



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



Engineering and
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Making video with your phone: Camera Angles and lighting

Some material modified from @learnsoton

Digital Learning – www.southampton.ac.uk/digital-learning

Collated by the Environmental Biotechnology Network: <http://www.EBNet.ac.uk>

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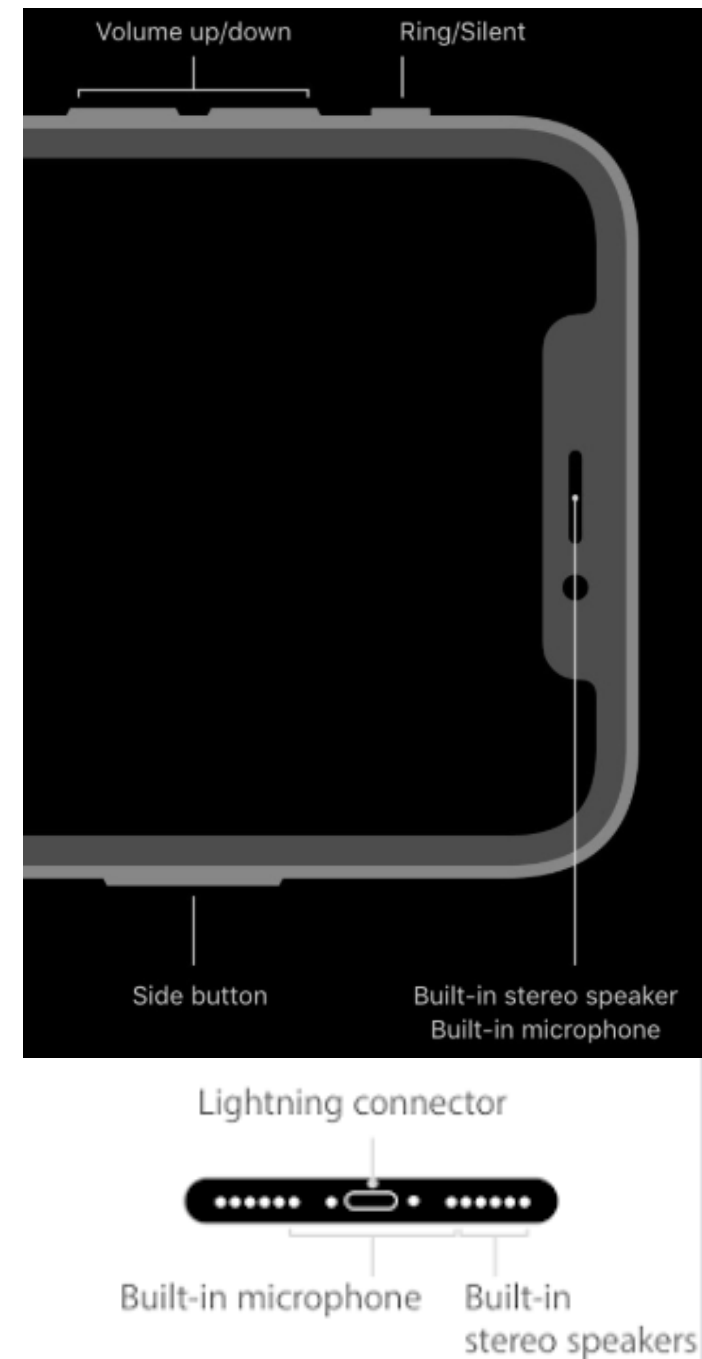


Lesson 1 Aims

By the end of this lesson, you will have:

- A basic understanding of camera angle and lighting when you film yourself
- Created a video to practice finding the optimal angle and lighting for your face and location (for your viewing only. Perhaps a tactful and helpful friend/colleague can also help!)

NOTE: Due to the variety of phones in the marketplace, this course does not show you how to run the recording software on your particular phone or camera/speaker/mic location(s) (e.g. speakers & mic for late model iphone are shown on the right)





Is video the best medium?

- Video is best if you are showing or demonstrating something, but it can be time-consuming to film and edit, so first consider whether video is necessary
- If you are ***discussing*** a subject, then it may be worth recording an audio podcast. This can also be done using your phone as a recording device and is much easier to edit using your phone or a free desktop app like [Audacity](#)

Look into the lens



Photos: Digital Learning, University of Southampton

When face-to-face, we connect with people by looking at them. When filming talk that is direct to an audience, it is important to look into the lens of the device you are using to record yourself. This can be quite tricky when using a laptop or if you do not have a tripod for your mobile phone --- other lessons include tips on how to address these issues.

OPTIONAL VIEWING: Joe from Digital Learning (shown above) provides a great example of how to talk properly to the camera here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0I_ryev6c0 (1:03 long)



Camera angle - 2



If you are interested in climate change, it is well worth following Prof Katharine Hayhoe, a Canadian climate scientist working in the US, on YouTube (Global Weirding: <https://t.co/WtJ8ql6Kuf?amp=1>) or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/KHayhoe>). For many years, she has minimised her carbon footprint by presenting remotely at conferences.

