# ⚙ Factory floor 🎬 Producing constructive visual stories



## Essentials

**Main topics: visual narrative, visual production preparation, storyboard, applying constructive principles on location, relationship with protagonists and film crew, participatory filming, smartphones for filming, constructive editing, use of music, narration, post-production.**

**Summary:** Reporters working in visual formats can apply constructive principles to their work to boost audience engagement, present nuance and context, and create opportunities for dialogue. That involves planning, such as investigating locations ahead of time, engaging with the community to find characters and locations, avoiding visual stereotypes and being prepared to change plans if needed to tell the story more fully and truthfully. For film and video, mood boards and storyboards are important in the planning process. Postproduction should be carefully considered, especially editing. Music and narration styles have great power in visual stories, so constructive visual reporters should ensure they are used appropriately.

## Building a constructive visual narrative

Constructive storytellers should build a visual narrative that informs and engages viewers and creates a space for dialogue, response and collaboration. Defining the story elements and writing a story description are two dimensions of the work. Visual storytelling is about making those stories three dimensional. That extra dimension requires special consideration by journalists since visual depictions can have such a powerful impact. Recording the visual component of a story is also often more intrusive than with print or audio. In addition, visuals have the ability to "reveal" communities to audiences – for better or worse – in ways that print and audio pieces often do not.

**Visual tastes and preferences:** Visual constructive journalism starts by understanding one's own tastes and preferences.  There are constructive visual elements in any well-told story. Visual journalists should revisit some of their favorite audio-visual stories and study the scenes that they find the most compelling.

**Visual representations:** Facts and figures (evidence, practical information) must be translated into images, graphics, illustrations, visual testimonies/examples and representations. Feelings, abstract meaning and messages must be translated into images, sceneries, visual metaphors that correspond and complement the dialogue and music.

**Visual choices and the "truth":** Constructive storytelling seeks the "best obtainable version of the truth" (Ulrik Haagerup, Constructive Institute). By their very nature, images can suggest meanings beyond an author's intentions. "Reality" and "truth" are always associated with a point of view and are not fixed or ultimate. Constructive storytellers must carefully consider the visual choices they make as well as their impact on audiences.

**Additional visual material:** Sometimes there is visual material available online that can be studied or even used that deals with the same issue a journalist is covering or one that is similar. Look for published reports, films, documentaries, photo essays that could enrich the visual perspective and understanding of the problems, the responses and the people involved.

**Recommendations:**
- Be aware of the agenda and background of the producers and publishers of any materials found on both traditional and social media
- Be specific about the similarities and differences of your visual references. Identify them based on the impact they achieved, not only by the appeal of the shots, style or color.
- Bad examples are good examples. Learn from them.

**Visual creativity:** Journalists should not be satisfied with the first, most obvious visual idea that comes to mind. They should rather always think about searching further for a different, more original image.

**Preliminary visit to filming sites:** Visiting possible shooting locations is extremely useful when preparing to do a visual story and should be made a priority if at all possible. Such visits reveal how things look on the ground and can help you avoid surprises that might cause problems later. They can reveal details that can lead to new storylines and unexpected angles. They give journalists the chance to reassess their choice of characters and locations.

Visits might include but are not limited to:
- Initial correspondence with main character
- First thoughts of pictures or videos of the "storyworld" (main locations)
- Sound recording of the atmosphere

## Checklist:

**Character**
- Do I have access to my main character? Are there any issues related to trust or the power dynamic between us?
- Does the issue affect the main character directly at both levels – problem and solution/response? Is this the best person to represent the people who are affected?
- Am I the right person to conduct the interview? (language, gender, level of education, age, children/elders, etc.)

- Will the person freely speak his or her personal point of view or is he or she authorized to speak on behalf of others?
- Is the person loyal to a certain political agenda or biased perspective?
- Do I have to ensure anonymity? If yes, how can I do that? (recording out of focus, avoid the face, shoot from behind, shoot in the dark)?
- How can the person be portrayed with honesty and depth and not as a cliché or stereotype?

