

WALLDO

Tips for Shooting Great News Video

WALLDO stands for WIDE/ANGLED/LOW/LINKING/DEPTH/OPPOSITE. It is a mental cheat-sheet for shooting video in the field. The shots are creative but also have very practical purposes behind them.

WIDE: Shooting from a distance provides context, and perspective. It shows the viewer the big picture. It establishes location.

ANGLED: When you shoot everything from directly in front, it takes away depth and also seems safe, and sometimes pretty bland. Shooting things like buildings, and especially signs from an angle makes for a more interesting visual.

Low: Shooting from ground level, or even knee-level, gives viewers a different perspective. Put the camera on the ground to get the feet passing by during the parade. The same approach in your school's hallways can make for an interesting shot as kids walk by on their way to class.

LINKING: Maybe the most difficult of the WALLDO shots to do well, this requires movement of the camera. It is a shot that links two related objects or subjects by panning from one to the other. This shot is used when it is hard to get the two objects in the frame at the same time. Maybe you follow a jogger running to your left, and as he passes by the "Relay for Life" sign, you stop on the sign. You have now "linked" the participant with the cause he is running for. Rack focuses can also "link" two objects in a creative way.

DEPTH: One of the easiest, but most important WALLDO techniques. Find foreground objects to put in your frame when you shoot. They allow you to add depth to the visuals. For example, a burning building is easy to shoot. But think of the drama you add when you shoot that building with the owner in the foreground, watching his property burn. On a less dramatic level, shooting the outside of your school with branches in the foreground adds depth and makes the shot more interesting.

OPPOSITE: This is the reverse angle in video, or the "reaction" shot. The opposite of the running back scoring a touchdown is the shot you get when you turn around and show the cheering crowd. Shooting a guest speaker from in front is the standard shot, but you add a great and unique perspective by shooting from behind her as she speaks, providing her point of view as she looks at her audience.

TIP: After students master these shots, the next step is to COMBINE them now and then. Think about how you can shoot both angled and depth shots at the same time, or low and opposite. WALLDO is something you always have in your tool belt once you learn the techniques, and the best way to learn is by practicing them.