

coursera

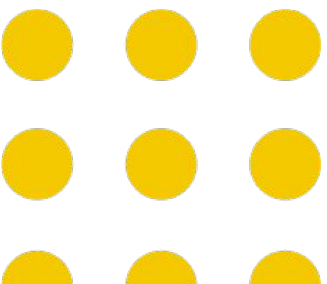
Home Video Production Toolkit

Introduction

It takes a lot of planning and patience to create videos. But with so much technology today, you don't need to spend thousands of dollars on a high end camera or studio set-up. This guide will provide you with recommendations on how to set up your studio and film videos at home.

Before you start your video production journey, review our [Creating Video Content](#) articles on how to design your video and best practices from our Teaching & Learning team. We also have a [script template](#) to help you get started.

Depending on what you're teaching, your videos might have different setups. To teach learners how to code or use software, you might screen record and capture your voice only. You can also just film yourself giving a lecture. With editing software, you can add slides after filming and combine footage of you and slides in one video.





- 1. Before Your Shoot**
2. During Your Shoot
3. After Your Shoot
4. Remote Production Assistance
5. Additional Resources

1. Set your background

Take a moment to set up your background.

- Choose a space that is quiet. A space with lots of natural light will help if you're not planning to use a lot of light equipment.
- Avoid having bright windows directly behind you. Backlighting creates a silhouette that obscures your features.
- A room with soft surface materials is ideal to absorb sound. You can also bring in soft surface items into the room if there's an echo.



Background options

Option 1: Create a background in your home

Choose a wall with a solid color or set the background by bringing in props but **keep it simple** so learners are not distracted with what's behind you.

Option 2: Use a green screen

A digital background is added in after filming in editing. You can get really creative with this option.

[Zoom](#) also has a virtual background option using a green screen.

Option 3: Use a background cloth or paper

Hang seamless paper or background cloth on a stand or simply cut and tape it to a wall.

[LimoStudio Green Backdrop Screen](#) \$32

[Screen Background Stand Kit](#) \$55

[Impact Chroma Muslin Background](#) \$60

[Lighting Kit with 3 Backdrops](#) \$133

[Seamless Background Paper](#) \$20-\$60

[Julius Studio Backdrop stand](#) \$40

[Pop-Up Reversible Background Kit](#) \$60

[Pop-Up Chroma Green Background Kit](#) \$60

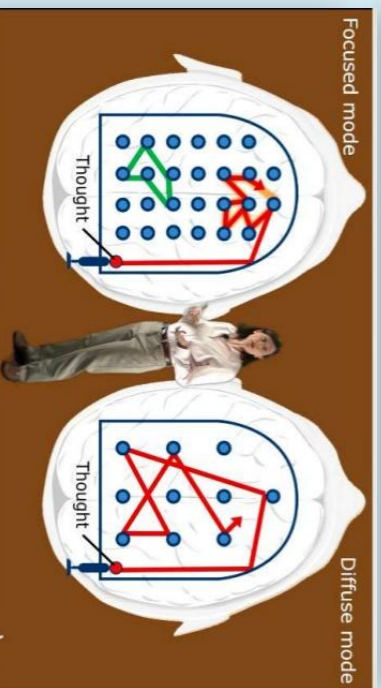
Green screen



Solid wall color background



Cloth backdrop setup



Images from [Barbara Oakley](#)

2. Use a microphone

Sound is essential in video. Use a separate microphone rather than the one on your camera, computer or phone. The audio will be much crisper and there will be less ambient noise. You can record both the audio on the main camera device and have a separate audio file to sync it up in editing. [Learn more about capturing good sound.](#)



Microphone options

Option 1: External microphones

External microphones can be set on a table, attached to a boom, or to your camera.

[USB Microphone](#) \$40

[Rode Compact On-Camera Mic](#) \$59

[Blue Snowball Microphone](#) \$70

[Blue Yeti Microphone](#) \$129

[RODE Studio Boom Kit](#) \$190

[Rode Shotgun Microphone](#) \$249

Option 2: Use a lavalier

A lavalier is a small microphone that attaches to your shirt. You can attach a lavalier to a phone to record audio or attach it to a camera or computer to capture sound separately.