**Community**
- Do I have the right access to the community – to the host of the story, the problem and solution?
- Are there any social, cultural or religious sensitivities that I must be aware of before writing my visual treatment? Do I need to consider getting special permission or following certain procedures before shooting certain people or places?

**Location**
- What information can be gathered from the first general look at the story location? What does it mean or add to the story's context, e.g., busy, empty, poor?

**General recommendations**
- Beware of the position of your access to the community. What are their personal and political agendas? This might affect how the community receives and collaborates with you.
- Allow yourself time to observe simple actions, attitudes and routines. Find visual manifestations on how the problem affects the community and how the solution would make a difference in their daily life.
- Avoid stereotypical or well-worn representations. Give each visual idea that comes to your mind a second thought and think about alternatives.
- Properly conducted research will help improve storytelling and ensure effective production and postproduction.
- Be flexible, creative, and precise! By this stage, some storytellers might decide to change their initial choice of the interview location. Some of them might even replace their main character. Stay calm, even if this means "doing it all over again".

↘ *See handout 13: Tips on pitching*


# Preparing visual story production

A visual narrative should be informative, captivating and inspiring. There are practical tools that are especially helpful in constructive visual storytelling because they help journalists avoid unintended bias and misunderstandings. They are important for scouting locations and planning shoots, and they enable the storyteller to communicate with the crew, with collaborators and sponsors, and to respond to unexpected situations during the production phase.

**Visual treatment:** A short, written description of the shooting sequences (purpose, best visual representations) and how they are structured (order). This document of 1-2 pages helps

in the planning of shots and is the basis for budget calculations. Often, visual research material can be used as a reference in the visual treatment (e.g., photos, graphics, or links to videos)? These visual references give an idea of how the final product or sequences might look.

**Storyboard:** A detailed list with sketches/pictures of shots and sound in chronological order.

| Storyboard: Title of video Total duration: XY minutes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scene/ location | Images | Natural sound, music | Potential Soundbites (SB) or voiceover text (VO) | Duration (in seconds) |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

*See handout 14: Storyboard sample*

**Mood board:** A collection of reference pictures that shows how your story would look in terms of color, framing, etc. It's sometimes called an inspiration board and is often a collage of different visual elements that can serve as a guide to making a film or video. Images, color palettes, and even videos or GIFs (if you're using a mood board app) can all be a part of it.

**Tips:**
- In storytelling, journalists constantly make decisions and compromises. But when developing a visual narrative, they should not compromise truth for the sake of good images. Ideally, they should have both. But if not, truth and accuracy have priority.
- Constructive visual storytelling includes planning ahead to make sure you have access to what you need to shape the narrative.

## What makes filming constructive?

Visual reporters should follow constructive principles once in the field for filming/shooting. Parts of the following recommendations also apply to collecting footage from relevant visual databases such as Getty Images or Colourbox as well as to doing online interviews.

Many constructive journalists find it helpful to structure their footage/shooting according to the main elements of solutions-oriented stories:

- **Response:** What kind of images or scenes best illustrate the initiative/approach/ intervention, show how it works, and help move away from the status quo? What kind of images show the problem and offer context?

- **Evidence:** What best illustrates the effectiveness of the response? Is there visual evidence to support a claim of success (e.g., more plants are growing, less water is wasted)? Are there people or groups in a community who could provide evidence of the impact of the

intervention? Where should they be filmed and interviewed (testimony in the form of a statement and/or action)? If the evidence is provided by data, constructive reporters need general footage that buttresses that data.

- **Insights:** Is there any visual evidence that the response might be relevant to others and potentially transferable to other contexts, replicable by other communities? (other environments, other social groups, other countries, other debates, etc.)?

- **Limitations:** "Painting the full picture" means also looking for footage that illustrates failure, struggle and caveats, showing what doesn't work and what could be improved.

**Visual metaphors:** What visual metaphors help raise hope, narrate the story and support the voice-over? ("Associative railing"; example: a little seed that is growing as a metaphor for an agricultural initiative that is starting to have success and display results). *Attention*: A very obvious and forced linkage of the visual level to the narration may end up seeming cheesy and over the top! Kiana Hayeri, an Iranian Canadian photographer based in Afghanistan and regular contributor to The New York Times, recommends always being aware of the emotions that story topics evoke. Before a shoot, she usually reflects on the negative emotions her topics might raise and tries to counter them by topics or aspects that could bring hope.

