

FIELD EDITION

THE COMPLETE SHOTS LIST

*A Beginner's A-to-Z Guide to Filming, Creative B-Roll,
Lighting and Field Coverage*

BUILT FOR REAL-WORLD CREATORS

Learn what to film, where to place the camera, how fast to move, which lens to choose, how to work with available light, and how to bring home an edit-ready story from nearly any location.

Created for Ghost Gramps

A practical guide for YouTube, documentaries, travel videos, livestream packages, shorts and personal storytelling.

Before You Begin

This guide is written for the person who knows the story they want to tell but is still learning how to capture it. You do not need expensive gear, a film-school vocabulary or perfect mobility. You need a repeatable system, a little patience and permission to experiment.

THE RULE THAT MATTERS MOST

Bring home a story, not just proof that you were there. A sign proves the location. A wide shot shows the place. Details prove the history. Movement gives it life. Sound makes it believable. A closing shot lets the viewer leave with you.

Safety and access: Never trespass, enter unsafe structures, stand in active roads or railroad rights-of-way, interfere with services, or risk a fall for a shot.

Abandoned does not mean unowned. Ask permission, respect posted rules and work within your physical limits.

Gear language: Lens numbers in this guide use full-frame equivalent focal lengths because they are easiest to compare across cameras. Phone users can think of 0.5x as wide, 1x as standard and 2x or 3x as telephoto.

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The Two-Minute Quick Start

When you arrive somewhere and your mind goes blank, use this page. It works for a courthouse, a creek, a ghost town, a museum or a roadside dinosaur.

- 1. Identify it: Film the sign, plaque, road name, map or unmistakable landmark.
- 2. Show the whole place: Get one stable wide shot from the best safe viewpoint.
- 3. Show the main subject: Move closer for a medium hero shot.
- 4. Prove the story: Capture at least three details - dates, textures, tools, damage, lettering or activity.
- 5. Add life: Record one moving element - wind, water, traffic, people, machinery, shadows or your own walk-through.
- 6. Record sound: Hold still and capture 30 to 60 seconds without talking.
- 7. Get yourself in it: Record a short introduction, reaction or walk into frame.
- 8. Leave clearly: Film a departure, door closing, road away, final quiet detail or sunset.

DEFAULT CLIP LENGTH

Most B-roll clips should run 8 to 12 seconds. Start still for 2 seconds, make one slow move, then end still for 2 seconds. Hold longer when action is unpredictable or the scene should feel quiet.

NEED	MINIMUM
Identifier	1 readable shot
Wide	1 stable shot
Medium	1 hero shot
Details	3 different close shots
Movement	1 purposeful move
Sound	30-60 seconds
A-roll	1 short usable line
Ending	1 clear closing image

PART I - START FILMING WITH CONFIDENCE

The first goal is not cinematic perfection. It is consistency. This part gives you a system you can repeat until the technical choices become natural.

1. Think Like a Storyteller, Not a Camera Operator

Every location needs a beginning, middle and ending

STORY JOB	QUESTION	TYPICAL SHOTS
Beginning	Where are we and why should I care?	Road approach, sign, wide establishing view, first reaction
Middle	What is here and what proves the story?	Medium views, details, activity, narration, old photos, sound
Ending	What should the viewer remember?	Hero detail, reflection, departure, final fact, quiet image

The five visual questions

1. Where am I? Use a sign, map, landmark or wide scene.
2. What is the main subject? Give it a clean medium or hero view.
3. What makes it interesting? Show dates, damage, craftsmanship, people, scale or contrast.
4. What changes or moves here? Look for wind, water, machines, light, traffic, hands or footsteps.
5. How does it feel? Use light, sound, pacing, empty space and your reaction.

A-roll and B-roll in plain English

A-roll is the information-carrying footage: you speaking, an interview, a demonstration or the main action. B-roll is the supporting footage that shows what the words describe, covers edits, adds atmosphere and gives the viewer something new to notice.

A USEFUL HABIT

Whenever you say a noun in narration, ask whether you filmed it. If you say "old railroad depot," bring home the depot, the sign, the tracks, the ticket window, the worn floor and one sound that belongs there.

2. Your Basic Camera Setup

A dependable beginner setup

SETTING	START HERE	WHY
Resolution	4K if storage allows; otherwise 1080p	4K gives room to crop and stabilize; 1080p is easier to store and edit
Frame rate	30 fps	Natural for YouTube, travel, talking and general B-roll
Shutter	1/60 at 30 fps	Creates natural-looking motion blur
White balance	Auto at first; lock it in steady light	Prevents color from shifting during a clip
Focus	Tap or single autofocus before moving	Keeps the important subject sharp
Exposure	Protect bright skies, windows and signs	Slightly dark is easier to fix than blown-out white
Stabilization	On for handheld; off on a solid tripod if it causes drift	Reduces shake without fighting a locked shot

Before you leave the vehicle

- [] Clean the camera lens and windshield.
- [] Check battery, memory card and microphone.
- [] Confirm frame rate and resolution.
- [] Record or photograph the location name for file organization.
- [] Look for safe parking, public access, weather and closing time.
- [] Choose one stable camera position for a walk-through or drive-through shot.

Phone, action camera or interchangeable-lens camera?

A phone is fast, discreet and excellent for wide, standard and short telephoto coverage. An action camera is best for secure vehicle views, walking POV, water, tight spaces and risky weather. An interchangeable-lens camera gives the strongest low-light performance, shallow depth of field and lens choice, but it also asks for more setup. Use the camera you will actually carry and operate confidently.

3. The Three Lenses That Cover Most Stories

You can make a complete video with three visual viewpoints. Think wide, natural and compressed. On a phone, that usually means 0.5x, 1x and 2x or 3x. On a camera, use the full-frame equivalents below.

LENS VIEW	COMMON RANGE	BEST APPLICATIONS	WATCH OUT FOR
Wide	16-24mm equivalent	Establishing views, interiors, tall buildings, landscapes, tight rooms, dramatic foreground	Edge stretching, tilted verticals, getting too close to faces
Standard	35-50mm equivalent	Natural-looking scenes, walk-and-talk, people, general B-roll, medium shots	Can look ordinary unless composition and light are intentional
Telephoto	70-200mm equivalent	Distant details, signs, wildlife, compressed roads, layers, safe public viewpoints	Shake, missed focus, flat-looking scenes without foreground

The best effect of each lens

Wide creates depth. Put something close to the lens and the main subject farther away. Standard creates honesty. It looks close to how a person remembers a scene. Telephoto creates compression. Distant objects appear closer together, making roads, hills, signs, crowds and architecture feel layered.

Three-shot lens exercise

1. Shoot the same subject wide with a strong foreground object.
2. Shoot it again at a standard view from a natural standing distance.
3. Back up and use telephoto to isolate a detail or stack background layers.

DO NOT ZOOM DURING EVERY CLIP

Choose the lens before recording. A clean fixed focal length usually edits better than a wandering zoom. Zoom only when the zoom itself reveals information.

4. Frame Rate, Shutter and Motion

The three most useful frame rates

FRAME RATE	USE IT FOR	PLAYBACK IDEA	SHUTTER START
24 fps	Narrative pieces, moody historic work, controlled scenes	Normal speed with a traditional film feel	About 1/50
30 fps	General YouTube, travel, talking, everyday B-roll	Normal speed and easy workflow	About 1/60
60 fps	Water, flags, vehicles, wildlife, hands, moments you may slow down	Slow to 40-50 percent on a 24/30 fps timeline	About 1/120

The three movement speeds you will use most

SPEED	CLIP LENGTH	BEST EFFECT	APPLICATIONS
Slow	8-15 seconds	Calm, thoughtful, eerie, revealing	Historic places, abandoned sites, nature, cemeteries, details
Natural	5-10 seconds	Feels like exploring with you	Tours, museums, streets, markets, walk-throughs
Fast	1-4 seconds	Energy, surprise, transition	Shorts, action, whip transitions, event highlights, quick reveals

Move slower than feels normal. Cameras exaggerate sudden starts, uneven footsteps and last-second corrections. Make one move per clip and stop recording before changing direction.

When to break the shutter rule

- Use a faster shutter for crisp water drops, fast vehicles, sports or footage you will freeze-frame.
- Use a slower shutter carefully for dreamy motion, light trails or deliberate blur.

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- Under indoor lights, adjust shutter if you see flicker. Try 1/50, 1/60, 1/100 or 1/120 depending on the light and frame rate.
- In bright daylight, use an ND filter if you want natural shutter speed without overexposing.

5. Exposure, Focus and White Balance Without the Headache

Exposure priorities

1. Protect important highlights. A white sky, window, neon sign or pale face cannot be repaired if it is completely blown out.
2. Expose for the story subject. A dark room may stay dark if the doorway or artifact is the point.
3. Slight underexposure is usually safer than clipping bright areas.
4. Check the screen from a shaded angle. Bright sunlight can fool you into thinking the image is darker than it is.

Focus priorities

- Focus on the eyes for people.
- Focus on the lettering for signs and plaques.
- Focus about one-third into a landscape when everything should feel sharp.
- For a camera move, set focus before recording and avoid walking closer than the focus system can follow.
- Record a locked-off safety shot before attempting a rack focus.

White balance priorities

Auto white balance is fine when the light is changing. Lock white balance when filming several clips in one room or when a slow camera move crosses similar light. This prevents a wall from changing from blue to orange during the shot. When indoor bulbs and daylight mix, choose which light matters most and let the other look imperfect rather than chasing both.

QUICK RESCUE

If a scene looks too blue, move away from shade or select a warmer white balance. If it looks too orange, move away from household bulbs or select a cooler setting. Keep skin and neutral walls believable.

6. Stability and Camera Support

The stability ladder

METHOD	BEST USE	FIELD TIP
Tripod or solid surface	Interviews, establishing shots, time-lapse, self-filming	Let action move inside the frame
Monopod or walking stick support	Quick setup, telephoto, limited mobility	Lean slightly into it and control your breathing
Wall, post, railing or vehicle	Fast field stabilization	Protect the camera from vibration and traffic
Two-handed handheld	Natural B-roll and short moves	Elbows tucked, knees soft, move from hips
Gimbal	Longer tracking and walk-through shots	Balance it first; do not make every shot float
Secure mount	Vehicle, POV or fixed action camera	Never handhold while driving

Handheld technique

1. Hold the camera close to your body.
2. Tuck elbows against your ribs.
3. Use short heel-to-toe steps.
4. Breathe out slowly during the move.
5. Start and finish with your feet planted whenever possible.
6. Record a second take that is completely still.

7. Composition and Subject Placement

The three compositions to master first

COMPOSITION	HOW TO USE IT	BEST FOR
Centered symmetry	Place the subject in the middle and balance both sides	Roads, hallways, doors, churches, monuments, dramatic reveals
Rule of thirds	Place the subject near a third line and leave space toward the action or view	People, signs, landscapes, interviews, vehicles
Layered depth	Use foreground, subject and background	Wide lenses, ruins, nature, streets, windows, fences

Headroom and looking room

For a person, leave a small comfortable space above the head, not a large empty ceiling. If the person faces left, leave more room on the left. If they point or walk, leave space in front of the action.

Leading lines

Roads, rails, fences, shadows, rows of graves, bridge rails, streams and building edges can guide the eye. Place the camera so the line begins near a corner or lower edge and points toward the subject.

Foreground framing

Shoot through a doorway, window, fence opening, branches, machinery, sign or vehicle mirror. A nearby object gives depth and creates the feeling of discovering the scene. Keep the foreground simple enough that the subject still reads clearly.