[Lavalier Lapel Microphone](#) \$16

[Extension cable](#) \$9

[Rode Lav and mic for Smartphones](#)
\$78

Option 3: Use a phone

You can use your phone or second phone for audio recording.

Things to consider

Attach a microphone to a boom stand

A boom is an extendible and adjustable arm which a microphone can be mounted on. This is most ideal if you'll be standing for your video. [Learn about setting up a boom mic.](#)

[Stand with microphone clip options](#) \$20-\$30

[Boom stand](#) \$30

Note: Depending on your microphone, you may also need to purchase an adapter and an extension cable

Tip: If you're using a phone to record audio. Attach the phone to a boom pole or a backdrop stand (if not using it for background) so that it hangs above you but out of shot. Watch Wistia's video on [Shooting Video with an Iphone.](#)

Using a lavalier

- Clip it so that the microphone is pointing up towards your mouth.
- This can be clipped to a tie, in between the buttons on a dress shirt, or on the lapel of a jacket.
- Run the cord of the lavalier on the inside your shirt so viewers will not see it.
- Test the sound to make sure that nothing is causing an audio issue.

Tip: If you have an old pair of headphones with a mic, you can cut the headphones off and attach the microphone to your shirt like a lav. Check out [this video](#) on how to do it.

Audio setup with second phone



Image from [Wistia](#)

Mic on a boom stand



Lavelier clipped on shirt



Image from [Al For Everyone](#)

3. Set up lighting

An easy way to make your video look professional is to have good lighting. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Don't frame yourself with your back to a window.
- Lights should be diffused to avoid creating shiny areas or spots on your face. This can also happen by pulling the light source back farther away from you or directing the spot in a slightly different way.
- If you wear glasses, it may take some additional patience to get it right. Adjust the lights and move it further back to try avoid creating a glare on your glasses.
- For green screen, stand ~1 meter (~3 feet) in front of it and use 4 lights to prevent shadows.



Lighting options

Option 1: Use natural light

Natural light is better than artificial lights. If possible, shoot in an area with lots of windows and face the light.

Option 2: Use an external monitor

If you need an extra boost of light, place the laptop in front of an external monitor. Change the monitor desktop background to white. [More details here.](#)

[Ring Light with Tripod and Phone Holder](#)
\$43

Option 3: Use a ring light

This is extremely popular with YouTube Creators and easy to use.

[Neewer Ring Light Kit](#) \$106

Lighting options (cont.)

Option 4: Attach a light dimmer to your camera or light stand

It's a great option if you don't have a lot of space to set up light equipment.

[Newer Dimmable 176 LED Video Light on Camera LED Panel](#) \$43

[Mountdog 1350W Studio Softbox Lighting Kit](#) \$90

[Newer 3 Pack Led Lighting Kit](#) \$183

[Fluorescent Lighting Kit](#) \$198

[LED 3-Panel Kit](#) \$295

Option 5: Use a lighting kit

Lighting kits give you more flexibility to adjust and control lighting.

Three-Point Lighting

Here is a diagram of how to set up a standard three-point light, which is the standard method used in video and film. Placing lights in three separate positions will illuminate the subject while also controlling the shadows produced by direct lighting. Watch [this](#) 1 minute video about three-point lighting.