**Awareness of emotions:** During filming/shooting, look at how the environment corresponds to the emotions your protagonists are experiencing. For example, when entering a room, camera operators should always consider the quality of the light. Bright, glaring light and diffuse, somber light communicates different emotional states. Keep in mind: How does the light level correspond to the scene's emotional tone? If it's incongruent, think of other details that can communicate the emotion, for example, body language (the movement of hands, fingers, etc.), objects, shot angles.

**"Wow shots" and "beauty shots":** Without being sensationalistic or misrepresenting anything, are there visuals available that will make people say "wow" or marvel at the sheer beauty? The film team/photographer should make sufficient time to collect visual material (B-roll) if it hasn't already been done during a first field research trip. What are visuals of beauty and uniqueness, even in a setting of sadness or tragedy? But be careful that the visuals do not play down or misrepresent aspects of a serious or sad subject. Again, the overriding goal is truth.

**Other protagonists:** When on site, the producer should look around, talk to people and find out if other potential protagonists are present? Can someone else present another perspective even if she/he is not part of the storyboard? Problems and solutions are always a matter of social context that are considered and approached in different ways by different people.

**Don't forget the problem!** It's important to regularly remind yourself of the actual problem you're reporting about. It's also part of a general constructive awareness in the production phase to not get lost in only the solution element or to get tied up gathering information and visual materials about "heroes" that lavish excessive praise on them.

## Creating a safe environment

It's important to create a sense of ease, openness and honesty for everyone involved in the production. The quality of the shooting process is crucial for the quality of the final product.

The more protagonists and team members relax and open up, the more authentic the interviews will be and the more productive and constructive a filming/shooting will end up being.

**Good rapport with protagonists:**

- **Spend time together:** A personal visit prior to the actual filming/shooting is always beneficial. This minimizes the gap between reporter and protagonist. It shows a sense of genuine interest and can boost the protagonist's engagement and commitment to the story.
- **Explain the core ideas of the story approach:** Get the support of the protagonists ahead of the filming/shooting. A one-on-one talk about the constructive story idea is recommended.
- **Get a consent agreement on the core visual elements:** That includes what to film, where to do interviews, etc.
- **Slow down!** When on site for the actual filming/shooting, film teams and photographers shouldn't be in a hurry. They should take their time and give protagonists time as well.
- **Show respect and dignity for feelings:** When in a community, film teams and photo reporters should ask for access politely (e.g., talking to people in mourning) and ask themselves: How would I want to be filmed in this situation?
- **Ask about happy moments before the shoot** to make protagonists feel at ease:
    - Where are you most happy? (place – at home, garden, nature, etc.)
    - When are you most happy? (time – day/night, sunset, etc.)
  Filming and interviewing could be arranged accordingly.
- **Start filming with a mobile phone:** This is less intimidating than a traditional film or video camera and can put people at ease, making them more likely to agree to interviews. A smartphone can be used at least for filming in research and early production stages of a constructive story, if not at all stages. It depends on the quality of the phone's camera. (See "Filming with smartphones" below.)
- **Keep eye-contact:** While it's important not to make people uneasy, eye-contact shows real interest and curiosity about the other.
- **Engage in conversation:** During slow shoots, visual reporters should ask a lot of questions and keep protagonists talking. They could also search for common fields of interest (e.g., cooking). Ensure translation when needed.
- **Be mindful of societal, cultural, religious and gender issues:** These considerations can affect the shooting process. Cultural traditions (e.g. behavioral norms) and religious practices (e.g., prayer times, especially in a Muslim context) should be respected.

**Good teamwork:**

- **Inform core team members:** Tell those on the technical team, such as the camera person, about your constructive approach to storytelling. It's likely they've never heard the term constructive journalism before. Some insights should be shared, but the team should not be overly worried about it.
- **Respect the team's needs:** Filming days of 12 to 16 hours won't help tell a story constructively. The constructive mindset also touches on aspects related to the well-being of the technical team (breaks, food and drinks, shelter from weather, etc.).