THE CLUTTER TEST

Before recording, look at the edges of the frame. Remove trash cans, bright signs, half-cut people, poles growing from heads and distracting objects when you can simply move a few feet.

PART II - THE LANGUAGE OF SHOTS

A shot is more than a camera position. Each size, angle and move changes what the viewer feels and what information they receive.

8. Shot Sizes: Wide, Medium and Close

Extreme wide shot

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Shows the subject as a small part of a large environment.	Mountains, ghost towns, coastlines, isolation, scale.

How to shoot it: Choose a clean horizon and let the environment dominate. Add a road, person or vehicle for scale.

Movement and timing: Hold 10-20 seconds. Camera can remain locked.

Common beginner mistake: Using it when the subject is too tiny to understand.

Creative variations: Shoot at sunrise, with weather moving in, or with a telephoto lens to compress landscape layers.

Wide establishing shot

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Explains where the scene takes place.	Every location, especially openings and transitions.

How to shoot it: Show the complete building, street, room, landscape or event from the best safe viewpoint.

Movement and timing: Hold 8-15 seconds before any pan.

Common beginner mistake: Panning immediately instead of giving the editor a clean beginning.

Creative variations: Shoot one centered version, one three-quarter angle and one with foreground.

Medium hero shot

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Shows the main subject clearly while keeping context.	Buildings, people, artifacts, vehicles, signs.

How to shoot it: Fill roughly half to two-thirds of the frame and remove distractions.

Movement and timing: Usually locked or a very slow push-in.

Common beginner mistake: Standing too far away and making the viewer search for the subject.

Creative variations: Use side light, a lower angle or telephoto compression.

Medium close-up

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Focuses attention while preserving some surroundings.	A-roll, interviews, demonstrations, hands, objects.

How to shoot it: For a person, frame around chest or shoulders. For an object, include the working area.

Movement and timing: Hold 8-12 seconds or for the full action.

Common beginner mistake: Cutting off hands during a demonstration or leaving too much headroom.

Creative variations: Frame through a doorway, include foreground blur, or shoot over a shoulder.

Close-up

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Shows evidence, emotion, texture or function.	Dates, eyes, hands, tools, rust, labels, switches, food.

How to shoot it: Fill the frame with one clear subject and focus carefully.

Movement and timing: Locked is safest; short micro-slide adds depth.

Common beginner mistake: Collecting close-ups without first showing where they belong.

Creative variations: Use side light, reflection, shallow depth or slow motion.

Extreme close-up

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Turns a tiny feature into a visual event.	Lettering, water drops, gears, cracks, fingerprints, flame.

How to shoot it: Stabilize, focus precisely and simplify the background.

Movement and timing: Hold longer than expected; tiny movement looks large.

Common beginner mistake: Using it when the detail does not add information.

Creative variations: Reveal the detail first, then pull back to show the full object.

9. Camera Angles and What They Communicate

Eye-level angle

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Feels honest, familiar and observational.	Interviews, travel, general coverage, everyday details.

How to shoot it: Place the camera near the subject eye line or natural viewing height.

Movement and timing: Locked or natural-speed movement.

Common beginner mistake: Using eye level for every shot and creating visual sameness.

Creative variations: Combine with foreground framing or an off-center subject.

Low-angle hero

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Makes a subject feel strong, tall, dramatic or important.	Monuments, signs, trees, churches, machinery, roadside oddities.

How to shoot it: Lower the camera safely and aim slightly upward. Keep verticals intentional.

Movement and timing: Slow tilt or locked shot.

Common beginner mistake: Tilting so far that the subject distorts or the sky blows out.

Creative variations: Include grass, road texture, rails or a puddle close to the lens.

Ground-level angle

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Creates unusual scale and strong foreground.	Footsteps, roads, tracks, leaves, wheels, grave markers, doorways.

How to shoot it: Place the camera on a stable low support away from traffic and walking paths.

Movement and timing: Let action pass through frame; avoid handheld crawling.

Common beginner mistake: Risking gear or blocking a path.

Creative variations: Walk past the lens, roll a wheel through, or focus from texture to subject.

High-angle view

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Shows layout, vulnerability, pattern or movement.	Markets, rooms, worktables, stairways, crowds, maps.

How to shoot it: Use a safe balcony, step, raised tripod or overhead arm.

Movement and timing: Locked or gentle tilt down.

Common beginner mistake: Leaning over unsafe edges or pointing down without a clear subject.

Creative variations: Look for repeating shapes, paths, table arrangements or shadows.

Top-down shot

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Flattens the scene into a graphic pattern.	Maps, tools, food, artifacts, tickets, hands, gear layouts.

How to shoot it: Keep the camera parallel to the surface and square the lines.

Movement and timing: Locked; let hands or objects move.

Common beginner mistake: Crooked framing and shadows from the camera operator.

Creative variations: Build a before-and-after layout or arrange a sequence of clues.

Over-the-shoulder

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Places the viewer beside a person as they look, read or work.	Maps, signs, interviews, screens, demonstrations, exploration.

How to shoot it: Frame a shoulder or side of the head while keeping the viewed subject readable.

Movement and timing: Locked or gentle follow.

Common beginner mistake: Blocking the important information with the person.

Creative variations: Use shallow depth, rack focus, or a reflection of the face.

Point of view

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Lets the viewer experience the action through your eyes.	Walking, opening doors, handling gear, entering a room, driving with a secure mount.

How to shoot it: Use chest or eye height and move deliberately.

Movement and timing: Natural speed with short clips.

Common beginner mistake: Long shaky walks that cause viewer fatigue.

Creative variations: Cut between POV, a locked side view and a close-up of the same action.

Dutch angle

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Creates imbalance, unease or playful weirdness.	Eerie moments, odd attractions, comic transitions, disorientation.

How to shoot it: Tilt the horizon deliberately and noticeably, not accidentally.

Movement and timing: Usually locked or a slow push.

Common beginner mistake: Using it constantly or only slightly crooked.

Creative variations: Pair a tilted detail with a straight wide shot for contrast.

10. Camera Movement: The Core Moves

Locked-off action

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Keeps the camera still while life moves inside the frame.	Traffic, crowds, water, wind, machinery, people, shadows.

How to shoot it: Compose carefully, lock the camera and wait for movement to enter and leave.

Movement and timing: Hold 15-30 seconds when action is unpredictable.

Common beginner mistake: Moving the camera because nothing happened in the first three seconds.

Creative variations: Use foreground and background movement at different speeds.

Pan

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Turns left or right to reveal width or follow action.	Streets, landscapes, rooms, murals, vehicles, groups.

How to shoot it: Plant your feet, twist to the end position first, then rewind your body and pan smoothly toward comfort.

Movement and timing: A 90-degree pan should usually take 6-12 seconds.

Common beginner mistake: Starting fast, correcting halfway or ending without a still hold.

Creative variations: Pan from an empty area to the subject, or follow movement and stop on a detail.

Tilt

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Moves up or down to reveal height, depth or connection.	Buildings, trees, waterfalls, signs, statues, stairways.

How to shoot it: Start on a meaningful detail and tilt toward the larger subject.

Movement and timing: 5-10 seconds for most subjects.

Common beginner mistake: Tilting with no clear start or end point.

Creative variations: Tilt from reflection to subject, feet to face, cornerstone to roofline.

Push-in

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Moves closer and increases importance or curiosity.	Artifacts, doors, faces, signs, eerie spaces, reveals.

How to shoot it: Walk or slide straight toward the subject while keeping speed constant.

Movement and timing: Slow: 6-12 seconds. Natural: 4-7 seconds.

Common beginner mistake: Accelerating as you approach or bumping focus.

Creative variations: Start behind foreground, push through a doorway, or combine with a slight focus change.

Pull-back

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Reveals context or creates a feeling of leaving.	Signs, clues, scale reveals, endings, surprising locations.

How to shoot it: Begin close on a detail and move backward safely to reveal the setting.

Movement and timing: 6-12 seconds with a spotter if walking backward.

Common beginner mistake: Watching the screen instead of checking the path.

Creative variations: Begin on a detail, face, object or texture; end on the whole building or landscape.

Side slide

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Moves left or right while keeping the camera pointed at the subject.	Storefronts, fences, machinery, rows, interiors, parallax.

How to shoot it: Keep the lens square to the subject and move parallel at a steady distance.

Movement and timing: 5-10 seconds. Shorter with handheld.

Common beginner mistake: Turning the camera during the slide and losing the clean geometry.

Creative variations: Place a close foreground object between camera and subject for parallax.

Tracking follow

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
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Moves with a person, vehicle or action.	Walk-and-talk, exploration, demonstrations, events.
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How to shoot it: Follow from behind, beside or slightly ahead while keeping consistent distance.

Movement and timing: Natural pace; 5-12 second clips.

Common beginner mistake: Long wandering takes with no beginning or end.

Creative variations: Cut between rear follow, side profile, feet, hands and destination reveal.

Orbit or arc

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Moves around a subject to show shape and create drama.	Statues, vehicles, oddities, people, isolated objects.

How to shoot it: Choose a small safe arc, keep distance constant and let the background change.

Movement and timing: 4-8 seconds for a 30-60 degree arc.

Common beginner mistake: Trying a full circle in cluttered spaces.

Creative variations: Use telephoto for a subtle background shift or wide for dramatic parallax.

Reveal

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Hides the subject first, then discovers it.	First looks, ruins, attractions, views, people, signs.

How to shoot it: Start behind a wall, tree, vehicle, doorway or foreground object and move until the subject appears.

Movement and timing: 3-8 seconds depending on surprise.

Common beginner mistake: Revealing too early or moving beyond the best composition.

Creative variations: Reveal vertically, through focus, with a door opening or by letting a vehicle pass.

Parallax move

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Creates depth by moving a close foreground object faster than the distant subject.	Fences, trees, columns, signs, shelves, doorframes.

How to shoot it: Use a side slide with something close to the lens and the main subject farther away.

Movement and timing: Slow and steady: 5-10 seconds.

Common beginner mistake: Foreground completely blocking the subject.

Creative variations: Combine with telephoto for subtle elegance or wide angle for dramatic depth.

Whip pan

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Creates a fast blur used as energy or a hidden edit.	Transitions, events, shorts, comic beats, fast reveals.

How to shoot it: Pan quickly in one clean direction and stop recording after the blur.

Movement and timing: Less than 1 second for the blur.

Common beginner mistake: Using it inside a calm sequence or failing to match direction in the next clip.

Creative variations: End one scene whipping right and begin the next scene whipping right.

Focus change

WHAT IT DOES	BEST FOR
Moves attention between near and far subjects.	Clues, signs, people, layered scenes, reveals.

How to shoot it: Lock the camera. Focus on the foreground, then smoothly shift to the background or reverse.

Movement and timing: 2-5 seconds for the change plus still holds.

Common beginner mistake: Combining focus pull with shaky movement.

Creative variations: Use a map to location, fence to building, flower to grave marker, tool to worker.

11. Movement Recipes for Beginners

The one-move rule

A clean clip usually has one job: pan, tilt, push, pull, slide, follow or focus. Do not pan, zoom, tilt and walk in the same ten seconds unless the chaos is intentional.

The start-move-stop pattern

1. Compose the finished shot before recording.
2. Press record and hold still for 2 seconds.
3. Make one slow controlled movement.
4. Stop at the final composition and hold for 2 seconds.
5. Stop recording before lowering the camera or talking.

Three takes that guarantee options

1. Safety take: A locked-off version.
2. Story take: The simplest purposeful movement.
3. Creative take: A low angle, reflection, foreground frame, focus change or unusual perspective.

USE MOVEMENT TO REVEAL INFORMATION

A move should answer a question. What is around the corner? How tall is it? What is behind the sign? Who is doing the work? How big is the room? If the move reveals nothing, a locked shot may be stronger.