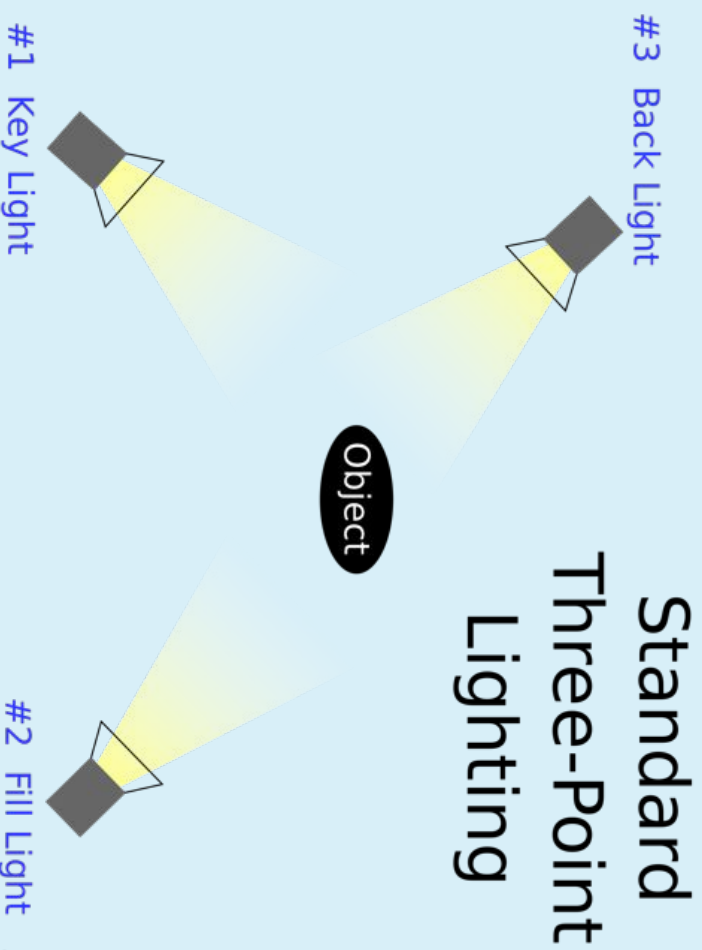


Image source: [Wikipedia](#)

4. Choose your camera

Filming for your course doesn't mean spending lots of money on a new camera. There are plenty of options to use what you already have such as your phone or computer camera. Choose a camera option that you're most comfortable with. And *always* use a tripod to keep your camera stable.



Camera options

Option 1: Mobile phone or tablet

Most mobile phones and tablets today have high quality video resolution. Check out Wistia's

[Shooting Video with an iPhone.](#)

Option 2: External webcam/laptop

External webcams give you better quality all around than the built-in camera on your laptop.

[Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920](#) \$80

[Logitech C920 Widescreen Mode](#) \$90

[Logitech BRIO 4K Ultra Pro Webcam](#) \$199

Option 3: DSLR Camera

This is the most expensive option if you don't already have one. It's a good investment if you're planning to do many videos in the future or maybe you want to upgrade to something more professional after trying some of the options above.

[Sony a5100 16-50mm Interchangeable Lens Camera with 3-inch flip up LCD](#) \$548

[Canon Rebel Digital Camera with EF-S 18-55mm IS II Lens](#) \$699

[Canon Rebel Digital Camera with EF-S 18-55mm IS II Lens](#) \$699

Note: You may need to purchase an [SD card](#) in addition to a camera.

Camera accessories

Use a tripod

It's highly recommended that you use a tripod to make camera shots shake-free but if that's not an option, place your camera against something so it's still and at eye-level.

[Phone Tripod with Remote](#) \$16

[Acuvar Tripod for Tablets](#) \$25

[Lightweight Tripod with Bag](#) \$26

[Ravelli Tripod](#) \$26-\$40

Tip: Use a laptop stand or put books under your laptop so that the webcam is at eye level.

Footage space

You'll spend hours recording. This means you'll run out of space on your device; especially if you're using a phone. Use a cloud storage system to save footage or back footage up on a hard drive.

Cloud options: [Box](#), [Dropbox](#), [Google Drive](#), [Amazon Drive](#)

[Portable hard drive options](#) You'll want to use a hard drive if you're also the one editing the videos.

Use a teleprompter app

You might need a script or outline to help you during filming. Don't worry, there's a few ways to do this. [This video](#) will give you an idea of how it feels to read the teleprompter. It isn't something we're naturally used to doing so practice a few times before you hit record. [Here](#) are some teleprompter tips and a script template to get started.

- If you're using a phone for filming, download a teleprompter app to use at the same time during recording.
- If you're using a camera, use your laptop as a teleprompter. Check out [Wistia's video](#) on using a laptop as a teleprompter.
- If your webcam/laptop is your camera and you have an external monitor, use a teleprompter app on your monitor with the guided line centered at the very top of your laptop so you're not looking down or away. You can also use a tripod and place a phone with a teleprompter app above the webcam so you maintain a similar eye-line.