**No rushed schedules!** Constructive journalists can learn from Slow Journalism's principle to take time "to do things properly. Instead of trying to beat social media to breaking news stories, we focus on the values we all expect from quality journalism – accuracy, depth, context, analysis and expert opinion." According to the advocacy and support group Africa No Filter, many problems that result in poor and unethical storytelling can be addressed by proper scheduling and the allocation of enough time. When traveling to foreign countries or out-of-the-way places, if the budget and schedule allows it is a good idea to add an extra day before the return trip. It gives you and your team time to follow unexpected paths or go deeper with interviews and on-the-ground research.

**A sense of authorship:** One strategy that may also work in a constructive approach is to specifically ask the audience to go out themselves to film their community and document the challenges as they see them. This approach gives a sense of authorship to the community, which could potentially lead to the discovery by the community itself of potential solutions. With smartphones, community members can easily shoot video or even record personal video or audio diaries, although the time investment for journalists who edit them can be significant.

**First person accounts:** A collaborative approach can be a powerful political tool for a marginalized or underrepresented group gaining agency. For the Italian filmmakers from ZaLab, participatory documentary cinema is a way of offering instruments of expression to marginalized groups who are normally excluded from the mass media. Their films use first-person accounts and no external narration. The protagonists are closely involved in the construction of the story.

**Tips for creating constructive collaborations:**
- Be honest and direct when approaching a local community.
- Be able to explain in simple terms what you are looking for.
- Be transparent in your objectives.
- Maintain an open dialogue where you listen to what the community wishes to share with you instead of imposing preconceived solutions upon them.
- Screen your piece to the community before broadcasting it.

## Filming with smartphones

The smartphone is a "pocket studio" for creating, editing and distributing images, audio and video and can be quite useful for constructive journalism. The main advantage: The unobtrusive device is less intimidating than film and video equipment and turns potentially stressful interview situations into more normal face-to-face conversations. Mobile journalism (MoJo) has some other advantages.

**Benefits:**

- Easily portable: The smartphone is light and even a complete mojo kit – phone, lightweight tripod, microphones and external lights – together do not weigh more than 3 kgs.
- Minimizes the gap between reporters, protagonists and audiences. All have access to the tools needed to produce content.
- Allows new forms of storytelling and a more inclusive approach to journalism.

- Useful as an additional device. Mobile phones are also good for capturing B-roll and ambient audio for postproduction.
- Enables production and distribution with a single device.

**Limitations:**

- **Smartphone quality:** Smartphones brands differ in quality. A smartphone should allow shooting at 1080p resolution at the minimum. Processing speed should be sufficient to run apps for production.
- **Lens quality:** Today's smartphones have dual, triple or even quadruple cameras, depending on the brand and model. Higher lens quality = better quality photos and videos.
- **Steady shots:** Tripods are useful to avoid camera shake. Some devices offer optional image stabilization. Other electronic options are available, such as gimbals.
- **Wind protection:** A wind cover ("dead cat") on the microphone is recommended.
- **Audio:** The built-in microphones on smartphones offer good quality audio only at close distance. External microphones are best. There's a wide range of high-quality lavalier microphones available for use with smartphones. (Don't conduct interviews or pieces to camera in noisy places.)
- **Frame rates:** The NTSC video format has a rate of 30 frames per second (fps), while the PAL system has a frame rate of 25 fps. If you work in a country on the PAL system, phones must allow you to record video at 25fps (like an iPhone) or use a third-party app like Filmic Pro or Open Camera that allows you to manually set the frame rate to 25fps.
- **Storage:** Videos consume a lot more space than photos on your phone. To be on the safe side, get an extra storage device for your phone. Extra memory cards come in handy to avoid running out of storage during production.
- **Power:** It is a good idea to carry a power backup/power bank on the day of the shoot.
- **Zooming:** Avoid using the digital zoom feature on the smartphone camera as video quality will degrade. Instead, move closer to the subject.

↘ *See handout 15: Mobile journalism – technical requirements and applications*

## Editing constructively

Editing is the first and the most crucial step in post-production. Dramaturgical decisions are made, images and voice clips selected. In the editing booth, the risk is high that the words of others are manipulated (consciously or not) or connections are made that don't reflect the reality on the ground. Constructive editors must constantly be aware of these risks to avoid them.