PART III - LIGHTING, SOUND AND PEOPLE

Good light is not always bright light. Good light reveals the subject, supports the mood and keeps the viewer looking where the story is.

12. Light Direction: The Fastest Way to Improve a Shot

LIGHT DIRECTION	LOOK	BEST APPLICATIONS	FIELD MOVE
Front light	Clear, flat, easy exposure	Signs, documentation, faces, readable details	Stand with the light behind or beside the camera
Side light	Texture, shape and depth	Brick, rust, faces, carvings, machinery, landscapes	Move 45-90 degrees from the light source
Backlight	Glow, silhouette, atmosphere	Leaves, hair, mist, dust, water, doorways, sunsets	Expose for highlights and use a clean outline
Top light	Hard shadows and strong contrast	Midday graphic shots, patterns, overhead details	Use shade or change angle for people
Under light	Unnatural, eerie or theatrical	Flashlight stories, campfire, spooky effects	Use sparingly and protect facial highlights

How to read light in ten seconds

1. Look at the brightest part of the scene.
2. Look at the shadow direction.
3. Turn your subject or move yourself until the light reveals texture or eyes.
4. Check the background for bright distractions.
5. Decide whether the scene should feel clear, dramatic, soft or eerie.

13. Common Lighting Situations

Sunrise and golden hour

Use warm side light for buildings, faces and texture. Shoot toward the sun for silhouettes and glowing edges, then turn around for warm front light. The light changes quickly, so capture your wide hero shot first.

Harsh midday sun

Look for shade, covered porches, north-facing walls, trees or open doorways. For architecture, use the hard shadows as graphic shapes. Avoid placing a person in mixed sun and shade. Slightly underexpose pale buildings and clouds.

Overcast sky

Overcast light is a giant softbox. It is excellent for people, forests, cemeteries, details and color. Add depth with foreground, side angles and wet surfaces. Keep some sky out of the frame if it is blank white.

Backlit subject

Decide whether you want a silhouette or visible detail. For a silhouette, expose for the bright background and keep the outline simple. For a visible face, move to the side, add reflected light or change the camera angle so the background is not much brighter.

Window light

Place a person or object beside the window, not directly against it. Side window light gives shape. Turn off ugly overhead bulbs when possible. For a room, expose for the window highlights and allow the darker interior to feel natural.

Mixed indoor light

Choose one dominant source. Move closer to the window or farther into the room. Avoid standing where half the face is orange and half is blue. Lock white balance once the scene looks acceptable.

Neon, streetlights and signs

Underexpose slightly so letters and colors survive. Use reflections in glass, metal or wet pavement. Record a locked shot because low-light movement magnifies shake. Capture the sign wide, medium and close.

Flashlight and practical light

Keep the camera steady and move the light slowly across the subject. Do not swing the light and camera at the same time. Bounce the beam off a wall for softer illumination, or skim it from the side to reveal texture.

Rain, fog, dust and smoke

Backlight makes particles visible. Side light shows rain and mist better than front light. Protect the lens, use a hood, keep a dry cloth ready and record clean sound from shelter. Never use smoke or dust where it creates a safety or access problem.

THE SIMPLEST LIGHTING TOOL

Move your feet. A two-step move can change flat front light into textured side light, hide a blown-out window, put a face in shade or add a reflection.

14. Sound Makes the Picture Believable

The four sound layers

LAYER	EXAMPLES	HOW MUCH
Voice	A-roll, narration, interview, guide explanation	Record clean and close
Natural sound	Wind, water, birds, traffic, machinery, footsteps	30-60 seconds per area
Specific effects	Door, latch, bell, tool, gravel, switch, engine	Several clean takes
Silence or room tone	Quiet room, empty road, night ambience	30-60 seconds without movement

Sound portrait

A sound portrait is a locked shot built around one recognizable sound: a mill wheel, church bell, train horn, neon buzz, footsteps in a hallway, insects at night or rain on a roof. Let the sound begin before you cut to the image and continue after you cut away.

Wind control

- Use a foam cover or furry windscreen.
- Turn your body into the wind and shield the microphone.
- Move behind a wall, vehicle, tree or doorway.
- Record narration later if the location audio is unusable.
- Capture visual B-roll even when the wind prevents talking.

Audio checklist

- ☐ Headphones connected when possible.
- ☐ Microphone not rubbing against clothing.
- ☐ No refrigerator, air conditioner or generator dominating the room.
- ☐ Levels not clipping on loud sounds.
- ☐ Ten seconds of silence before and after an interview answer.
- ☐ Location name spoken aloud for organization.

15. Filming Yourself and Other People

A-roll framing

SHOT	USE	PLACEMENT
Medium close-up	Main explanation or interview	Eyes near upper third; simple background; looking room
Medium environmental	Host at a location	Show waist/chest and enough background to identify place
Wide walk-and-talk	Movement and scale	Leave room in front of walking direction
Profile or three-quarter	Reflective narration, observing a view	Face toward light and into open frame space

The short-line method

Instead of one long speech, record short complete thoughts. Say one or two sentences, pause, change framing or location, and record the next thought. This creates natural edit points and reduces the pressure to memorize.

Mobility-friendly filming

A strong video does not require constant walking. Use a tripod, monopod, vehicle window, bench, zoom lens and locked compositions. Let action move through your frame. Film several angles from one safe position before relocating.

Solo creator setups

1. Walk into frame: Lock the camera, start recording, walk to a mark, pause and look at the subject.
2. Walk away: Place the camera behind or beside you and move toward the location or horizon.
3. Over-the-shoulder read: Frame your shoulder and the sign, map or artifact.
4. Hand interaction: Point, open a permitted gate, trace a map, write notes or adjust gear.
5. Host reaction: Record a natural look before speaking.
6. Vehicle arrival: Mount or place the camera safely, drive into frame, park and step out.
7. Seated host shot: Use a bench, chair, RV doorway or picnic table with the location behind you.
8. Reflection self-shot: Use a window, mirror, puddle or polished surface.

PART IV - BUILDING EDIT-READY SEQUENCES

Random beautiful clips are difficult to edit. A sequence is a group of shots that explains one action, place or idea from several useful viewpoints.

16. The Wide-Medium-Close Habit

Whenever you find something important, film it three ways: the whole setting, the subject in context and the detail that proves why it matters.

STEP	SHOT	EXAMPLE: OLD MILL
1	Wide	Mill, creek and surrounding land
2	Medium	Water wheel and building side
3	Close	Wooden paddles, gears, water drops, maker plate

Add two more for a complete mini-sequence

1. Action: Water moving, a guide turning a handle, your hand pointing or a wheel rotating.
2. Reaction or result: Your expression, the finished product, the sound, or a final hero detail.

17. The Five-Shot Sequence

This classic sequence turns a simple action into an edit-ready story.

SHOT	WHAT TO FILM	EXAMPLE
1. Wide	The person and location	Guide standing beside an old printing press
2. Hands	The action close-up	Hands setting type or pulling a lever
3. Face	Concentration or reaction	Guide watching the mechanism
4. Over shoulder	Action from the worker viewpoint	Press and paper beyond shoulder
5. Creative	Unexpected angle or result	Paper emerging, gear turning, ink texture

Use it for almost anything

- Opening a gate or door.
- Reading a historical marker.
- Preparing coffee in the RV.
- Walking into a museum.
- Starting a vehicle.
- Examining an artifact.
- Setting up a camera.
- Crossing a bridge or trail section.

18. Coverage for Narration

Film nouns, verbs and adjectives

NARRATION TYPE	WHAT TO CAPTURE
Noun	The building, person, map, artifact, vehicle, road or landscape
Verb	Hands working, water flowing, door opening, wheels turning, people arriving
Adjective	Rusty texture, empty street, bright sign, narrow hallway, rough stone, quiet water

Coverage math

For each minute of finished narration, aim for roughly 8 to 15 usable B-roll clips, depending on pacing. A calm history video may hold shots longer. A short social video may change every one or two seconds. Record more variety, not endless duplicates.

Record clean handles

A handle is the still moment before and after the action. Two seconds of clean stillness gives the editor room for transitions, speed changes and sound edits. Do not lower the camera immediately after the interesting moment.

19. Beginning, Middle and Ending Shot Recipes

Opening recipes

- Road approach -> sign -> wide reveal.
- Mystery detail -> pull back to location.
- Natural sound before picture -> first wide shot.
- Old photograph -> match current view.
- Host reaction -> reveal what you are looking at.
- Fast montage of three details -> calm establishing shot.

Middle recipes

- Wide-medium-close on each important subject.
- Map or plaque -> physical evidence -> narration.
- Locked action -> hands -> reaction -> result.
- Past versus present comparison.
- Public exterior -> authorized interior -> object detail.
- Question in A-roll -> B-roll evidence -> answer in voice-over.

Ending recipes

- Walk or drive away through frame.
- Return to the opening composition in different light.
- Close door, gate, book or map.
- Hold on the strongest detail as natural sound continues.
- Sunset, streetlights or empty scene after activity.
- Final host thought with the location behind you.

20. Shoot for the Edit

Continuity basics

- Keep travel direction consistent across adjacent clips.
- If you enter a door from left to right, continue the next movement in a compatible direction.
- Do not repeat the exact same framing back-to-back.
- Cut on action: start the action in one angle and finish it in another.
- Record signs long enough to read.
- Get a cutaway when an interview has a mistake or jump cut.

Transitions you can capture in camera

TRANSITION	HOW TO SHOOT
Object wipe	Let a wall, person, tree or vehicle fill the frame; begin the next clip with a similar block
Whip match	End and begin clips with the same whip direction
Shape match	Match a round clock to a wheel, doorway to window, road line to rail
Motion match	Match a hand opening one door to another door opening
Light match	Move into darkness and begin the next clip from darkness
Sound bridge	Let the next location sound begin before the picture changes

PART V - LOCATION PLAYBOOKS

Each playbook gives you a minimum coverage package, creative ideas, a simple sequence, light and sound notes, common traps and a low-energy version.

21. Cities and Downtown Districts

Cities are built from layers: architecture, movement, signs, reflections, people and the tension between old and new. Let the city move inside steady frames.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

City identifier | Wide skyline or street | Storefront or landmark hero | Human movement | Blue-hour closer

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Arrival through the windshield:** Use a secure mount and record the change from outer roads into downtown. It gives the viewer a sense of entering the place.
- 2. Locked intersection:** Stand well back on a public sidewalk and let vehicles and people cross. Long takes create several edit points.
- 3. Low-angle architecture tilt:** Start on doors or columns and tilt toward the roofline. Height feels dramatic without needing a drone.
- 4. Storefront side slide:** Walk parallel at chest height with the camera level. Readable signs and repeating windows make strong rhythm.
- 5. Reflection layer:** Shoot glass at an angle so the street and interior overlap. One frame can show past and present together.
- 6. Crosswalk feet:** Frame shoes, curb paint, shadows and signals without emphasizing faces. It adds motion while protecting privacy.
- 7. Telephoto street compression:** Back up and stack signs, lights, traffic and people. The street feels busy and layered.
- 8. Old versus new:** Place a historic facade beside a modern object, vehicle or tower. Contrast creates an instant story.
- 9. Alley reveal:** Start behind a wall and slide to reveal an alley, mural or back entrance. It adds discovery.
- 10. Blue-hour lights:** Return after sunset for storefronts, headlights and streetlamps. This provides a natural ending and visual payoff.
- 11. Public interior doorway:** With permission, hold a wide shot from the entrance before details. Doorframes create depth and context.
- 12. Leaving downtown:** Record buildings thinning into outer streets. The sequence gets a clear ending.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Approach and city sign
2. Wide street or skyline

3. Three architecture details
4. People or traffic in motion
5. Old/new contrast
6. Host line
7. Blue-hour or departure ending

Best light and sound

Light: Early morning gives clean streets and long shadows. Late afternoon and blue hour add glow and reflections. Midday works for hard graphic shadows and readable signs.

