

15 Step Basic Editing Process

There's an easy and logical method to edit any short video. For more sophisticated video editing, there's a much more intricate process of editing. But if you're just getting started, these are the basics to consider.

- Ingest your footage into the video editing software of your choice. If you're doing this on your phone, then only bring in the footage you are sure you're going to use. If you're doing this on your computer, bring in all the footage from the shoot.
- Get rid of any footage you know that you're definitely not going to use.
- If you're using an interview or dialogue shots within your video, edit that first to create the spine of your video. If the audio is going to tell the story, then you must edit that first.
- Next, put your b-roll or shot sequences into the timeline in roughly the order that you think tells the story.
- Trim down every clip so that it doesn't run longer than 4 seconds. Aim for clips to range from 1 to 4 seconds.
- Make sure you cut out any errors like camera bumps or weird moments that make your subjects look bad.
- Avoid using shots that are overexposed or have terrible audio.
- Add dissolve transitions if needed. A dissolve can create a connection between two pieces of footage and can indicate the passing of time. Just don't overuse transitions.
- If your video is educational, then you can use a more bombastic transition like a slide to go between elements in the video.
- Next, add music to your video.
- Add titles or other text.
- Do a colour correction or colour grade. This might something simple like adjusting the brightness and contrast levels so that all the footage is uniform. Or you might add a filter or do a creative colour grade. Whatever you do, leave the colour grade until the very end because it can slow down playback. It can also distract you from the most important part of your job as an editor: cutting everything that isn't required to tell the story!
- Clean up the audio if needed. If there is background noise, you can try to clean that up. Just don't overdo it because you can easily leave digital artifacts in your audio if you use destructive noise reduction techniques with too much zeal!
- Finally, adjust the audio levels and do your final mix. This could be as simple as bringing down the music levels and bringing up the dialogue. Typically it's good to master your audio to around -6db.
- Now export your video. Make sure that if you export a stereo version, the audio is actually coming out of both the Left and Right channel. If you're not sure, just look for a way to export the video in mono.