[Video Teleprompter Lite Mobile App](#) (iPhone, iPad only)

[Teleprompter Apps for Android](#)

[nPrompt for Macs](#), \$30

[Prompt Smart for mobile device and laptops](#)
\$3-\$30/year

[Glide Gear TMP100 Adjustable Tablet/Smartphone Teleprompter](#), \$199

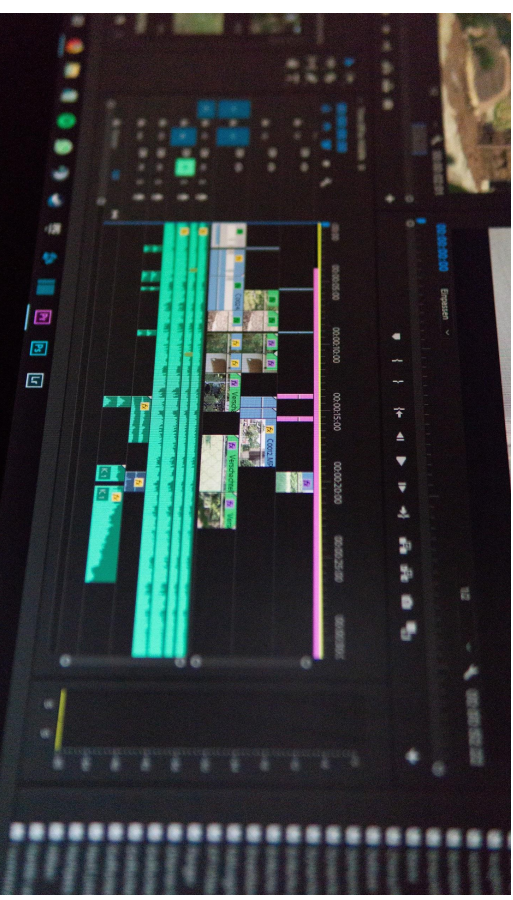
If you're using this type of teleprompter, make sure your final scripts are in a teleprompter ready format.

Video production setup options

	Under \$100	Under \$350	Over \$350
Background	Background Paper \$18 Duct Tape \$6	LimoStudio Green Backdrop Screen \$32 Duct Tape \$6	LimoStudio Green Background Screen \$32 Julius Studio Backdrop stand \$40
Audio	Second phone \$0 Tripod Boom with Clip \$26	Blue Yeti Microphone Boom Stand \$129 Boom Stand \$20	RODE VideoMic Studio Boom Kit \$190 Newer 3 Pack Led Lighting Kit \$183
Lighting	Ring Light w/Tripod and Phone Holder \$43	Newer LED Panel \$43 Light stand \$20	Newer 3 Pack Led Lighting Kit \$183
Camera	Mobile phone \$0	Logitech C920 Widescreen \$90	Canon Rebel Digital Camera with EF-S 18-55mm IS II Lens \$699
Tripod	Included with lighting	Elevate webcam on high surface	Ravelli Lightweight Tripod \$32
	\$93	\$340	\$1176

5. Select recording and editing software

Videos are the most popular instructional resource for courses on Coursera. Some instructors use a video software program like Screenflow or Camtasia to record and edit videos, but you can use any other software of your choice. If you can't decide, most software options include free trials.



Recording and editing software

You don't need to stick to one software to do it all. Make sure it supports your hardware and choose what works for you.

	Video Recording	Screen Recording	Editing
<u>Camtasia</u> \$250	✓	✓	✓
<u>SnagIt</u> \$50	✓	✓	✓ Very basic editing
<u>QuickTime Player</u> (free)	✓	✓	✓ Very basic editing
<u>Screenflow</u> (Mac only) \$129-\$209/mo		✓	✓
<u>iMovie for MacOS and mobile</u> (free)	✓		✓
<u>Audacity</u> (free, audio recording and editing)	✓ Audio only		✓ Audio only
<u>Adobe Premiere Pro</u> ~\$20/mo			✓
<u>Zoom</u> \$15-\$20/mo (see additional info on next slide)	✓	✓	

Zoom tips

[Zoom](#) is typically used for video webinars, online meetings, and video conferencing but you can also use it to record yourself or/and your screen, and interviews. Using Zoom will still require some editing work to trim out transitions from video to screen sharing.

Note: Internet connection will greatly affect your video resolution and audio quality. It is not recommended to use Zoom if you do not have a stable connection during recording.