Sound: Traffic wash, crosswalk signal, footsteps, door chime, distant voices, fountain, train or street musician when permitted.

Avoid these traps

- Panning across every building
- Filming recognizable people too closely without reason
- Standing near traffic lanes
- Only shooting storefront signs with no street context

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Park once. From one safe block, capture a wide, a locked intersection, a storefront, three details, one reflection, 30 seconds of sound and a seated host line.

22. Small Towns and Main Streets

Small towns reward patience. The story often lives in the courthouse square, a faded wall sign, a depot, a diner, a church and the spaces between active businesses.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Town sign | Main street wide | Landmark | Local detail | Leaving town

Creative shot ideas

1. **Town-name arrival:** Frame the welcome sign with road and landscape. It establishes identity immediately.
2. **Main street centerline look:** From a legal sidewalk or safe pull-off, use the street as a leading line. The layout becomes clear.
3. **Courthouse orbit:** Walk a short arc around a courthouse or civic building. Background change adds scale.
4. **Ghost business details:** Film faded lettering, sealed doors, old awnings and reused storefronts. Visual leftovers tell economic history.
5. **Bench-level view:** Shoot from a bench or low seated position as locals and vehicles pass. It feels observational and mobility-friendly.
6. **Church and steeple tilt:** Start on entrance or cornerstone and tilt up. The building gains presence.
7. **Depot and track context:** Use a legal public viewpoint to show depot, rails and town relationship. Rail history often explains why the town existed.
8. **Window display reflections:** Mix merchandise, street and passing movement. Active and historic layers share one frame.
9. **Local hands:** With permission, film a clerk, cook, barber or craftsman working. Hands make the town personal.
10. **Water tower telephoto:** Use the tower behind rooftops or signs. It becomes a visual town signature.
11. **Empty-space hold:** Hold a quiet street or closed business for 15 seconds. Silence can communicate change.
12. **Road out of town:** Film the final businesses giving way to open road. A dependable closer.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Welcome sign
2. Main street wide

3. Courthouse/church/depot
4. Active business or person
5. Faded detail
6. Town sound
7. Drive-away ending

Best light and sound

Light: Morning light keeps streets calm and storefronts readable. Late afternoon adds warmth to brick and signs. Overcast days are excellent for faded paint and people.

Sound: Church bell, diner clatter, flag, traffic, train, courthouse clock, screen door, birds and distant conversation.

Avoid these traps

- Treating quiet as boring
- Only filming abandoned storefronts and missing the living town
- Standing in roadways for symmetry
- Failing to identify the town clearly

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Shoot from the courthouse square or one central block: town sign, main-street wide, landmark, faded detail, active detail, sound and departure.

23. Rural Roads, Farms and Backcountry

Rural scenes are about distance, rhythm, weather, work and the relationship between a road and the land around it.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Road leading line | Landscape wide | Farm or roadside detail | Movement in wind or work | Road-away ending

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Road crest reveal:** Frame a road disappearing over a hill or around a bend. It creates curiosity and direction.
- 2. Fence-line parallax:** Slide beside fence posts with distant land behind them. Depth appears even in a simple field.
- 3. Mailboxes and road names:** Film clusters, handmade signs and county road markers. Small details identify community.
- 4. Telephoto heat layers:** Compress road, trees, barns and distant hills. The landscape feels deep and remote.
- 5. Wheel and gravel close-up:** From a safe parked position, film tires, dust, stones and footsteps. Texture makes travel physical.
- 6. Wind portrait:** Lock on grass, crops, flags, trees or clotheslines. Movement comes from the land, not the camera.
- 7. Barn three-quarter hero:** Use a corner angle with sky and field. Shape and setting both read clearly.
- 8. Gate opening sequence:** With permission, shoot wide, hands, latch, over shoulder and result. A simple action becomes a full sequence.
- 9. Work from a distance:** Use telephoto to film tractors, livestock or field work without interfering. Safe distance preserves natural behavior.
- 10. Storm-light contrast:** Film sunlit land beneath dark clouds from a safe location. Weather creates drama for free.
- 11. Vehicle mirror view:** Use a parked vehicle mirror to layer road and landscape. It suggests travel without driving footage.
- 12. Dust or road departure:** Let a vehicle move away and hold after it leaves. The lingering dust creates closure.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Road approach
2. Wide land view

3. Barn/farm/roadside subject
4. Three textures
5. Wind or work action
6. Natural sound
7. Road-away ending

Best light and sound

Light: Early and late light gives shape to fields. Overcast skies preserve color. Midday can work with strong road shadows and cloud formations.

Sound: Wind, insects, birds, distant machinery, gravel, gate latch, cattle, water, tires and silence.

Avoid these traps

- Stopping on blind curves or narrow shoulders
- Entering private land
- Filming only from the windshield
- Ignoring weather and heat

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Use the vehicle as your base. From a safe pull-off, shoot the road, landscape, sign, three details, telephoto work or wind, and a seated narration line.

24. Ghost Towns and Forgotten Settlements

Emptiness is part of the story. Use patient frames, long approaches, evidence and natural sound instead of forcing every shot to look scary.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Distant first view | Approach road | Strongest remaining structure | Personal remnant | Lonely final image

Creative shot ideas

1. **Settlement in landscape:** Show remaining structures small within open land or trees. Isolation becomes visible.
2. **Long approach:** Walk or drive slowly toward the first structure. The viewer discovers it with you.
3. **Empty street low angle:** Use road texture and receding buildings. The town feels abandoned without fake effects.
4. **Building hero three-quarter:** Choose the best remaining structure and frame a clean corner view. Shape and condition are readable.
5. **Doorway into darkness:** Stay outside unless access is legal and safe; expose for the opening. The threshold creates mystery.
6. **Personal remnants:** Film dishes, tools, bottles, furniture, signs or toys without moving them. Human-scale evidence creates emotional connection.
7. **Nature reclaiming:** Show roots, weeds, nests, vines and weather entering structures. Time becomes visible.
8. **Old map match:** Hold or overlay a historic map/photo at the present viewpoint. The lost layout becomes understandable.
9. **Locked empty frame:** Hold a porch, street, room or path for 15-20 seconds. Stillness carries atmosphere.
10. **Wind through structure:** Film curtains, grass, loose metal or branches moving. Natural motion replaces forced camera movement.
11. **Host scale shot:** Stand near a structure or foundation without touching it. Scale helps viewers understand what remains.
12. **Distant departure:** Walk or drive away while the town shrinks behind you. The story closes with distance.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Map/road approach

2. Town-wide view
3. Hero structure
4. Wide-medium-close evidence
5. Personal remnant
6. Quiet sound bed
7. Departure

Best light and sound

Light: Soft morning or late light adds texture. Overcast weather supports melancholy and detail. Avoid unsafe night exploration merely for mood.

Sound: Wind, insects, loose metal, footsteps, birds, distant road noise and long quiet room tone.

Avoid these traps

- Trespassing because a site looks abandoned
- Entering unstable structures
- Overusing Dutch angles and fake scares
- Moving artifacts
- Filming only close decay with no town context

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Stay on public ground or beside the vehicle. Use telephoto for structures, capture the road, wide landscape, sign/map, three evidence details, sound and a final distant view.

25. Abandoned Buildings and Industrial Ruins

Ruins are visually rich but physically unforgiving. The best coverage explains former purpose, present condition and the human evidence left behind.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Exterior master | Entry or threshold | Function evidence | Decay texture | Safe exit

Creative shot ideas

1. **Exterior context:** Show the entire building with road, fence, neighborhood or landscape. Viewers understand where it sits and how large it is.
2. **Corner hero angle:** Use a three-quarter corner rather than a flat front view. Depth and condition read better.
3. **Window frame view:** Shoot safely through an opening from outside. You can suggest interior space without entering.
4. **Function sequence:** Find machinery, room layout, signs, pipes, shelves or loading areas. The building becomes a workplace, not just decay.
5. **Peeling surface side light:** Move light or camera angle until texture casts small shadows. Paint, rust and plaster become dimensional.
6. **Ceiling light shafts:** From a safe position, show beams, holes and light. Damage and atmosphere appear together.
7. **Repeating columns or windows:** Use symmetry or a centered vanishing point. Patterns create order inside chaos.
8. **Object in context:** Film the room wide before a close-up of a chair, tool or paper. The detail keeps meaning.
9. **Shadow movement:** Hold on walls as branches, clouds or people outside create shadows. Mood comes from real light.
10. **Scale with doorway:** Include a person or vehicle outside the structure. Size becomes clear.
11. **Before-and-after angle:** Match an old photo when available. The viewer can compare change directly.
12. **Exit to daylight:** Film through the doorway as you or the camera leaves. Closure reassures the viewer and finishes the sequence.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Legal exterior approach

2. Exterior master
3. Purpose evidence
4. Wide-medium-close decay
5. Personal/object detail
6. Natural sound
7. Exit or departure

Best light and sound

Light: Side light reveals texture. Overcast light controls bright windows. Late-day light through openings can be dramatic, but never remain in an unsafe area waiting for it.

Sound: Wind, loose metal, drips, distant traffic, birds, footsteps from a safe surface and exterior ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Entering without permission
- Standing under damaged ceilings
- Climbing stairs or roofs
- Breathing mold or chemicals
- Shooting only decay without explaining purpose

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Work from outside. Use a wide, corner hero, telephoto window/interior view, three exterior textures, sign or former-use evidence, sound and a clean departure.

26. Historic Homes, Forts, Jails, Battlefields and Mills

Historic coverage works when the viewer sees the whole site, then the physical proof: dates, construction, tools, rooms and landscape.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Historic marker | Full site overview | Architecture sequence | Artifact plus label | Past-meets-present shot

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Marker three ways:** Shoot readable front, close title and wide with site behind it. Facts stay connected to place.
- 2. Visitor route approach:** Walk the path a visitor or historic resident would have used. The viewer enters the story naturally.
- 3. Architecture sequence:** Doors, windows, brick, nails, columns, hinges and roof details. Construction shows time and craftsmanship.
- 4. Room from doorway:** With permission, establish the room before individual objects. Layout explains function.
- 5. Artifact and label pair:** Shoot the label, whole artifact and one detail. Editing stays accurate.
- 6. Hands-on demonstration:** With permission, capture hands using a tool or machine. History becomes action.
- 7. Landscape evidence:** Show earthworks, river, road, field or hill that shaped the event. History is not only inside buildings.
- 8. Past-meets-present frame:** Include an old wall, road or object with modern life beyond it. Time layers share the image.
- 9. Defensive viewpoint:** Frame what a soldier, jailer, miller or resident would have seen. Point of view supports narration.
- 10. Human scale:** Place a visitor beside walls, wheels, cells or gates. Size and confinement become understandable.
- 11. Quiet memorial detail:** Hold on names, flags, flowers or worn surfaces respectfully. Emotion is earned through evidence.
- 12. Closing route:** Leave by a gate, bridge, path or door. The historical visit ends naturally.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Marker

2. Site overview
3. Approach route
4. Architecture/landscape evidence
5. Artifact-label pair
6. Host fact
7. Exit

Best light and sound

Light: Morning and late afternoon add shape to architecture and earthworks. Interior window light is often more attractive than overhead fixtures. Overcast is excellent for markers and memorials.

