

Citizen Journalism video reportage

How to make a video reportage
with your smartphone

Why this guide?

There is so much violence in the world. People hurt people that they never even met before. Out of prejudice, fear and ignorance. That kind of violence is rooted in a belief, that there is an "us" and a "them". A duality. When we believe that we are fundamentally different from each other, we start to fear and to hate. And those of us who have power often abuse it. Either knowingly or because we're too ignorant to care. Those who are in the majority suppress those who aren't. How can we change that?

As a video producer I know how powerful it is, when people reclaim the power over their own story. And make their own voice heard. Something happens when we share how we feel about something. Today we let big news broadcasters tell our story. But they are interested in ratings, - not in solving the problems of the world. Instead of letting big news broadcasters define (and sadly) often twist our story, we could start telling it ourselves.

Everybody with a smartphone can report and document on social injustice and institutionalised violence against minorities. It has never been easier to film, edit and share your own videos. This guide is meant as a tool for you to go out and make video-reportages with your smartphone. You don't need to know anything about journalism to do that. All you need is a will to document what you see, what you hear, what you experience and what you feel.

What is a reportage?

Reportage is Latin and means "to bring back". A video reportage is when somebody is at the scene of an action and captures on video what is happening and brings it back to other people. The person who makes the reportage is like a "fly on the wall" and observes the events while they unfold and communicates his or her experience to others.

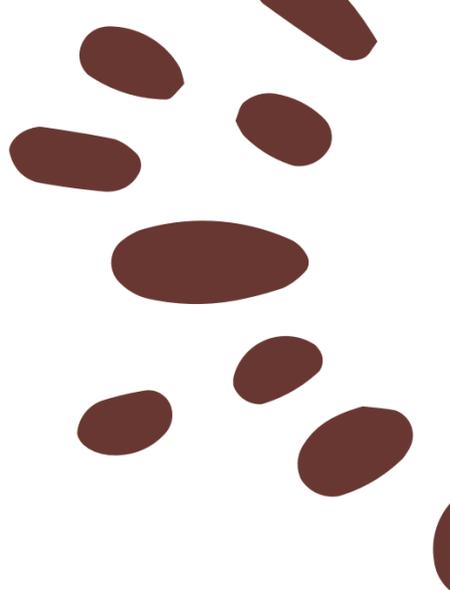
Guidelines

Stay in the present tense, You want to communicate that it's happening NOW.

Comment on what's happening. Don't think that the viewer can see it. They need YOU to explain.

Describe colours, sounds, ambience. It helps the viewer to imagine what it's like to be there.

Make small interviews with people around you. This gives other perspectives to the experience



What do you need?

Smartphone

If you have a smartphone with a camera - you're good to go!

Remember
to charge the battery or bring a powerbank.

Be sure that you have space for the videoclips.

Microphone

For reportage it's important to capture your voice.

If you have a headset with a microphone, you can use that. Hold it close to your mouth.

You can also buy a microphone that you clip on to your collar. The cheapest ones are as low as \$ 17.

Editing App

You'll probably need to edit a little bit in your footage. There are many free editing apps for your phone out there.

I can recommend InShot. It's very easy to use, and it has a lot of useful features.

How to film the reportage?



DOCUMENTATION

Capture what you see. Share your experience with the viewer. Focus on giving the viewer an impression on what is going on. Don't jerk the camera around, but move it slowly, and give the viewer time to see the scene. You can comment while you're filming on what is happening.

TALKING HEAD

A talking head is you in the picture talking directly to the camera. This is good for introducing the video. But also use it throughout the event. It keeps the story personal and relevant to the viewer. As viewers we tend to lose interest and focus if we only see events unfolding. We need a narrator to guide us through. That's *your* job!

Video reportage in 5 steps



STEP 1 - Present yourself

WHO are you?

Start by introducing yourself. What's your name, your profession and where are you from? It's important - especially in citizen journalism - that the viewer knows a little about you. It helps them trust, what you are telling them.

WHERE are you?

Give a little background on where you are right now. Is it a demonstration you're at? Or are you just on your way to pick up your kid from school when something happens, or walking down the street, when you see something, that you want to cover.

STEP 2 - Explain what is happening

What is happening right now?

What is the situation? What do you see? As a reporter you have to tell your viewer what you experience. What do you know about the situation? What do people do?

What is the background?

what is the background for what is happening right now? It doesn't have to be the full story, but just the events that led up to what is happening now.

Is there a history, an unfolding of events, that you should tell your viewer? Is the situation different from yesterday, a week ago or just an hour ago? How has the situation changed?





STEP 3 - Make it real

Describe sounds, colors, smells, energies... All the things you pick up with your senses: Your eyes, ears, nose, skin, nervous system - all of it. You are not just a brain in a body. You are also that body. And what the body experiences is just as important as what the mind understands.



STEP 4 - How do you feel?

The best reportages are personal. Tell the viewer how you feel about what you're witnessing. Do you feel sad, angry, happy, hopeful, powerless, powerful? There are so many ways to describe what you are feeling. Remember that you are the one, who is there where things are happening. By telling your viewer how the events make you feel, you help the viewer to connect and understand.

STEP 5 - Your aspirations

In recent years constructive journalism has been an emerging domain within journalism. It is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories.

I feel that we should NEVER avoid talking about conflicts and painful things, but we can do it in a way, where the outcome is not hatred or feelings of revenge, but aspirations for a better tomorrow.

In step 5 acknowledge the pain, hurt, anger and frustration, - but conclude your story by talking about what you wish for. What are the changes you would like to see regarding the events you are reporting about? What does a better tomorrow look like to you? And make it personal! What would that mean on an everyday level for you, your children, your parents, a friend, your community?





Your story matters!

We are quick to think that our voices are not important. That professional reporters and journalists are better at reporting about what's happening. But think about it. Big news broadcasters are not neutral. They have so many interests at stake, and we should never let it be up to them to write our collective story!

Right now history is being made! And you should let your voice be heard. History should be written by all the people, and not just a handful of people.

My personal belief is that we can change the world for the better by being vulnerable and brave, - and by sharing our hopes and dreams.



I hope that this guide is helpful for you. I made it because I wanted to share some of the tools, I have collected during my years as a professional video producer and as a teacher of personal storytelling in video.

If you want access to more free resources, I share tips and tools about video making at my Instagram profile: [@video.made.easy](https://www.instagram.com/video.made.easy)