When reviewing the filming/shooting material it is helpful to draw mind maps in which certain emotions are linked to situations/actions that have been captured. Sources need to be cross-checked to make sure information is accurate.

Short constructive stories should offer a solution, explain the problem it solves, provide evidence that the solution works and at least one limitation. Longer pieces can offer a more detailed description of the response and the way people are affected by a problem. They give

evidence of what works and elaborate more on the limitations of the solution. They also allow insights and reflect more on the replicability of the solution in other contexts or regions.

Longer constructive stories may start with the solution focus, then explain the problem behind it before going back to the solution. Or they can focus on the problem before presenting a solution. The two formulas below only differ in the beginning: one starts with the problem, the other with the solution. Of course, these are not the only ways to structure constructive reports.

| Long formula (5 min) - A | Sec | | Long formula (5 min) - B | Sec |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Start with a person's **problem** story (soundbite) | 20 20 | | Start with a person's **solution** story (soundbite) | 20 20 |
| Describe **problem** (possibly soundbites from concerned people + expert) / data for relevance? | 30 10 20 | | Describe **problem** (possibly soundbites from concerned people + expert) / data for relevance? | 30 10 20 |
| Describe **solution** (possibly soundbites from solution finder and beneficiaries) | 30 30 | | Describe **solution** (possibly soundbite from solution finder + people involved + beneficiary) | 30 30 |
| Show **evidence** of success (possible soundbites experts) data visualization | 30 10 10 | | Show **evidence** of success (possible soundbite or data visualization) | 20 10 |
| Explain **limitations** of the solution (possible soundbites) | 30 20 | | Explain **limitations** of the solution (possible soundbites) | 30 10 |
| Describe **lessons** and **insights** (possible soundbites solution finder or others / data) | 30 10 | | Describe **lessons** and **insights** (possible soundbites solution finder or others/ data) | 30 10 |

**Editing process:**

- **Author present for editing:** It is essential that the film author who has realized the interviews on the ground is present for editing. An editor who has not been in touch with the protagonist or present at the filming/shooting could make decisions that torpedo the constructive approach that was intended.
- **First impressions count:** Pay special attention to how you introduce/establish the story. What are the first scenes, people and locations we get to see? First impressions are memorable and they prime the audience for everything that follows.
- **Strong climax and end:** Be aware that audiences most readily remember the story's narrative main part or climax (if there's one) as well as how you wrap up the story. It's called the "peak-end-rule". Our memory works by snapshots.
- **Reappraise the storyboard:** It may be useful/necessary to change the order of locations or protagonists to more accurately communicate the situation/dynamic on the ground.
- **Connotations?** Be aware of the connotations of the images you choose and consider how the audience will connect images together in their minds. The decisions on how and where to edit and what succession of images is chosen might manipulate the audience's interpretation and emotional reaction to each of them (Kuleshov-Effect).

- **Good editing rhythm:** Take enough time with shots and soundbites to ensure that things are clear to the audience. But also ensure that the piece moved fast enough to keep attention and to convey the dynamics of the solution.
- **Show change-agents:** Prioritize showing people instead of buildings or landscapes, those people who are the main actors for change and solutions.
- **Unusual shots:** Always try to show that different, unusual perspectives are possible.
- **Self-assessment:** When the first rough cut is ready, ask yourself: Am I giving enough time to address the issue, enough context to the problem, describing and critically assessing possible solutions?
- **Feedback rounds:** Stay authentic to the essence of the story. For that, one must schedule enough time for the editing process and allow time for feedback from editors.