Sound: Guide explanation, door latch, floor creak, mill water, tools, flag, footsteps, birds and respectful quiet.

Avoid these traps

- Reading every plaque on camera
- Ignoring the surrounding landscape
- Filming labels too quickly
- Touching artifacts
- Sensationalizing memorials or battle deaths

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Choose one central viewpoint or visitor bench. Capture marker, wide site, telephoto details, one room from doorway, artifact label, sound and a short seated explanation.

27. Cemeteries, Memorials and Sacred Grounds

Respect is the first creative decision. Tell stories through names, symbols, landscape, light and care without turning real people into props.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Entrance or name | Wide respectful overview | Symbol/detail | Path or landscape | Quiet ending

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Entrance gate:** Frame the cemetery name, gate and path beyond it. The location is identified with dignity.
- 2. Wide landscape:** Show rows, trees, terrain and relationship to town or church. The site feels like a place of memory, not isolated stones.
- 3. Leading path:** Use a walkway or row as a guide into the frame. Movement is suggested without stepping among graves carelessly.
- 4. Name and context:** Film the marker wide before a readable close-up. The individual remains connected to place.
- 5. Symbol study:** Capture hands, lambs, anchors, flowers, military emblems and carving. Symbols add history and meaning.
- 6. Side-light texture:** Use low sun to reveal lettering and worn stone. Details become readable and dimensional.
- 7. Tree and stone layers:** Use branches or leaves as soft foreground. Nature and memory share the frame.
- 8. Flags or flowers moving:** Lock the camera and let wind create motion. Life enters a still setting.
- 9. Church relationship:** Show the cemetery with the church or community behind it. The site regains social context.
- 10. Reflection shot:** Use rain, polished stone or glass without touching markers. A subtle visual layer adds thoughtfulness.
- 11. Host from path:** Speak from a respectful walkway with general background. You can guide the story without standing on graves.
- 12. Gate closing or path away:** End with the entrance, fading light or empty path. The visit closes quietly.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Entrance/name

2. Wide overview
3. Path or rows
4. Specific marker in context
5. Symbols and textures
6. Quiet sound
7. Respectful exit

Best light and sound

Light: Early and late side light reveals inscriptions. Overcast light is gentle for documentary work. Avoid artificial spooky lighting unless the story and site rules clearly support it.

Sound: Wind, birds, distant church bell, leaves, footsteps on paths and long quiet ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Stepping on graves
- Moving flowers, coins or offerings
- Filming active mourners
- Making unsupported paranormal claims about named people
- Only shooting close markers with no landscape

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Stay on the main path. From one or two positions, capture entrance, wide rows, telephoto marker details, tree layers, wind movement, sound and a seated or standing host line.

28. Churches and Sacred Interiors

Churches offer symmetry, height, craftsmanship, stained light and community history. Permission and quiet behavior matter as much as composition.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Exterior front | Steeple or tower | Interior wide | Craft detail | Doorway ending

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Centered aisle symmetry:** From the rear, center aisle, altar and ceiling when permitted. Symmetry creates calm and importance.
- 2. Door opening reveal:** Begin outside or in vestibule and reveal the sanctuary. The threshold creates a natural transition.
- 3. Steeple tilt:** Start on doors or cornerstone and tilt upward. The building gains scale.
- 4. Stained-glass exposure:** Expose for the glass, then capture the colored light it casts. Window and effect become a pair.
- 5. Pew-level view:** Place the camera low along repeating pew backs. Leading lines and depth appear.
- 6. Craftsmanship close-ups:** Carvings, hymnals, hardware, wood joints, organ keys, textiles. Details show labor and tradition.
- 7. Bell or clock sound portrait:** Lock the camera and record the full sound. Sound can introduce or close the scene.
- 8. Side window light:** Use light across wood, stone or a person. Texture and shape improve.
- 9. Quiet hands:** With permission, film pages turning, candles being prepared or flowers arranged. Human activity stays respectful.
- 10. Exterior with cemetery:** Show the relationship between building and grounds. Community history becomes visible.
- 11. Night exterior from public ground:** Use existing light and a stable frame. A calm evening image is more respectful than forced horror.
- 12. Door close or final window:** End on the entrance, bell, window or empty aisle. The visit has closure.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Exterior and name
2. Steeple
3. Interior master with permission

4. Stained glass/craft details
5. Human or sound element
6. Host history line
7. Doorway end

Best light and sound

Light: Overcast controls bright sky around steeples. Interior side window light is beautiful. Expose stained glass separately from the room. Turn off unnecessary mixed lighting only with permission.

Sound: Bell, organ, room tone, page turn, door, footsteps, birds and distant community sound.

Avoid these traps

- Filming during worship or private events without permission
- Blocking aisles
- Using flash where prohibited
- Treating sacred spaces as horror sets
- Blowing out stained glass

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Use the rear pew or doorway. Capture exterior, steeple, centered interior, telephoto details, stained light, sound and a short quiet host line.

29. Museums, Visitor Centers and Public Interiors

Indoor stories need clear context, readable labels and controlled movement. Ask about tripods, flash, copyrighted displays and filming rules before setup.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Building/sign | Gallery wide | Signature object | Label/detail pair | Exit

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Entrance identity:** Show the building, sign and visitors entering. The location is clear before interior details.
- 2. Gallery master:** From doorway or corner, show the full room. The viewer understands arrangement.
- 3. Signature object orbit:** Use a short permitted arc around the main exhibit. Shape and scale become visible.
- 4. Label-object-detail sequence:** Readable label, full object, close evidence. Facts remain accurate.
- 5. Display reflection control:** Shift angle to reduce glare or use reflections deliberately. Glass becomes manageable or creative.
- 6. Top-down case view:** Square the camera over maps, tools or small artifacts when permitted. Graphic layout is easy to understand.
- 7. Hands and interaction:** Film buttons, demonstrations, drawers or touchscreens when allowed. Exhibits feel active.
- 8. Human scale:** Include a visitor beside a vehicle, skeleton or machine. Size becomes clear.
- 9. Hallway tracking:** Move slowly along an edge, not through traffic. The viewer experiences progression.
- 10. Historic photo match:** Frame an old image, then current object or scene. Past and present connect.
- 11. Quiet reaction:** Capture yourself or another visitor observing. A human response gives emotional rhythm.
- 12. Final object or exit sign:** End with the item the viewer should remember. The sequence closes with intention.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Exterior/name

2. Gallery overview
3. Main object
4. Label-object-detail
5. Human scale or interaction
6. Room tone
7. Exit

Best light and sound

Light: Window light may overpower cases; change angle. Overhead lighting is often uneven, so stabilize and expose for the object. Avoid fast movement in dim galleries.

Sound: Room tone, guide voice, demonstration, button, machine, footsteps and restrained crowd ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Ignoring filming rules
- Blocking visitors
- Moving across tiny label text
- Shooting only close objects without room context
- Using autofocus that hunts through glass

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Choose one gallery at a time. From the doorway, capture the wide, main object, label, three details, human scale, room tone and exit.

30. Mills, Factories, Workshops and Working Structures

These places are built from lines, machinery, hands, sound and process. The story is not just the object; it is how material moves from beginning to result.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Full structure | Process start | Hands or controls | Moving machinery | Finished result

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Structure in context:** Show mill, bridge, shop or factory with road, water or town. Location explains purpose.
- 2. Leading-line approach:** Use rails, beams, pipes, belts or channels toward the main subject. Industrial geometry guides the eye.
- 3. Process wide:** Show the full work area before close parts. Viewers can understand the system.
- 4. Hands on controls:** With permission, film levers, tools, valves and switches. Human skill enters the story.
- 5. Locked moving machinery:** Keep camera still and let gears, belts, wheels or water move. Motion stays readable and safe.
- 6. Slow-motion material:** Use 60 fps for water, sparks, dust, grain, fabric or moving parts when safe. The process gains detail.
- 7. Sound close-up:** Record one mechanism from a safe approved position. Machine identity often comes through sound.
- 8. Operator over shoulder:** Show controls and process beyond the worker. The viewer sees decision and result.
- 9. Telephoto compression:** Stack machinery or bridge elements from a legal distance. Scale and complexity increase.
- 10. Steam, mist or dust backlight:** Use light behind particles. Invisible process becomes visible.
- 11. Before/after material:** Show raw input and finished output in matching frames. The process has a clear arc.
- 12. Shutdown or quiet end:** Film machinery stopping, water continuing or workspace emptying. The sequence gets closure.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Exterior context

2. Process wide
3. Input material
4. Hands/controls
5. Machine action
6. Output/result
7. Sound and shutdown

Best light and sound

Light: Side and backlight reveal dust, mist, spray and texture. Industrial interiors may have mixed color temperatures; lock white balance and protect bright windows or sparks.

Sound: Machinery rhythm, water wheel, belts, clanks, tools, operator explanation and final quiet hum.

Avoid these traps

- Crossing barriers
- Following moving parts too closely
- Ignoring hearing protection
- Filming sensitive operations
- Showing only parts without process order

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Stay at one approved station. Capture process wide, telephoto details, hands, input, output, sound and a short explanation.

31. Railroads, Bridges and Transportation

Transportation stories are about direction, scale, engineering and movement. Work only from public, legal viewpoints and stay clear of active rights-of-way.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Full structure | Leading line | Engineering detail | Movement pass | Human scale

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Depot and town context:** Show station, street and tracks from public ground. Transportation and community connect.
- 2. Legal crossing line:** From behind markings, use rails as leading lines. Direction and distance become strong.
- 3. Bridge side profile:** Find a public riverbank, road or overlook. Shape and span are clear.
- 4. Understructure from safe path:** Film arches, beams, rivets and shadows. Engineering becomes visual.
- 5. Telephoto train pass:** Frame before arrival and let the train cross. Movement stays predictable and safe.
- 6. Wheel or track detail:** Use distance and zoom rather than standing near active equipment. Texture and mechanics add evidence.
- 7. Signal and sign sequence:** Wide placement, readable close, changing light if visible. Operational language supports narration.
- 8. Road or bridge POV:** Use a secure vehicle mount or passenger position only. The viewer experiences crossing.
- 9. Reflection under bridge:** Use water to mirror structure and movement. Symmetry adds creativity.
- 10. Human scale:** Place a person or vehicle well away from danger beside the structure. Size becomes understandable.
- 11. Sound portrait:** Record bell, horn, water, tires or bridge hum from a safe area. Sound carries transportation identity.
- 12. Departure lines:** End on tracks, roadway or river leading away. The story continues beyond the frame.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Structure wide
2. Legal leading-line view
3. Engineering details

4. Movement pass
5. Human scale
6. Sound portrait
7. Line-away ending

Best light and sound

Light: Low side light reveals beams and rivets. Overcast helps metallic detail. Blue hour adds signal lights and reflections, but safe visibility and legal access come first.

Sound: Train horn, crossing bell, tires, water, wind through beams, station ambience and distant engines.

Avoid these traps

- Standing on tracks or active bridges
- Stopping on narrow shoulders
- Turning your back to traffic
- Using wide lenses too close to hazards
- Failing to frame movement before it arrives

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Use one public crossing, overlook or riverbank. Capture wide, telephoto details, leading lines, one movement pass, sound and a final line into distance.