Her tip (shown above): Move camera to eye level or slightly above it. If you are using a laptop, raise it on books. She also sometimes moves her glasses fractionally down her nose to minimise glare.



Consider your light source

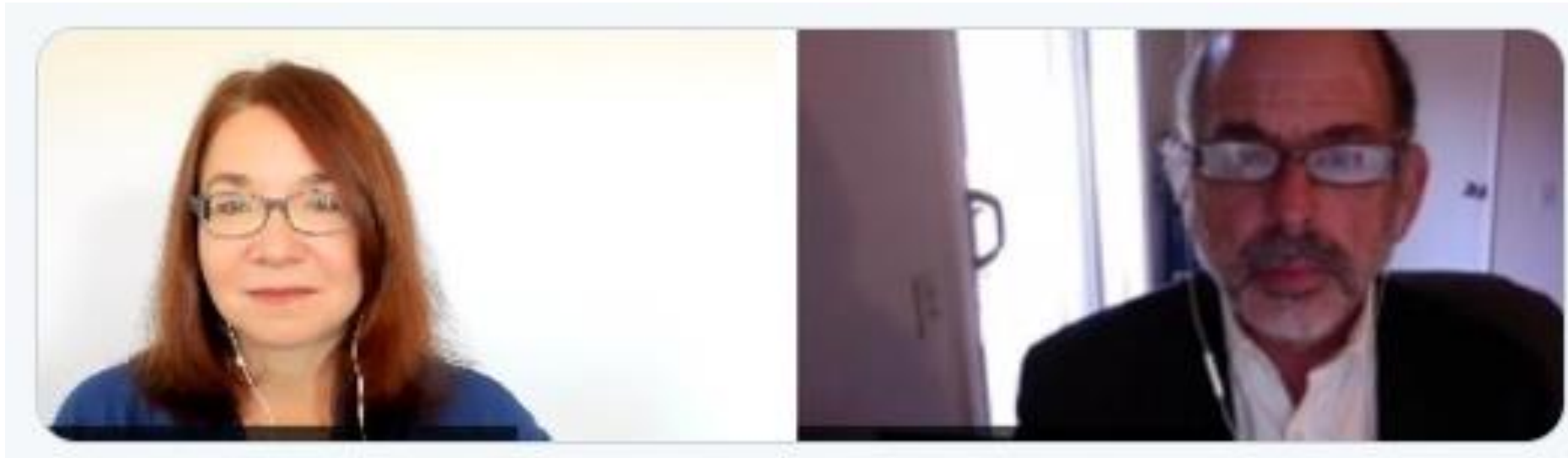


Photos: Digital Learning, University of Southampton

- Avoid filming against a bright background (a window, the sun, very reflective surface), as it can cause overexposed background and/or a silhouetted subject (left)
- Keep the brighter light source behind the camera and on the face of the subject



Lighting: A further example



LEFT: An example of good lighting. RIGHT: An example of poor lighting.

Photos: Katherine Hayhoe

Katherine Hayhoe's tip: Make sure there is a light on your face. Simply face a window, or put a table lamp in front of you (behind your camera).

Some vloggers (video bloggers) use a [ring light](#), but an ordinary table light set up behind the camera will also help if natural light is weak or non-existent.



Exercise 1

Experimenting with hand-held angles: holding your phone, shoot a short video of yourself. Whilst speaking (if you don't want to say anything, you can just say 'blah, blah' or some other nonsense), try the following:

- Looking directly at the camera (this can be harder than you think!)
- Looking at yourself in the screen
- Look up and to the right or left, and directly up/down as if you were thinking
- Hold the phone (i) far above you, (ii) slightly above you, (iii) level with your eyes, (iv) slightly below your eye level
- Hold your arm as far away as possible, then bring the camera closer to your face
- If you have glasses, change their angle: slide them fractionally down your nose

View the video. What angle and camera distance looks the best for you? How do your eye movements affect the 'feel' of the video? Does it help to move your glasses?



Exercise 2

Experimenting with light: holding your phone, shoot a short video of yourself. Whilst speaking (as before), try the following:

- Film yourself whilst moving towards a window
- When you are closest to the window, film the side of your face
- Turn your back to the window
- Walk away from the window and continue to film
- Find a desk lamp, put it behind your camera and film yourself at your preferred angle. Move the lamp up and down, closer and further (as best as you can whilst holding a phone!)

View the video. What happens as you move closer to the window? What happens when you turn your back to the window? If it is sunny, note how harsh the shadows are if the light is strong.

All lamps vary, but try to decide what is the best height and distance for your particular lamp in order to give the best light.

We hope you've enjoyed this

...and any suggestions for further ECR training on this subject (or any others) are welcome and can be directed to us at:



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