



Speaking on the Camera: Screencasting Tips & Tricks

This guide helps you to prepare yourself for creating an educational video. In this guide we focus on how to tell your story on camera, how to use body language, your voice, etc.

Before you start filming, you first create a script. Check out the [Scripting guide](#). For technical tips, information on screencast software, you can check out our [Technical guide](#).

A guide created by Risbo



Preparation

Once you have your script ready (see our scripting guide for more tips) it is crucial that you rehearse your script out loud before filming. This will make you feel more comfortable with the content, and you may notice any final errors that can be corrected before recording.

- Time your practice run to ensure your recording is not too long.
- Rehearse pronunciation of words/phrases you find or expect to be difficult.
- Avoid memorization word by word. Prepare simple notes with key words.



Planning

- If possible, choose a session time in the day when you generally feel most awake. During filming, you should aim to be as enthusiastic as possible. Also aim to get a good night's sleep the day before to make sure you are fresh and ready for a session of filming.
- Inform your family or roommates when you will be filming, to avoid disturbances.



What to wear

- Wear something you feel confident and comfortable in! An outfit that you normally wear when lecturing is recommended.
- Clothes can affect the quality of the camera image when you are in front of the camera (or green screen). No go's are: green tops, busy patterns such as dots, stripes, tweeds and plaids. Patterns can often flutter on camera. Additionally, you should avoid wearing clothes that create a high contrast with your skin tone, as this creates difficulty for correct camera exposure.
- If possible, try not to wear large amounts of jewelry when recording. If you move when being filmed, the noise from the jewelry can be picked up on the microphone, which will distract from the content.
- Think about your shoes: flats are preferred over high heels. Also, make sure you don't have sneakers or heels that make a sound when you move.

Quick Tip:

Remember to be yourself!
You don't have to become someone else: a perfect weatherman, the best TED-talk presenter... it's about adjusting small things, but your authenticity is important.



Using technical equipment

Although recording a screencast and a studio recording share some similarities, some things are completely different. Mainly that you must prepare and appropriately adjust your own technical equipment.



Location

- When screencasting, make sure you find a quiet place, that has a pleasant acoustic (so no bathroom).
- Make sure the background is not distracting.
- Close the curtains when it is sunny. Sunlight can vary a lot and can affect the quality of your video. It helps when you look at the side of the room with a window, instead of standing with your back to the window. This can lead your camera to overexpose the video.
- Find a comfortable chair that allows you to sit straight (better to avoid sofas). If possible, set it up so that you can stand in front of the camera.



Camera

- Put the camera as close to your eye level as possible. This stimulates the effect that you are looking directly at students, rather than looking down to or up to them.
- Push the camera a little bit back, to make more of your upper body visible, which enables you to use your gestures as well. Gestures are a great way to appear more engaging.
- Use an external microphone instead of the build-in one for better quality and remove all distracting background sounds. Switch off your smartphone.



Computer

- Close all unneeded software, apps, and tabs to speed up your computer and avoid disturbances.

Quick Tip:

Think of the font of your Presentation slides. Use a bigger size or zoom in on small text, since viewers could watch it on their phone.



Body Language & voice

The camera supposedly eliminates 20% of your visible enthusiasm so dare to be even more enthusiastic than usual! Demonstrate your enthusiastic energy using body language, voice, and humor.



Body Language

- Look directly into the camera as much as possible. If you are reading notes, try to minimize it and move it to the upper center of the screen (right below the camera). You can put little a smiley sticker next to your camera as a reminder to look there.
- Speak through a smile. It is even more important to maintain positive facial expressions when talking to the camera. You can check it by muting the sound of your video and see if your expression suits the message.
- Try to feel relaxed – keep your feet flat on the ground, keep your back straight, shoulders relaxed and BREATHE BREATHE BREATHE. Make sure you breathe regularly.
- Use gestures. Gestures are a great way to support your message and to appear more engaging. Screencasting might limit the full expression of your gestures, so make sure to mentally note where are the boundaries of the video and gesture within that space.
- A little movement when presenting is good but avoid moving from side to side on the video.



Voice

- Do a short vocal warm-up (e.g. tongue twisters) and have a glass of lukewarm water ready during your recording.
- Speak slightly slower than in a normal conversation. Take pauses between sentences and even within sentences.
- Remember to stay aware of the tone, articulation, and dynamics of your voice. It is good to make a contrast between high and low tones, fast and slow sentences, and loud and quiet speech to create a contrast and to lay emphasis on certain topics within your session.

Quick Tip:

Making mistakes or slip-ups is human and it makes your video more authentic, so do not start over after every minor mistake.



Final tips

- Keep it Short and Simple: the length of the video should be 6 to 9 minutes. Use short sentences. Less is more.
- Use video editing software to cut out quiet moments, for instance when filling in a form or loading a website.
- Pick a screencasting software that best suits your needs. [Check out our guide here.](#)
- Include in-video questions that can be answered by students before continuing with the video (possible to add in Canvas Feedback-Fruits).