32. Forests, Trails and Natural Landscapes

Nature becomes cinematic through layers, changing light, scale, texture and sound. Avoid endless walking footage; build small visual discoveries.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Trail entrance | Landscape wide | Layered detail | Movement in nature | Quiet final view

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Trail threshold:** Use a sign, gate, bridge or tree opening. The journey begins clearly.
- 2. Foreground foliage frame:** Place leaves, bark or branches near the lens. Depth appears in flat woods.
- 3. Low trail leading line:** Use roots, stones or path edges toward the distance. The viewer feels pulled forward.
- 4. Canopy tilt:** Start at trunk texture and tilt to the canopy. Height and growth connect.
- 5. Telephoto layers:** Stack trunks, ridges, fog or leaves. Compression creates pattern and mystery.
- 6. Water or leaf slow motion:** Use 60 fps for small movement. Nature gains detail without artificial camera moves.
- 7. Locked wind shot:** Hold on ferns, grass, branches or reflections. Natural motion feels calm.
- 8. Footstep sequence:** Wide walker, boots, over shoulder, destination. A simple hike gains structure.
- 9. Sunbeam or fog backlight:** Position light behind particles or leaves. Atmosphere becomes visible.
- 10. Macro texture:** Bark, moss, mushrooms, insects, stones or water drops. Close evidence balances wide scenery.
- 11. Scale figure:** Place a person small in the landscape. The environment feels large.
- 12. Stillness ending:** Hold a quiet view after the person leaves frame. The landscape gets the final word.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Trail sign
2. Wide environment

3. Path movement
4. Three textures
5. Water/wind/wildlife
6. Sound bed
7. Quiet end

Best light and sound

Light: Overcast and early light are gentle. Backlight reveals leaves, fog and insects. Midday works beneath dense canopy if bright sky is kept out of frame.

Sound: Birds, insects, water, wind, footsteps, leaves, distant thunder and true quiet.

Avoid these traps

- Long shaky POV walks
- Ignoring bright sky holes
- Disturbing wildlife
- Leaving the trail for a shot
- Recording only wide landscapes

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Choose a scenic rest point. From there, capture wide, telephoto layers, foreground frame, three textures, wind or water, sound and a seated host line.

33. Lakes, Rivers, Springs and Waterfalls

Water gives you reflection, motion, sound, changing light and natural transitions. Protect gear and do not trade footing for a lower angle.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Water-wide | Shoreline or bank | Reflection | Motion detail | Sound and final view

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Shoreline reveal:** Start behind trees, rocks or a doorway and reveal water. The first view feels earned.
- 2. Locked reflection:** Use calm water to mirror trees, sky, buildings or signs. Symmetry creates instant polish.
- 3. Low ripple angle:** Keep camera secure just above water level. Small movement feels large.
- 4. Telephoto sparkle:** Compress sunlight or reflections across water. Highlights become texture.
- 5. Water flow close-up:** Use 60 fps for drops, current, wheel or cascade. Motion can be slowed cleanly.
- 6. Foreground bank frame:** Use reeds, stones, dock rails or branches. Depth and location context improve.
- 7. Human-scale shoreline:** Include an angler, paddler, walker or person seated safely. Scale and use become clear.
- 8. Under-bridge or dock lines:** Use repeating supports and reflections. Geometry contrasts with nature.
- 9. Sound portrait:** Lock on current, falls, dock or shore and record clean sound. Water can carry an entire transition.
- 10. Weather change:** Film clouds, wind lines or rain approaching from shelter. The water reflects the atmosphere.
- 11. State-line or map context:** When relevant, connect water to borders, towns or history. Geography becomes part of the story.
- 12. Final ripple or sunset:** Hold a simple quiet close or wide. A natural, emotional ending.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Wide water view
2. Shore or structure context
3. Reflection

4. Water movement close-up
5. Human scale
6. Sound bed
7. Sunset/ripple end

Best light and sound

Light: Sunrise and sunset offer reflections and warm edges. Overcast preserves water color. Polarizers can reduce glare, but sometimes the reflection is the story.

Sound: Current, waves, dock creak, birds, paddles, fishing line, waterfall, wind and distant boats.

Avoid these traps

- Standing on slippery banks
- Leaving camera unsecured
- Overexposing sparkle
- Using slow shutter handheld without support
- Recording water sound so loud it clips

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Film from a dock, bench or stable bank. Capture wide, reflection, telephoto activity, three water details, sound and a final quiet frame.

34. Beaches, Coastlines and Open Horizons

Coastal scenes can become repetitive unless you add foreground, human scale, texture, weather and a clear sequence from arrival to horizon.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Beach access | Coast-wide | Foreground texture | Human or wave movement | Horizon ending

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Boardwalk reveal:** Follow rails or dunes until the water appears. The coast gets a dramatic entrance.
- 2. Dune-grass foreground:** Use grass, fence or sand close to the lens. Depth breaks up the open horizon.
- 3. Low wave line:** Secure the camera above reach of water and film waves crossing frame. Movement feels immediate.
- 4. Telephoto wave layers:** Stack breakers, people and horizon. Compression adds depth.
- 5. Footprints sequence:** Wide walker, footprints, feet and water erasing tracks. A simple human story appears.
- 6. Shell or debris detail:** Show context first, then close texture. Small evidence supports the place.
- 7. Silhouette at sunset:** Keep the outline clean against bright sky. Human scale and emotion combine.
- 8. Reflection on wet sand:** Shoot low when water recedes. The sky doubles in the frame.
- 9. Wind portrait:** Lock on grass, flags, clothing or spray. The weather becomes visible.
- 10. Structure in coast context:** Lighthouse, pier, fort, hotel or old cabin with water. History and environment connect.
- 11. Blue-hour lights:** Use piers, buildings or boats after sunset. The location changes character.
- 12. Empty horizon hold:** End with a long stable wide and natural sound. The openness becomes the final feeling.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Access path
2. Wide coastline

3. Foreground and textures
4. Wave/human action
5. Structure or history
6. Wind/wave sound
7. Sunset or empty horizon

Best light and sound

Light: Golden hour is ideal. Midday can use graphic shadows, bright color and a polarizer. Blue hour works for piers and waterfront buildings. Protect highlights on water.

Sound: Waves, wind, gulls, footsteps, pier sounds, boats and distant voices. Use strong wind protection.

Avoid these traps

- Putting gear where waves can reach
- Tilting horizons
- Recording only wide ocean shots
- Ignoring wind noise
- Walking backward near water

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Use a boardwalk, bench or stable dry area. Capture access reveal, wide, telephoto waves, three textures, one person for scale, sound and horizon end.

35. Mountains, Overlooks and Big Views

Big views need scale, layers and a foreground anchor. A beautiful overlook can look flat if everything is distant and the sky dominates.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Overlook identifier | Layered wide | Foreground anchor | Human scale | Weather or light change

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Arrival reveal:** Start behind trees, vehicle or wall and reveal the view. The scale arrives as a surprise.
- 2. Foreground rock or rail:** Place a safe object close to the lens. Depth strengthens the scene.
- 3. Telephoto ridge layers:** Stack distant ridges, valleys or buildings. Atmospheric depth becomes visible.
- 4. Human scale silhouette:** Place a person small and safely back from the edge. The landscape feels enormous.
- 5. Map-to-view match:** Film the overlook map, then the labeled feature. The viewer can orient themselves.
- 6. Cloud shadow time-lapse:** Use a tripod and allow light to move across land. Time becomes visible.
- 7. Road or river line:** Use the line as a guide through the landscape. The eye has a route to follow.
- 8. Texture detail:** Rock, railing, plants, snow, old marker or weathered sign. Close evidence prevents visual sameness.
- 9. Wind portrait:** Lock on clothing, grass or flags. Conditions become part of the story.
- 10. Pan with purpose:** Pan from known landmark to the wider view. The move reveals geography.
- 11. Backlit haze:** Shoot toward low sun carefully. Layers and atmosphere deepen.
- 12. Return in changing light:** Repeat the same wide later. The ending feels planned.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Sign/map
2. Wide view

3. Foreground depth
4. Telephoto layers
5. Human scale
6. Wind sound
7. Changing-light repeat

Best light and sound

Light: Early and late light creates layers. Midday haze can be used with telephoto compression. Overcast weather may hide distance but reveal foreground textures.

Sound: Wind, birds, distant traffic, river, flag and long quiet ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Standing near edges
- Panning without a destination
- Using only ultra-wide views
- Ignoring horizon level
- Letting empty sky dominate

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Stay at the railing or vehicle. Capture sign, wide, telephoto layers, foreground, person or vehicle scale, wind sound and a seated host thought.

36. Roadside Oddities and Tourist Attractions

Oddities are built for scale, humor and surprise. Show the attraction, the person who reacts to it and the ordinary surroundings that make it stranger.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Road sign | First reveal | Scale shot | Signature detail | Drive-away

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Hidden first reveal:** Use a vehicle, tree, building or sign to uncover the attraction. Surprise is part of the story.
- 2. Wide with surroundings:** Show highway, parking lot, marina, field or town around it. The ordinary context often makes the oddity funnier.
- 3. Low-angle hero:** Place camera low and aim upward. Scale and exaggeration increase.
- 4. Human scale pose:** Stand beside or beneath it without touching restricted areas. Viewers understand size immediately.
- 5. Forced perspective:** Line up a hand, vehicle or person to interact visually. A playful image creates thumbnail value.
- 6. Detail hunt:** Find paint, seams, maker marks, repairs, humor or weathering. The object gains personality.
- 7. Orbit:** Use a short arc if space and rules allow. Shape becomes clear.
- 8. Reaction shot:** Record the honest first look before the explanation. Human response carries humor.
- 9. Visitor interaction:** Film people posing from a respectful distance. The attraction is shown in use.
- 10. Gift shop or sign wall:** With permission, show themed objects and local jokes. The story expands beyond the exterior.
- 11. Middle-of-nowhere reverse view:** Turn away and film what surrounds the attraction. Context can be the punchline.
- 12. Drive-away shrink:** Let the oddity disappear behind the vehicle or bend. A natural comic ending.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Road approach
2. Reveal

3. Wide context
4. Scale
5. Details
6. Host reaction/fact
7. Drive-away

Best light and sound

Light: Bright daylight is often fine for colorful attractions. Golden hour creates hero images. Overcast prevents harsh glare on fiberglass and painted surfaces.

Sound: Traffic, visitors, wind, mechanical attraction, laughter, local guide and parking-lot ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Only shooting a close thumbnail angle
- Ignoring scale
- Blocking visitors
- Touching or climbing
- Forgetting the surrounding context

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Park and stay near the main viewing area. Capture reveal, wide, low angle, telephoto details, host reaction, sound and drive-away.

37. Markets, Festivals, Fairs and Community Events

Events need energy without visual chaos. Start wide, collect repeated actions, protect privacy and build a sequence from setup or entrance to lights-out.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Event sign | Crowd overview | Hands/action | Performance or signature moment | Closing activity

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Entrance banner:** Get the name before crowds block it. The event is identified.
- 2. Elevated or edge crowd wide:** Hold steady and let people move. Energy fills the frame naturally.
- 3. Vendor-row walk:** Move slowly along the edge, keeping signs readable. The viewer experiences variety.
- 4. Hands making or serving:** Capture cooking, crafting, pouring, cutting and exchange. Action tells the story without relying on faces.
- 5. Color cluster:** Flags, food, lights, tickets, signs and decorations. Short cutaways build editing rhythm.
- 6. Performance wide first:** Establish stage and audience before close views. Viewers understand context.
- 7. Audience reaction:** Applause, feet dancing, silhouettes or groups from side/rear. Emotion enters the sequence.
- 8. Ride or motion locked:** Let movement cross a stable frame. Energy remains watchable.
- 9. Food hero shot:** Frame product with maker or booth softly behind. The item looks connected to place.
- 10. Telephoto layers:** Compress signs, lights and people from the edge. Crowd density feels rich without pushing through.
- 11. Quiet detail between rushes:** Empty chair, cooling grill, ticket pile, worn stage. Pacing gains a breath.
- 12. Cleanup or lights-out:** Film emptying paths, closing booths or evening lights. The event gets a real ending.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Entrance

2. Crowd wide
3. Hands/action sequence
4. Signature attraction
5. Reactions
6. Sound portrait
7. Closing

Best light and sound

Light: Overcast is friendly for faces and booths. Late afternoon adds warm energy. Night lights require stable shots and lower exposure.

