



Virtual Heritage Fair Video Series: Accompanying Tips

This document accompanies Heritage Saskatchewan's Virtual Heritage Fair Video Series.

List of Things Not to Do:

1. Do not use racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ2+ sentiments, etc. (If you are using them in historical context, be sure to explain this. Do not use any slurs directly.)
2. Do not deliberately insult anyone.

Things to Make Sure:

1. Make sure to be respectful.
2. Make sure the audience can see your display (both up close and as a whole).
3. Make sure the audience can see you if you are supposed to be in the frame.
4. Make sure the audience can see what you want to show them.
5. Make sure the audience can hear and understand you.
6. Make sure that you tell your story, share your topic, and convey its importance.
7. Make sure to answer these three questions:
 - a. What is your topic?
 - b. Why is your topic important to Canada?
 - c. Why is your topic important to you?

Contents:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Essential Tips | Page 2 |
| 2. Camera | Page 2 |
| 3. Framing | Page 2 |
| 4. Memorising/Editing | Page 3 |
| 5. Location/Lighting | Page 3 |
| 6. Clothing/Costuming | Page 4 |
| 7. Including Others in Your Video | Page 5 |
| 8. Copyright | Page 5 |
| 9. Humour | Page 6 |

Essential Tips:

1. Keep your main video under ten minutes and over one minute long. Additional videos can be of any length, but try to keep them each under ten minutes as well.
2. Have a strong introduction and conclusion.
3. Include written work along with your video. Submitting slides or photos of your display is a good idea. Because the judges cannot ask questions, these will help them evaluate your project.
4. Use animation, re-enactments, or skits to help illustrate your presentation. Remember that these are supposed to help you, not be the main focus of your presentation. If you are not comfortable with including these, you do not have to.
5. Consider that you can include additional videos such as full interviews, a complete performance, outtakes, an in-depth tour of your artefacts/photo albums, or a fun skit or re-enactment separately from your main video presentation. These are mainly to enhance the viewing experience for the judges and audience, especially if they have an interest in the topic. With that in mind, your main video is your presentation itself (and what the judges are evaluating), although you can include clips from other videos and you can refer to them in your main video.
6. Be as safe as possible and make sure to have adult supervision if necessary (such as if you are re-enacting the Halifax Explosion with firecrackers).

Camera:

1. **Think of the camera as the audience's "eyes"**. The camera should be at your eye level so that the audience is not looking up or down at you.
 - a. Present to the camera or to someone standing just to the side of it.
 - b. If you are not appearing in the video, or when you do a close-up, the camera is still the audience's "eyes". Present as though the audience is next to you and you are showing them your display.
 - c. Make sure that the camera has a chance to focus so that the audience can see what you are showing them before you move on to another part of your display.
2. If you are recording with a cell phone or tablet, hold it horizontally, *not* vertically.
3. Have your camera on a stable surface, like a table or a tripod. If someone has to hold the camera, make sure that they are holding it against something that does not easily move. (An example of something that does not easily move is a large piece of furniture.)

Framing:

1. If you are recording with a cell phone or tablet, hold it horizontally, *not* vertically.
2. Integrate shots of your display/photos/model/etc. to help illustrate your presentation.
3. Unless you have a specific reason for including your feet or something on the floor, frame the video so that the audience only sees you from the waist up.
 - a. Try to keep your waist at the same height or lower than your display
 - b. Sitting down is fine

Memorising/Editing:

1. Memorise as much as possible, but remember that you can use cues such as cards, your display, or something off-camera.
2. Try to sound as natural as possible, as though you are presenting to someone in the room.
3. Edit out mistakes and long pauses as much as possible. Avoid doing everything in one long take.
4. Use subtitles when possible. Subtitles are good for the following reasons:
 - a. to provide translation;
 - b. to clarify a verbal mistake like saying “1863” when you meant “1763”;
 - c. to break up your presentation into smaller pieces, similar to the titles on a display;
 - d. to make yourself understood if there is background noise, such as outside; and
 - e. as a label to explain who someone is in a photograph, interview, etc.

Location/Lighting:

1. Use artificial light as much as possible, even when filming in the daytime. Close curtains or blinds if you are filming in a room with windows. Bring in lamps to make a room brighter so that you and/or your display are not shadowy.
2. Find one place to set up your display or to do the majority of your presentation. This should be a relatively quiet indoor space. Make sure that you are comfortable in this space and that your display is safe from family members and pets.
3. Do not move your display to another location partway through the video. (But you can move between locations by yourself.) Test out different spots for your display before you start to record.
4. Keep any outdoor segments short and consider recording your voice separately in case you have a lot of background noise, such as wind or traffic. A cloudy day works better for recording outside because the movement of the sun is less obvious.
5. If you are including a screen in your video (such as presenting a PowerPoint), be extra careful about lighting and reflections. Sometimes screens can act like mirrors!
 - a. If you want the audience to focus on what is on the screen, make sure the camera focuses on it, not you.
 - b. If you do not want the audience to focus on what is on the screen (because it is part of your background), make sure that the rest of the room is bright enough so that the camera focuses on you and your display, not the screen. If you can, consider turning the screen off when the audience is not supposed to be looking at it.
 - c. Submit PowerPoints, slideshows, etc. as separate files along with your video so that the judges can go back to look at them after they have finished watching.
6. Be careful about reflections in mirrors and windows. Avoid having mirrors, windows, cabinets with glass doors, or other shiny surfaces in your video.
7. You do not have to travel to where your project takes place for your video. You can also transform parts of your house, yard, school, or local park into a location relating to your topic, such as a fur trading post, a battlefield, a secret tunnel, etc.