1. Zoom has the option to use a [virtual background](#). While it's tempting to use its very cool backgrounds, it can be distracting to learners. Upload a solid background color or use a simple background image. Virtual backgrounds work best with a green screen.
2. Make sure you [record to the cloud](#) so you receive a separate video file emailed to you along with an audio file and transcript.
3. Use the annotation tool on a shared screen or whiteboard. [Learn more.](#)
4. [Touch up my appearance feature](#)
5. Consider using Zoom for interviews with an expert. Have the other participants record to the cloud so they have a file of their footage you can use if needed during editing.

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Prepare for filming

Unless you are a trained actor, being in front of a camera can feel awkward and uncomfortable. Even the most seasoned classroom instructor can feel artificial when the lens is on her. The tips in the following slides are intended to help you overcome this while keeping your energy high and making remote learners feel as if you are speaking directly to them and their needs.



#1 Frame your shot

Employ the [“rule of thirds”](#) when thinking about your shot composition. You should be positioned in the middle or the side. If you’re planning to add text on screen in some places, consider framing yourself to the side so the text has enough room to appear.

Tip: If you’re filming with your phone, use landscape mode so you don’t get the black bars on the side which happens when film vertically.



Why Corporate Income Tax?

- 1.) Cost of doing business in local economy
- 2.) Coherent system with Personal income tax



#2 Look at the camera

Look directly at the camera to create a connection with the learner, increasing their feelings of engagement. Reading off of notes in your lap or looking off to the side at a teleprompter, skews your eye line and can be distracting to the viewer.

Show enthusiasm. When your enthusiasm and passion shine on screen, it's a better indication that the video will be engaging to learners.

Stand instead of sitting down. In addition to providing a more flattering silhouette, it can inject more energy into your voice and personality, particularly towards the end of a long day. You will likely use hand gestures when standing versus sitting and that's okay.

If you feel your energy flagging, take a short break.



#3 Wardrobe

Wear what makes you feel comfortable and confident. This should be about you as an instructor; you shouldn't feel like you are in a costume that doesn't reflect who you truly are.



- Stay away from solid black or solid white, as it can tend to blend into the background. Try wearing vibrant solid colors -- everyone looks good in blue on camera.
- Do not wear any shade of green if you are using a green screen.
- Avoid wearing shirts with prominent logos (unless they are the logo of your university/company) to avoid any potential legal issues.
- Avoid wearing big necklaces as they have a tendency to bump against the microphone. Jangly bracelets will also be picked up on the microphone if you are moving your hands around causing the bracelets to clink together.
- Avoid tight patterns (like tiny stripes, polka dots, checks), as they can cause a "moire" (or buzzing) effect on the camera. Example:



#4 Audio tips

If you hear an echo or you have no option but to use a built-in microphone, bring in soft surface items into the room. Cushions, curtains, books, rugs, and blankets will absorb sound so it doesn't bounce off hard surfaces. [Moving blankets](#) are also a good option to hang on walls to help with sound.

- Speak directly and loudly into the microphone. Maintain about 6-12 inches distance from the microphone.
- Make sure the right microphone you want to use is selected for recording. The default is typically the built-in microphone on a laptop.
- Turn off all notifications on the technology around you (computer, phone). Do not set them to vibrate, as microphones will pick up the vibration noise.
- Stop and restart if you need to due to noise or mistakes. You don't need to start from the beginning; just pick up from one or two sentences back. Editing can help put it together afterwards.
- If you do have to stop, clap your hands in front of the microphone so the audio file will show a spike and inform the editor where another take occurred.
- If you are recording voiceover only for narrated slides or screencasts, recording in a closet can help eliminate ambient noise.

#5 Practice

Practice, practice, practice. It's essential! Scripts can help you think through each point you want to make but can be constraining. If you prefer to use them, make sure you read each sentence out loud. Don't be afraid to veer from your script in the moment if it feels natural. If you're not using a script, make sure you have a list of talking points.



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Coursera video specs

Here are some video guidelines to follow so you can ensure your video content works as expected on the Coursera platform.

General Guidelines

- Use 16:9 aspect ratio. Aspect ratio is the proportion of width and height of a frame. If you're using slides, make sure your settings are "widescreen 16:9" as this affects the font sizes if the slide deck is in a different resolution. [Watch this video](#) on how to adjust slide settings if using PowerPoint.
- Record your screen or video in the highest resolution. Video resolution represents the quality of the video. Your video resolution must be 720p or higher. Select a supported file type (.mp4 recommended).
- Leave enough padding (blank space) under the video and slides for 2-3 lines of subtitle text.
- Design for mobile. With fewer words per slide you can also make text size larger: we recommend no smaller than 20 point font.