Sound: Crowd wash, cooking, announcer, applause, machinery, music under event rules and cleanup sounds.

Avoid these traps

- Filming children closely without permission
- Blocking booths or aisles
- Recording copyrighted performances without considering rules
- Constant fast pans
- No wide establishing view

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Work from the edge. Capture sign, crowd wide, telephoto hands, food/detail, performance wide, crowd sound and closing lights.

38. Restaurants, Diners and Local Businesses

A small business story works best when you show place, person, process, product and personality. Permission comes first, and customers should not become background props without care.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Exterior/sign | Interior overview | Owner or worker | Process | Finished product

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Exterior arrival:** Show sign, parking, street and door. The viewer knows where they are.
- 2. Door-bell transition:** Film the door opening and capture the sound. A natural entrance bridges exterior and interior.
- 3. Interior master:** From a corner, show layout before close details. The space gains context.
- 4. Owner environmental portrait:** Frame the person with meaningful background. Person and business identity connect.
- 5. Five-shot process:** Wide worker, hands, face, over shoulder, result. A complete sequence is guaranteed.
- 6. Menu or price board:** Keep camera square and readable. Basic information supports narration.
- 7. Texture and history:** Old stools, photos, signs, tools, worn counters or recipes. Character and age become visual.
- 8. Food or product hero:** Use side/window light and a clean background. The result becomes appealing.
- 9. Customer atmosphere wide:** With permission and privacy awareness, film general activity. The business feels alive.
- 10. Sound portrait:** Grill, coffee pour, scissors, register, door or workshop tool. Specific sound gives identity.
- 11. Hands exchange:** Product handed to customer, receipt, bag or handshake. The process reaches completion.
- 12. Exterior evening closer:** Return to lit sign or door after service. The business gets a polished ending.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Exterior

2. Interior wide
3. Owner intro
4. Five-shot process
5. Product hero
6. Specific sound
7. Sign/door ending

Best light and sound

Light: Window side light is usually best. Turn off mixed overhead lights only with permission. For food, avoid direct flat flash and use a clean side angle.

Sound: Door chime, grill, coffee, tools, register, conversation wash and owner explanation.

Avoid these traps

- Blocking customers
- Filming private conversations
- Using wide lens too close to faces
- Ignoring background clutter
- Showing product without process or person

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Use one table, counter end or doorway. Capture exterior, interior wide, telephoto process, three details, product, sound and a seated owner/host line.

39. RV Travel, Campsites and Roadside Stops

Travel stories become relatable when you show routine, movement, setup, small problems and the view outside the door - not just highway footage.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Route or sign | RV in place | Setup action | Life detail | Departure

Creative shot ideas

1. **Route marker:** Film road sign, map, GPS screen safely while parked or a town entrance. Travel is oriented.
2. **RV hero three-quarter:** Show the vehicle with campsite, landscape or town. Home and place connect.
3. **Arrival sequence:** Wide vehicle, wheel, parking, door, first look. A travel transition becomes a story.
4. **Setup five-shot:** Leveling, hookups, awning, chair, pet area or workstation. Routine gains visual variety.
5. **Window view:** Frame the outside scene through the RV window or door. Inside and destination share one image.
6. **Coffee and map:** Top-down or over-shoulder planning shot. Travel feels personal.
7. **Mechanical detail:** Gauge, tire, repair, tools or fuel safely. Real RV life includes systems and setbacks.
8. **Pet reaction:** Film Edith or Archie observing, resting or greeting without forcing action. Companions make the story warm and honest.
9. **Seated host update:** Use campsite or open door as background. A-roll is comfortable and grounded.
10. **Time passing:** Tripod time-lapse of clouds, campsite activity or sunset. The stop gains rhythm.
11. **Night home glow:** Exterior of RV with interior light and safe campsite context. The vehicle feels like home.
12. **Departure sequence:** Pack detail, door close, wheel, drive-away and empty site. Travel continues clearly.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Map/sign

2. RV hero
3. Arrival or setup sequence
4. Life detail
5. Pet or host
6. Camp sound
7. Departure

Best light and sound

Light: Golden hour makes the RV and campsite inviting. Overcast reduces harsh reflections. At night, expose for windows and lights rather than brightening everything.

Sound: Door, steps, coffee, pets, tools, wind, campground, rain on roof, engine and road ambience.

Avoid these traps

- Handholding while driving
- Showing only road footage
- Ignoring setup and daily life
- Filming private neighboring campsites
- Framing setbacks as defeat instead of part of the adventure

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Film from the doorway, chair or one tripod position. Capture RV wide, view, three life details, pet, sound, seated update and departure.

40. Night, Haunted and Eerie Locations

At night, steady beats fancy. Use existing pools of light, clean silhouettes, shadows and real sound. Atmosphere should come from the place, not reckless access or invented danger.

THE FIVE SHOTS THAT SAVE THE EDIT

Blue-hour wide | Pool of light | Flashlight/detail reveal | Shadow or silhouette | Safe departure

Creative shot ideas

- 1. Blue-hour master:** Film before full darkness while sky still has color. The cleanest night establishing shot happens early.
- 2. Pool of light:** Frame a doorway, lamp, sign or window surrounded by darkness. Contrast directs attention.
- 3. Silhouette walk:** Place the subject between camera and brighter background. A simple outline feels cinematic.
- 4. Flashlight reveal:** Lock camera and move light slowly across one subject. Mood and information arrive together.
- 5. Neon reflection:** Use glass, metal or wet pavement. Color and texture increase without extra lighting.
- 6. Shadow movement:** Hold on a surface as branches, fences or headlights create shadows. Natural movement suggests atmosphere.
- 7. Interior doorway glow:** Shoot from dark toward a lit opening. Depth and uncertainty appear.
- 8. Locked empty frame:** Hold a hallway, road, porch or path 15-20 seconds. Stillness often feels more suspenseful than movement.
- 9. Dutch detail only:** Use one deliberate tilted shot for unease. A small stylistic accent is stronger than constant tilts.
- 10. Audio-first reveal:** Begin with insects, wind, creak or distant sound before showing source. The viewer listens actively.
- 11. Host whisper or quiet line:** Record close to microphone rather than faking fear. Intimacy works better than shouting.
- 12. Safe departure:** Show lights receding, door closing or vehicle leaving from a legal position. The ending is clear and responsible.

A simple edit-ready sequence

1. Blue-hour identifier
2. Night wide

3. Light pool
4. Three details
5. Shadow/silhouette
6. Night sound bed
7. Safe exit

Best light and sound

Light: Blue hour is your friend. Protect bright lights and let shadows remain dark. Use support, slower movement and a wide-aperture lens when available. Avoid raising ISO so far that detail becomes mush.

Sound: Insects, wind, distant road, water, building creaks, footsteps and controlled quiet. Monitor with headphones for hum and handling noise.

Avoid these traps

- Trespassing or entering unsafe places after dark
- Overusing flashlights and fast camera swings
- Brightening night into gray daylight
- Inventing evidence
- Failing to show a safe ending

LOW-ENERGY VERSION

Set up near the vehicle or public entrance. Capture blue-hour wide, one lit subject, telephoto details, locked shadows, sound, host line and departure.

PART VI - THE CREATIVE LAB

Creativity is not random motion. It is choosing a viewpoint, timing or transition that makes the story clearer, more surprising or more memorable.

41. Fifty Creative Shot Starters

1. Shoot through a doorway and keep part of the frame dark.
2. Use a puddle to reflect a sign or building.
3. Start on a rusty bolt and pull back to reveal the whole machine.
4. Place the camera near the ground and let footsteps cross.
5. Frame the subject inside a vehicle mirror.
6. Let a passing truck or person wipe the frame for a transition.
7. Match an old photograph to the current location.
8. Use a fence post close to the lens for a parallax slide.
9. Hold on a shadow instead of the person creating it.
10. Film through moving leaves, curtains or hanging chains.
11. Begin out of focus and let the subject become clear.
12. Use a telephoto lens to stack road signs and lights.
13. Frame a person small beneath a large structure.
14. Shoot the same hero angle at arrival and departure.
15. Record natural sound before revealing the source.
16. Place a map in the foreground and the location beyond it.
17. Use a doorway, arch or bridge opening as a frame within the frame.
18. Turn away from the attraction and show the strange surroundings.
19. Film hands first, then reveal whose hands they are.
20. Shoot a sign reflected in sunglasses, glass or polished metal.
21. Use a locked shot and wait for a bird, car, person or cloud shadow.
22. Push from bright exterior into dark interior without trying to expose both perfectly.
23. Use side light to make peeling paint or carved stone pop.
24. Tilt from feet or foundation to face or roofline.
25. Pull back from a date to the building it belongs to.
26. Frame a location between two foreground objects.
27. Use a short orbit around a statue, vehicle or oddity.
28. Shoot top-down as gear, maps or artifacts are arranged.
29. Use a long-lens shot through foreground traffic or people.
30. Let rain run down glass while the location stays beyond it.
31. Record a silhouette crossing a lit doorway.

32. Use a slow slide beside repeating windows, pews or fence posts.
33. Match the direction of two different walks for a hidden cut.
34. Follow a hand opening a door, then cut to the next location door opening.
35. Place the sun just behind a sign or roof edge for a flare reveal.
36. Film the empty frame before a person enters and after they leave.
37. Use 60 fps for a flag, waterfall, sparks, dust or fabric.
38. Shoot a static person while the background moves.
39. Film from a bench or seated eye level for a fresh perspective.
40. Use a narrow beam of light across one detail in darkness.
41. Show scale with a doorway, ladder, vehicle or human figure.
42. Use a slow pan that starts with a known detail and ends on the surprise.
43. Film a location name as it appears in three places: sign, map and object.
44. Shoot a moving object reflected rather than directly.
45. Create a before/after pair from raw material to finished product.
46. Hold a quiet 20-second frame after the action ends.
47. Begin a scene with sound over black, then fade into the image.
48. Use an object close to lens as a soft blur for depth.
49. Film weather changing the same composition.
50. End with the route, water, rail or path continuing beyond the frame.

42. Creative Transitions You Can Shoot in the Field

TRANSITION	SHOT 1	SHOT 2	BEST USE
Object wipe	Move behind a wall/tree/vehicle until frame is covered	Begin covered and reveal new place	Travel and location changes
Whip pan	Whip right into blur	Begin whipping right and settle	Fast or playful sequences
Door match	Door closes or fills frame	Different door opens	Interiors, history, travel
Shape match	Round clock, wheel or window	Another round object	Visual essays and montages
Motion match	Hand reaches, person turns, wheel spins	Same action elsewhere	Process and travel
Darkness match	Move into dark doorway or cover lens	Begin in dark and reveal	Night, haunted, interior
Sound bridge	Let next sound begin early	Cut picture after sound starts	Smooth documentary edits
Map match	Point to map location	Cut to matching real view	Travel and history
Old-photo match	Fill frame with old image	Dissolve/cut to same current angle	Historic storytelling
Focus match	End blurred	Begin blurred and focus new subject	Dreamy or reflective scenes

Transition discipline

Capture the normal edit first. A transition should be a bonus, not the only usable take. Match direction, speed, brightness and shape as closely as possible.