## How to be constructive in narration/voice over

In broadcast journalism, the voice-over (also known as off-camera or off-stage commentary) is usually done by the reporter. This narration offers additional information or explanation and adds layers to the story, especially information that is difficult to convey visually. In documentaries, different types and styles of voice-over can be used, which can be more opinionated and subjective. If voice-over narration is employed the narrator must be mindful of the following:

- **General attitude and intention:** All journalists have an opinion about or attitude towards their subject and it's important to be aware of this. However, manipulation should be avoided. Narrators should not take a position of ultimate knowledge ("the voice of God"). They should guide the viewer through the story but leave space for independent thinking. In documentaries, reporters sometimes use a first-person narrative and consciously make no claims to objectivity. This is called "Gonzo journalism".
- **Context and nuances:** A good voice-over for constructive pieces includes context and nuance, gives background information and explores the complex shades of gray around an issue instead of painting in stark blacks and whites.
- **Language/terminology:** Different words and terminologies have diverse connotations in diverse cultures or settings. Be aware of the kind of language you use and to what ends. A constructive voice-over informs instead of inflames.
- **Male or female voice?** Depending on the sensitivity of a topic and the cultural setting, the journalist should be conscious about the implications of choosing a man or female voice to narrate.
- **Tone:** The narrator should adopt a positive "basic tone" without being cheesy, mawkish or sensationalistic.

## Using music in constructive reporting

Music is a powerful tool in the hands of video reporters and filmmakers. Constructive journalists should be aware of the power and effects of music and therefore be particularly conscious and responsible in their choices.

**Music's power on the mind:** Music stimulates areas of the brain that are involved in "emotions, motor skills, memory and language" (Marissa Peters, 2021). It has a powerful influence on our mood – it can make us get up and dance on the table or calm us down and lower our blood pressure. It often triggers memories. Like stepping into a time machine,

hearing certain music might transport us back to particularly emotional or significant moments in our lives (mostly between the ages of 10 to 30): first kisses, lost loves, special holidays when we listened to certain music. But a piece of music doesn't necessarily influence different people in the same way.

**Music can bias the perception of images:** Film music composer Joel Douek (2013) says "when it comes to emotions, human beings are much more music-driven than they are visual-driven." Ominous music can turn the delightful Mary Poppins of the Walt Disney musical fantasy into an evil presence from a horror film as in the recut trailer "Scary Mary Poppins".

**The power of background music:** Studies show that music that is congruent to the visual sequences in a visual story
- can intensify specific emotions.
- enhances the information processing/retention/learning.
- leads to a better evaluation.
- increases perceived credibility.

Music psychologists say that "music is likely to produce often a very positive mood, and we know that positively colored events are actually remembered better than negative events." Because the impact of music is subtle and invisible (an unconscious influence on mood), many professionals are adamantly against adding music in news pieces. One of them is Michael Hernandez from the Journalism Education Association at Kansas State University: "Music creates a bias because it comes from outside the situation and facts, and because it is placed into the story by the reporter, just like an opinion."
*Attention*: Music and spoken words are both processed through the same channel, the phonological loop. This means, "background music can inhibit the processing of other information that uses the same channel" wrote Marissa Peters in her 2021 master's thesis in Educational Science and Technology at the University of Twente in the Netherlands.

**Using music constructively**
- **Know the requirements:** Make sure you are aware of the rules or guidelines of the outlet and show that will run the story. Sometimes rules vary among different shows or formats at one organization.
- **Use ambient sound:** It can transport audiences to the place of your story and engage them. But use the ambience, don't amplify things by putting extra sound on top. It should reflect the sound of the real environment at the shoot.
- **Use music that occurs at a shoot:** Do you find music on the scene that you can include naturally? This "diegetic music" or "source music" occurs within the world of a narrative and is heard by the characters in the scene. For example, music heard in a bar or at a concert or festival you're shooting at. That's opposed to "incidental music", which is music heard by the viewer but which was not occurring at the scene of the shoot, rather it was added later.
- **Try to use music authentic to the place/the protagonist:** Is there any locally produced music that reflects the identity of the place and/or the protagonist? Be careful of cultural and generational differences. Young people might not identify with the same music their parents listen to.
- **No coloring of reality:** Make sure you don't use music in a manipulative way, altering the authentic tone of the story.

- **Be conscious about the goal:** Think about the reasons for adding incidental music: do you want to structure visual sequences (problem/solution), intensify the emotions triggered by images and soundbites (No distraction! Congruence is key), or localize the scene? Would ambient sound be sufficient?