8. While your display should remain in the same place, you can move parts of it around, especially a model. You can use different rooms in your house, such as demonstrating how to cook something in your kitchen or doing a science experiment outside.

Clothing/Costuming:

1. Unless a change of outfit is significant to your presentation, try to keep things about yourself the same throughout your video. This includes your clothes, hairstyle, whether or not you are wearing glasses, etc.
2. Suggestions on what to wear for your video:
 - a. Loose-fitting, comfortable clothing (how formal you want to be is your choice)
 - b. A uniform, costume, regalia, etc. that is relevant to your presentation
 - c. A shirt with a logo, slogan, or photo that is relevant to your presentation
 - d. Clothing with your school logo/mascot
3. Avoid distracting your audience with your clothing. Distractions include holes, rips, stains, etc. (even if they were bought that way). Other distractions include clothes that do not fit or that are see-through. Avoid shirts with logos, slogans, or large images that are not relevant to your presentation.
4. Before you start filming, check how you and your outfit look in the camera. Something that looks fine in a photo or in person might look odd in a video, mainly because of lighting.
5. Costumes should be age-appropriate and respectful. Avoid any overtly sexualized costumes. Unless you are playing a character or are wearing an outfit that you have earned (such as through dance), avoid dressing up as a member of an ethnic group that you are not a part of.

Including Others in Your Video:

1. Do not include anyone else in your video **without their consent** unless you are filming in a public place (like a park) and they are in the background. This also includes people who are not appearing in person in the video (i.e. if you interviewed your grandmother through video-chat). Make sure to get their permission **before** you interview/record them.
2. Make sure to go over any interview questions with the person you are interviewing **before** you start recording. This will make them feel more comfortable and it will make your video easier to edit.
3. If a pet or other non-wild animal appears in your video (even in outtakes), you still need to get permission from their owner to include them. Make sure to give credit to any pets or livestock who take part in your video!
4. You do not have to interview anyone for your video. Some suggestions for interviews (other than people directly involved with your topic) include asking your family members or friends about your topic or having someone else play the part of a historical character that you are “interviewing”.

Copyright:

1. Heritage Fairs fall under the education portion of “fair use” (sometimes called “academic fair use”) under the Copyright Act. As such, students do not need to get permission to use most photos, clips, etc. as long as they credit their sources. Parody and satire are also included under “fair use”.
2. Music does **not** fall under “fair use”; please use copyright-free music, music that is in the public domain, or one’s own composition. Music will only fall under “fair use” if it is the topic of the video itself, such as if the topic is a song, band, singer, or music style. Even in these cases, some recording labels will try to assert their copyright over the music.
3. If a song is in the public domain, you should be able to find this out online (make sure to check about Canada rather than in the US or elsewhere). However, remember that even if the lyrics or tune to a song is in the public domain, a particular artist or band’s version of it will be copyrighted separately.
4. Make sure to give credit to anyone who appears in your video, anyone who helps you with your video, and anyone who contributed to your video (as well as your project overall). This includes non-human contributors such as pets and livestock.

Humour:

1. Be careful about trying to be funny. **Remember to be respectful.** Here are some tips about humour:
 - a. Just because something is funny does not make it right. It can still be mean.
 - b. A bad joke could ruin your whole video.
 - c. Do not embarrass anyone or force anyone to do anything embarrassing.
 - d. Do not make fun of anyone or any group, including generic “people of the past”.
 - e. Do not use racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ2+ sentiments, etc.
 - f. If you are playing a character or imitating a specific person, make sure that you explain this to the audience.
 - g. If you are playing a character or imitating a specific person, remember that you still have to be respectful. (Sometimes, playing a character could be inherently funny, like wearing a fake moustache and top hat, and this is acceptable.) Even if your character would have views different from the present day, remember to be respectful.
 - h. If you want to imitate a celebrity, you risk distracting or confusing your audience. (Judges may not be familiar with the person you are imitating, for example.)
 - i. Be yourself. If you are not comfortable telling jokes, you do not have to.
 - j. The judges will be more impressed with your research and enthusiasm than your ability to be funny.
2. It is great to use online videos (i.e. YouTube, TikTok, etc.) as inspiration, but remember that this is a school project, not an entertainment piece. Online presenters may use shock value and mean jokes to get more views. This is not appropriate for a Heritage Fairs video. Instead, check out videos online whose main purpose is education.
3. Outtakes – It is fine to edit together your outtakes (or bloopers) and submit them as a bonus video to entertain viewers. You can put them at the end of your main video (such as during your credits) as long as they do not take the video over ten minutes. Including outtakes shows your editing skills, as well as that you worked hard and had fun. If you are not comfortable including them, it is best to leave them out. If someone else, such as your parent, appears in your outtakes, you need to get their permission to include the clip.