseball player
Drop card #7 of TSA member with trophy	2	Close-up	A Technology Student Association member

TAPE MUSIC OUT

## Sample of a Fully Scripted Television Show

Video	Time	Audio
OPENING CREDITS	(2 sec.)	OPEN MUSIC B. G.
FC #1      Milestones #272 "Swim Parade"	(8 sec.)	Tape music B.G. #1 (light music)
Still frame water spout		
Super title: COME ON IN, THE WATER'S FINE		Tape music out
To black		Tape music B.G. #2 (Snail music)
Magic screen: Snail figure drawn	(13 sec.)	Snail:      I know—I know—everyone's always telling me, "why don't you get in the swim of things? Just dive right in." Well, all that competition might be all right if you're a big guy with plenty of muscle, but for Sam Snail—that's me—just give me the side of a fish tank to cling to. I'll never win one of those bright, shiny trophies.
#1 — Insert to right of snail — Angel cartoon		Seque to S.E. Tape #3 (Harp - 10")
	(23 sec.)	Tape S.E. out Angel:      Sam Snail, you're thinking crooked again. Snail:      I am not thinking crooked—hey, who do you think you are to talk to me that way? Angel:      I'm the Angel of Victory—and I know quite a bit about winning games and winning trophies and winning in life. Snail:      Angel of Victory! Angel:      Yes, but my friends call me Vickie. Maybe I can help you understand something about winning.
C.U. Trophy	(12 sec.)	Tape Music B.G. #4 (Light Music)
		This is a trophy, a token of victory. It is awarded to the top performer in the competition. The winner could be—
#2 — Golf pix.	(2 sec.)	A champion golfer
#3 — Baseball player pix.	(2 sec.)	A baseball player
#4 — TSA member pix.	(2 sec.)	A Technology Student Association Member with trophy
		Tape music out

# Television Studio Layout

TV CAMERAS

CUT OUT TV CAMERA SYMBOLS

