



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Quick Guide

How to make a short video

A quick guide for parliamentary staff on how to start making short videos using your phone and with limited resources.

With more virtual events and meetings and less opportunities to present what you do in person at seminars and conferences, it's useful to be able to create short videos about the work of your parliament. Not all parliaments have the resources to film and produce high-end productions, but most of us have access to a smartphone and some simple editing software. This is enough to make short videos to share with others.

Planning

While you don't need a detailed script, you do need to plan out what you're going to do and say and to understand how much time is available (or needed). Sketch out a quick timeline or structure with the key points that you need to get across.

If you aren't confident improvising around this structure, you might want to write a script. The challenge with this is that we speak less formally than we write, so bear this in mind.

Equipment

You will need:

- A smartphone
- An external microphone
- A tripod (or something to support the camera)
- Online storage space (video files can be large)
- A quiet space to record in

All you really need is a way to record the video, and most modern smartphones will be more than good enough for this. The picture quality is usually fine but the sound can be disappointing (particularly if you are outdoors). You can improve the quality a lot by investing in a clip-on (lavalier) microphone. Get one with a long lead and a muff to reduce 'popping' from your voice and wind noise.

You need a way to stand the camera in a stable position, with the camera perfectly vertical and on its side (landscape – never shoot videos like this in portrait mode!).

The camera needs to be positioned at head height, just over a metre away from you. You can do this with a table and a pile of books, but the best way is a tripod with a smartphone attachment.

Filming

You need to be comfortable, sitting up straight and natural. Consider what's behind you, this can be a blank wall or bookcases or something that isn't too distracting (so preferably not moving). You're looking for a backdrop that adds to the message, re-enforces what you're saying or illustrates your role.

Set the camera so that you are in the centre and your whole face and shoulders are visible. Use the front-facing camera (assuming the quality is good enough), so that you can see that everything is lined up. You should be looking straight at the camera (note, but don't worry, that the camera lens itself is off to one-side).

Do a test shoot to ensure that the microphone is working, there is no distracting background noise and the picture is straight and how you'd like it.

If you've got a script or a structure that you need as a reminder, you can tape a piece of paper below the camera. Another possibility is to use a tablet or a laptop below the camera, as close as you can get it so that you don't have to look too far away. There are several free 'teleprompter' or 'autocue' apps and websites that can be used, but practise with them as it doesn't always feel natural at first.

As you're filming, leave lots of gaps in the recording so that you can edit out parts. Start the camera recording (or ask someone else to do this), sit back and count to five. After each section or discrete segment, it's useful to leave a long pause (5-6 seconds or more) before going on to the next part. This gives you chance to make a mistake and re-take. If (when) you do make a mistake, pause, count to six and start again. Don't stop and restart the camera, you can edit all of this out afterwards.

Most of us warm up as we talk and it's the same for recording a video on your own. It's not natural for most of us, so it can feel a bit awkward at first. To get around this, you can do some practice recordings. Alternatively, if you're more confident, start somewhere in the middle and record the opening sequence last, when you've warmed up.

Editing

The key to making the video work is as much editing as filming. You might be able to do this on your phone with the software that's available or an app you can download. Alternatively, transfer the video to your computer and edit it there. If you're using a Mac, iMovie has all the tools you need. If you're using Windows or Android, do a bit of research on video editing tools for beginners: you don't need much!

Editing is just a case of cutting and pasting the segments you've recorded into the right order. Leave the intros and outros (where you paused) until everything's in the right place, then these can be removed too (leave some space to make the recording sound natural and flow well). The next (optional) step is to add captions and titles. To

do this, follow the instructions but go for a minimalist approach – less really is more as it's the content that matters, not the fancy effects.

Once you're happy with the result, package it up as a file or share it to YouTube, Vimeo or similar.

Find out more

- [How to Film Professional Videos with an iPhone](#)
- [Filming with iPhone: The Complete Guide to Shooting Video like a PRO!](#)
- [Seven tips for filming professional videos on a mobile phone](#)
- [Beginner's guide to making video with your smartphone](#)
- [Five tips for filming with a mobile phone](#)

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