> **Musical preconceptions:** A European correspondent produced a radio story about unemployed youth in Tunisia. The editor asked her to include traditional Tunisian music so listeners from Europe would feel transported to the country. Some viewers might have visited Tunisia as tourists and local folk music is something they can relate to. The correspondent refused because her protagonists had different musical preferences and were fans of American music. She struggled to convince the editor to abandon these preconceptions.

# Using video effects, titles and color grading in constructive reporting

Typography, design colors and grading may depend on editorial guidelines of the outlet airing the final piece. Ideally, separate video track(s) should be used for this.

In order to apply a constructive approach, one must be mindful of the other phases of post-production like video effects, titles and color grading.

**Video effects**
This may include adjustments, adding/removing visual content, reframing, changing composition, cropping and blurring. For instance, if there's an unwanted element in a shot, is it ok to modify it in order to keep the attention where you want it? Are you – to what extent – permitted to alter an image? In case a source asks for anonymity, visual effects could be used to blur their image.

**Titles**
When adding titles, choose typography, graphics and colors that reflect the mood of the piece you're working on. Is it hopeful, serious, kid-related? When adding captions, make sure you're giving enough context (especially for photojournalism). For video, are you animating the titles?

**Visualization of data**
If you want to include statistics and numbers in your titles, consider turning them into an illustrated infographic to make them more accessible to audiences.

**Color grading (vibrant, sun-flooded, dark)**
It is best to refrain from altering images too much. An example of bad practice is the "yellow filter" some Hollywood films sometimes use to color grade a place that they deem dangerous, like Mexico or somewhere in the Arab world. That creates subtle bias that the average viewer probably does not even notice.  In 1994, Time Magazine in the US ran a cover photo of Black, former football star O.J. Simpson after his arrest on suspicion of murder. The same photograph was run on the cover of another news magazine. It was discovered that Time had significantly darkened Simpson's skin, which caused an outcry as the murder case already had a racial

overtone. The photo illustrator who had touched up the photo denied having any racial agenda, saying he had only wanted to give the image a more "dramatic tone".



**More information**

**Visual communication:**

**Giorgia Aiello & Katy Parry, Visual Communication: Understanding Images in Media Culture, 2019 (book)**

**All Noam Chomsky's books, articles and interviews. Including this 2016 interview on YouTube titled "Understanding Reality"**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQd6QGQIxmQ&t=61s

**The Essentials, free online photography classes, The Everyday Projects + Black Women Photographers**
https://www.everydayprojects.org/webinars

**Participatory approach:**

**Towards a Participatory Approach**
https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/ijfma/article/view/7224

**"The Life That We Don't Want": Using Participatory Video in Researching Violence**
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2009.00033.x

**Mobile journalism:**

**Book: Anthony Adornato, Mobile and Social Media Journalism: A practical guide, Second Edition, 2022**

**Corinne Podger, Mobile Journalism Manual, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Singapore Ltd. Media Programme Asia**
https://www.mojo-manual.org/how-social-video-differs-television/

**Panu Karhunen, Closer to the Story? Accessibility and Mobile Journalism, 2017**
https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/closer-story-accessibility-and-mobile-journalism

**Multimedia storytelling:**

**Jane Stevens, Tutorial, Multimedia Storytelling: learn the secrets from experts**
https://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/starttofinish/

**Stella Bruzzi, Narration: the film and its voice, New Documentary: A Critical Introduction (Chapter 2), 2003 (book)**
https://books.google.com.au/books?id=A-w-YxAnM4EC&pg=PA40&dq=voice+over+in+documentary&hl=en&ei=Uqq7TOLLGIecvgOFiIX5DQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result#v=onepage&q=voice%20over%20in%20documentary&f=false

**Bill Nichols, Introduction to Documentary (Chapter 6)**
http://personal.psu.edu/kns5319/ARCH%20130/Bill%20Nichols%20-%20%20Introduction%20to%20documentary.pdf

**Gonzo Journalism**
https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Gonzo+Journalism&docid=608007441835054363&mid=1B1EE4BDA00BC6EAFFC61B1EE4BDA00BC6EAFFC6&view=detail&FORM=VIRE

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