



4-H Filmmaking Workshop Video 5: Documentary Filmmaking

Script

Morissa: [0:01] This film is brought to you by 4-H, America's largest youth development organization, in collaboration with Montana State University and TERRAPod. [0:15] [music]

Emily: [0:47] Did you like that montage? Wasn't it cool? Didn't you feel hooked in and excited to keep watching? Can you believe those clips are from documentary films? In fact, science documentaries? Films people usually think have to be boring. It doesn't have to be a Hollywood film to be creative and exciting. [1:05] Let's explore what makes a good scientific documentary, and then we can apply those creative filmmaking techniques to just about any topic.

[1:13] [music]

Emily: [1:19] In order to talk about what makes a good film, we need to understand a little bit about the history of filmmaking. When people first started making films they filmed plays, and they used the camera as if it were a member of the audience, which meant that it didn't move. It didn't play an active role in telling the story and evoking emotion or in creating drama. [1:40] Here, watch this clip to see what I mean.

[1:43] [clip plays]

Emily: [2:00] A "Trip to the Moon" is from 1902. Did you notice how the camera didn't move? It just observed. Over the years filmmakers began to move the camera around to vary their shots and to add music. Now the camera often plays an active role in the story telling. Watch these clips to see what I mean. [2:23] [clips play]

Emily: [3:30] Do you see how exciting filmmaking has gotten over the years? Well, so has documentary filmmaking. Now, we're going to look at some methods the documentary filmmakers use. Sometimes there's an off-screen narrator who shares information with the viewer, like in "March of the Penguins." [3:50] Other times, there's an onscreen host who invites us on a journey to learn more about an animal or a culture, and sometimes the filmmaker interacts with the subject. We call this interactive filmmaking, and many times in documentaries you'll see interviews which are a great way to share information.

[4:07] Now, don't worry if you can't memorize all of these right now. You'll get the hang of it, but when you go to make your own documentary you're going to have to choose which method to use.

[4:19] In the next few minutes we are going to watch and discuss some great documentary clips and the techniques that were used. Let's go.

[4:26] [clips play]

Visit the 4-H Filmmaking Studio & Workshop at: www.4-H.org/curriculum/filmmaking

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Emily: [7:12] Remember when I mentioned you can learn creative filmmaking by watching good science films like the ones we just watched? In these we learned you don't have to be linear and direct to be science-y. Like in "Deep Blue," we learned so much about the ocean just by watching, rather than hearing a bunch of facts from a voiceover. [7:30] So when you go to make your own film, don't feel limited. This is when you want to be totally creative, whether you're adding music, voiceover, sound effects; whether you want to hire actors; whether you want to use interviews; whether you want to use fiction versus documentary. Just do what you need to do to find your own voice as a filmmaker and roll with it.

[8:01] [music]

Transcription by CastingWords