Encoding Guidelines

Video

- H.264 Codec
- Bit Rate between 8-16 Mbps
- De-interlace / progressive video
- Maximum video resolution of 1280 x 720 (720p)

Audio

- AAC Codec
- Sample Rate of 44.1 KHz
- Bit Rate of 160 or higher

Note: The maximum file upload size is 2GB.

Video reviews

Videos should be sent out to stakeholders to review and checked for errors. Check for continuity, typos, and that the audio and video are as high quality as possible.

You may also want to send footage to an editor or vendor. Video vendors can assist by doing the editing for you. The amount of work varies but this can include making smooth cuts, making clearer transitions, highlighting key terms on the screen, color correction, and green screen animations.

- The file will be too large to send through email so you'll need to consider a file sharing service such as Google Drive, Box, or Dropbox. Ask your reviewer(s) for specific comments and to include the timestamp of the video with their feedback. You should also give them a deadline.
- You may also decide to upload the videos to a system where reviewers can comment as they watch, making collaboration and feedback much easier. Check out the following video collaboration tools:

[Eframe.io](#)

[Vimeo](#)

[Wipster](#)

[Mediasilo](#)

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Remote production assistance

For at home productions that require more than you might be able to do on your own, Coursera has built out an “Approved Vendor Network” that can provide you with managed Remote Production Solutions. These third party vendors can provide you with such remote services as:

- Access to an ecosystem of producers, directors, animators and editors who can work with you remotely to manage your at home productions.
- Production kits for rent/temporary access including cameras, lights, audio equipment and backdrops.

For inquiries on Coursera Approved Remote Production Vendors please contact Dave Livingston <dlivingston@coursera.org>

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Additional Resources

Video Production

[Bringing your ideas to life with the right educational video format](#) (YouTube)

[YouTube Creator Academy](#) (YouTube)

[Creating a Quality Video Production Studio for eLearning At Home](#) (eLearning)

[Look Great in Your Next Webcam Video](#) (Wistia)

[Shooting video with an iPhone](#) (Wistia)

[Filming an Online Course Gear 101](#) (Kajabi)

[How to Create a DIY Green Screen Video Effect](#) (Camtasia)

[How a Complete Novice Created the Worlds Largest Online Course in Her Basement](#) (The Observer)

Lighting

[Wistia's Down and Dirty Lighting Kit ~\\$100](#)

[How to Get the Perfect Lighting](#) (Camtasia)

Audio

[How to Create Audio for Video](#) (B&H)

[Audio Editing Basics](#) (Camtasia)

[Audacity Tutorials](#) (Audacity)

Additional Resources (cont.)

Editing

[Camtasia Tutorials](#)

[Adobe Premiere Tutorials](#)

[Getting Started in iMovie \(Storyblocks\)](#)

Coursera Resources

[5 Innovative Techniques for Creating Online Video Lectures](#)

[The “secret sauce” behind the world’s most popular online course](#)

[Becoming an Effective Instructor on Camera: Tips from the Art Director’s Studio](#)

Stock photo sites

[Pixabay](#)

[Unsplash](#)

[Pexels](#)

[Video blocks](#)

[Istock](#)

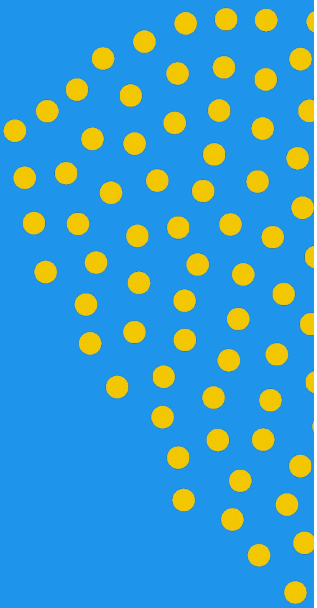
[Shutterstock](#)

Stock audio sites

[Pond5 Public Domain Project](#)

[Pond5](#)

[Audio Jungle](#)



Share your feedback

We'd love to hear from you. Share your feedback, tips, ideas, or photos from your own home video setup in this [short survey](#).