43. Weather as a Creative Tool

Rain

- Reflections on roads and sidewalks
- Drops on windows with subject beyond
- Umbrella and boot details
- Water running from roofs and signs
- Sound on metal, canvas or RV roof

Fog and mist

- Telephoto layers disappearing into distance
- Silhouettes and headlights
- Backlit particles
- Slow reveals
- Long quiet frames with sound

Wind

- Flags, grass, hair, fabric, signs and trees
- Locked frames that let the environment move
- Wind-driven shadows
- Strong natural sound with protection
- Visible struggle can support the story when safe

Storm light

- Bright subject beneath dark cloud
- Cloud time-lapse
- Distant rain curtains
- Reflections and sudden color changes
- Safe interior or vehicle viewpoint

Extreme heat or cold

Show conditions through evidence: heat shimmer, sweat, shade seeking, frost, breath, gloves, condensation, dashboard temperature while parked, empty streets or equipment behavior. Do not damage yourself or gear to prove the weather.

44. Slow Motion, Time-Lapse and Speed Ramping

Slow motion

Use 60 fps for motion with detail: water, flags, animals, footsteps, machinery, dust, sparks and quick reactions. Slow motion works best when the camera is stable and the action crosses the frame. Do not slow everything; contrast makes it effective.

Time-lapse

Use a tripod or locked support. Good subjects include clouds, sunset, street activity, campsite setup, museum crowd changes, shadows and event setup. Leave the camera long enough for visible change and protect it from weather or theft.

Speed ramping

A speed ramp changes one clip from fast to normal or slow. Shoot a longer clean tracking or reveal clip, keep direction steady and avoid sudden shake. Use speed ramps sparingly for travel transitions or event energy, not reflective history.

45. Shooting for Shorts and Vertical Video

Vertical composition

- Keep the main subject centered or within the middle vertical area.
- Use height: steeples, trees, waterfalls, signs, people and doors.
- Move closer because wide horizontal context is reduced.
- Leave clear areas for captions without covering the subject.
- Use quick wide-medium-close changes rather than one long pan.

A 30-second vertical sequence

1. 0-2 seconds: Strong reveal or surprising detail.
2. 2-5 seconds: Location identifier.
3. 5-12 seconds: Wide and medium context.
4. 12-22 seconds: Three details or actions.
5. 22-27 seconds: Host fact or reaction.
6. 27-30 seconds: Final image or question.

46. The Low-Energy and Limited-Mobility Filming System

Creativity can come from observation rather than distance traveled. This system is designed for days when walking, balance or endurance is limited.

1. Choose one safe base: vehicle, bench, doorway, picnic table, visitor center or overlook.
2. Shoot three lens views from that base: wide, standard and telephoto.
3. Collect three details without relocating far.
4. Let movement come to you: traffic, people, flags, water, birds, shadows or machinery.
5. Record one seated A-roll segment.
6. Capture 30-60 seconds of clean sound.
7. Move only once for a second perspective or departure shot.

A FULL STORY FROM ONE SPOT

Wide context + medium hero + telephoto detail + natural movement + sound + seated host line + closing frame. That is enough for a short video or a strong narrated segment.

PART VII - FIELD CHECKLISTS AND QUICK REFERENCES

Print these pages, save them on your phone or keep the PDF open in the vehicle. Checklists are not meant to limit creativity; they protect you from returning home without the basic coverage.

47. Master Field Shot Checklist

Before filming

- ☐ Lens and windshield clean
- ☐ Battery and storage checked
- ☐ Microphone and wind protection ready
- ☐ Frame rate and resolution confirmed
- ☐ Location name recorded
- ☐ Access and safety verified
- ☐ Weather and light direction checked
- ☐ One safe base position selected

Identify the place

- ☐ Road or trail approach
- ☐ Location sign or marker
- ☐ Map, GPS or town name
- ☐ Wide establishing view

Build the story

- ☐ Main subject medium hero
- ☐ Wide-medium-close sequence
- ☐ Three proof details
- ☐ Date/name/label readable
- ☐ Human scale
- ☐ Past-versus-present or context shot

Add movement

- ☐ Locked action
- ☐ One slow reveal/push/slide
- ☐ Wind/water/traffic/person/machinery
- ☐ Walk-through or walk-away

Capture people and voice

- ☐ Short host introduction
- ☐ Reaction shot
- ☐ Hands or over shoulder

☐ Interview or guide line if available

☐ Closing thought

Capture sound

☐ 30-60 seconds ambience

☐ One specific sound effect

☐ Room tone or quiet

☐ No clipping or wind overload

Finish the visit

☐ Interior overview when allowed

☐ Side/rear/context exterior

☐ Creative angle

☐ Final hero shot

☐ Departure or closing image

☐ File/location note spoken or written

48. Ten-Minute Emergency Shot Plan

MINUTE	SHOT
0-1	Film sign or unmistakable identifier. Photograph it too.
1-3	Get one stable wide and one medium hero shot.
3-5	Collect three close details that prove the story.
5-6	Record one slow reveal, slide or push-in.
6-7	Capture one moving element.
7-8	Record 30-45 seconds of natural sound.
8-9	Get one side, rear, doorway or interior overview when legal.
9-10	Shoot a departure or final quiet image.

MINIMUM EDIT-READY PACKAGE

1 identifier + 1 wide + 1 medium + 3 details + 1 movement + 1 sound bed + 1 ending. Add one host line and you have a complete short segment.

49. Interview and A-Roll Checklist

Framing

- ☐ Eyes near upper third
- ☐ Comfortable headroom
- ☐ Looking room
- ☐ Background supports story
- ☐ No pole or bright object behind head
- ☐ Camera at or near eye level

Light

- ☐ Face turned toward soft or side light
- ☐ No half sun/half shade
- ☐ Windows controlled
- ☐ Skin not overexposed
- ☐ White balance steady

Sound

- ☐ Microphone close
- ☐ Wind or clothing noise controlled
- ☐ Refrigerator/fan/traffic reduced
- ☐ Ten seconds quiet before and after
- ☐ Answer recorded twice if needed

Content

- ☐ Name and role
- ☐ One complete short answer
- ☐ Specific example or memory
- ☐ Natural reaction
- ☐ Closing thought

50. Shot Log and Location Notes

LOCATION / TOWN

DATE / ARRIVAL TIME

GPS / MAP PIN

ACCESS / CONTACT / HOURS

MAIN STORY OR HOOK

MUST-HAVE HERO SHOT

INTERIOR AVAILABLE?

BEST LIGHT DIRECTION

NATURAL SOUND TO RECORD

SAFETY / WEATHER NOTES

STILL NEED TO SHOOT

FILE / FOLDER NAME

51. Quick Camera Reference

SITUATION	FRAME RATE	SHUTTER	LENS	MOVE
General YouTube	30 fps	1/60	Standard	Locked or slow
Cinematic history	24 fps	1/50	Standard/tele	Slow
Slow motion detail	60 fps	1/120	Standard/tele	Locked or controlled
Interior room	24/30 fps	1/50 or 1/60	Wide	Locked/slow slide
Wildlife/distant detail	30/60 fps	1/120 or faster as needed	Telephoto	Locked/follow
Night exterior	24/30 fps	1/50 or 1/60	Wide/standard	Locked
Fast event highlight	30/60 fps	1/60-1/120	Standard	Natural/fast accents
Waterfall/waves	30/60 fps	1/60-1/120	Wide/tele	Locked

52. Quick Lens Reference

LOOK	PHONE	CAMERA EQUIVALENT	USE
Wide	0.5x	16-24mm	Place, interiors, height, strong foreground
Natural	1x	35-50mm	People, walk-and-talk, general coverage
Compressed	2x-3x	70-200mm	Distant details, layers, safe viewpoints

Remember: Move your feet before reaching for digital zoom. Use optical lenses or phone lens buttons whenever possible. Digital zoom reduces detail and makes shake more obvious.

53. Quick Movement Reference

MOVE	DIRECTION	STORY PURPOSE	DEFAULT TIME
Pan	Left/right rotation	Show width or follow action	6-12 sec
Tilt	Up/down rotation	Show height or connect details	5-10 sec
Push-in	Move closer	Increase importance or curiosity	6-12 sec
Pull-back	Move away	Reveal context or leave	6-12 sec
Slide	Move sideways	Show depth and geometry	5-10 sec
Follow	Move with subject	Experience action	5-12 sec
Orbit	Arc around subject	Show shape and drama	4-8 sec
Reveal	Uncover subject	Surprise and discovery	3-8 sec
Whip	Fast pan blur	Energy or hidden transition	<1 sec blur
Focus pull	Near/far focus shift	Redirect attention	2-5 sec

54. A-to-Z Shot Dictionary

A - Approach

A road, path, vehicle or walking shot that brings the viewer toward the place.

B - Backlight

Light behind the subject used for glow, silhouette, mist, dust or separation.

C - Close-up

A detail shot that proves the story, shows texture or captures emotion.

D - Dutch angle

A deliberate tilted horizon used briefly for unease or playful strangeness.

E - Establishing shot

A wide view that explains where the scene takes place.

F - Foreground frame

A nearby object used to create depth and a sense of discovery.

G - Ground-level shot

A very low angle that exaggerates scale, texture and movement.

H - Hero shot

The strongest clean view of the main subject.

I - Insert shot

A close detail inserted into a sequence: key, label, hand, switch, map or tool.

J - J-cut

An edit where the next scene sound begins before the next picture; capture clean sound to make it possible.

K - Kicker ending

A final memorable detail, joke, fact, sound or image that gives the segment closure.

L - Locked-off

A completely still camera that lets action move inside the frame.

M - Medium shot

A natural view that shows the main subject with useful context.

N - Natural sound

Real location audio recorded separately for atmosphere and transitions.

O - Over-the-shoulder

A shot past a person toward what they are reading, seeing or doing.

P - Parallax

Depth created when a close foreground object moves faster than the distant subject.

Q - Quiet frame

A long stable shot with little action, used for reflection, suspense or breathing room.

R - Reveal

A shot that begins with the subject hidden and then uncovers it.

S - Slide

A sideways camera move that keeps the subject framed and shows depth.

T - Telephoto compression

A long-lens look that stacks distant objects and isolates details.

U - Undercrank/overcrank idea

Film at a different frame rate for fast or slow playback; 60 fps slow motion is the beginner-friendly version.

V - Visual variety

A deliberate mix of sizes, angles, lenses, movement and stillness.

W - Wide-medium-close

The basic coverage habit that keeps every important subject editable.

X - X-factor shot

The one unusual angle, reflection, transition or moment that makes the location memorable.

Y - Your reaction

A host look, line or pause that shows why the place matters personally.

Z - Zoom with purpose

A zoom used only when changing scale reveals information; otherwise choose the lens before recording.

55. Final Field Rules

1. Get the safe, useful shot before the fancy shot.
2. Shoot wide, medium and close whenever something matters.
3. Make one camera move per clip.
4. Hold still before and after the move.
5. Move slower than feels natural.
6. Let action move inside locked frames.
7. Use wide, standard and telephoto views to create variety.
8. Protect highlights, focus on the story subject and lock white balance when light is steady.
9. Record natural sound at every location.
10. Show people, hands or objects for scale.
11. Respect access, property, memorials, wildlife and your own limits.
12. End the sequence clearly.
13. Bring home a story, not just proof that you were there.

GHOST GRAMPS FIELD REMINDER

You do not need to shoot everything. You need enough clear coverage to tell the truth of the place, plus one creative shot that makes you grin when you see it in the edit.

THE COMPLETE SHOTS LIST

Field Edition

BRING HOME THE STORY

Identifier. Wide. Medium. Details. Movement. Sound. Your voice. A clear ending.

Created for Ghost Gramps