Video Final Project—Sample Equipment List

In past years, participating communities used the following devices and software to develop their projects:
● *Tripods*
● *Digital Voice Recorders*
● *High-definition digital camcorder*
● *Video editing software*
● *Lighting kit for interviews*
● *DSLR camera for video and still images*
● *Flash drives and external hard drives for data storage*

All equipment selected for use was determined with the expertise and input from technology advisors at the local level or by state scholars and educators in each community. Local technology decisions are based on the project goals of their respective student groups.

Audio and video equipment recommendations from the Storytelling Field Guide:
If you can't access the equipment below, you can record all audio on a smartphone and create your own dampeners and screens if you need them. Here is a list of basic audio recording equipment you may want to consider:

Recorder. The industry standard is a flash type recorder. You want to be able to adjust your record levels. You want to be able to plug in a microphone. And ideally, the recorder would also have a great built-in mic because sometime plugging in an external mic isn't practical.

Omni-directional microphone. This type of microphone tends to record sound with a very warm quality, picking up not just what you're pointing at, but some of the other sound around it. This is good for recording interviews in quiet places and for gathering the general ambient sound of a place.

Unidirectional microphone (shotgun mic). These microphones tend to be long and thin. They are very sensitive and pick up mostly the sound of what you're pointing at. They're great for recording interviews in noisy places and for gathering sound of quiet or distant things.

Laveleer microphone. Lav mics are extremely small, and are designed to easily clip onto the shirt or jacket collar of the speaker. This gives very close proximity to their mouth. It will take some time to attach the lav to your subject and run cables back to your digital recording device or setup a wireless system, so keep set-up time in mind if using this mic

Handheld microphone. Handheld mics are large, designed to be seen but take no time to set up. This makes them perfect for a quick audio recording, where you may need to approach the subject and begin recording immediately in a busy environment. They are best used when placed very close to the chosen sound source, so microphone technique is important.

Headphones. The bigger, the better. Wear headphones at all times while recording so you know what you're getting on tape. It's best to use headphones that fully cover your ears.

Sound dampener. Sound from your voice reaches the microphone directly and then indirectly after bouncing off walls, floors and ceiling. That distance is enough for the sound to become out of sync and record a bit of an echo. Most people use foam tiles on their walls or place their microphone in a sound dampening box.

Pop Filter/Microphone Screen. A pop filter or pop shield is noise protection filter for microphones. It serves to reduce or eliminate 'popping' sounds caused by fast moving air on the microphone during recorded speech. It also keeps moisture off the microphone which can cause mold growth.

Wind screen. Wind on a microphone makes a rumbly distorting sound. Foam windshields work indoors to reduce noise, but are not good for outdoor recording unless there is very little wind around. For outdoor recording in the wind, get an outdoor windscreen known as a deadcat.

If you aren't able to access the equipment below, you can record video on a smartphone. If you are recording video on your phone, you will need an external microphone for audio recording the scenes you are shooting. Here is a list of basic video recording equipment you may want to consider.

Video Camera. What camera you choose depends on your budget, the type of shooting you're doing (static, stealth, etc.) and where you plan to showcase your film (web-only, theater, broadcast). You can shoot on anything from your smartphone to a DSLR to a top-of-line camera such as the Red Epic.

Tripod. A necessary piece of equipment to keep your footage looking steady and professional. Get a tripod with a fluid head for smoother looking pans.

Camera Light. Sometimes a nice pop of light from the camera can help fill in shadows. This is a nice accessory especially in a shoot where you might not have time for a full 3-point lighting set-up.

Three-Point Lighting Kit. You only need this if you're planning a lot of shooting inside. Creating a well-lit scene usually involves a 3-way lighting set-up.

Microphone. You cannot depend on the camera's microphone. They aren't strong enough. See the page on audio recording equipment for other options.

Boom Pole. A boom mic set-up comes in handy to capture audio from a group interview, crowd scenes or any situation where you need to gather professional audio quickly.

Audio (XLR) Cables. If you plan to use a professional audio set-up with your camera, you'll need XLR cables to go from your camera to the mic.

Light Reflector. A reflector is a tool that reflects existing light. Their primary purpose is to fix shadows. If you are shooting outdoors during the day, a reflector can be used to fix odd shadows on the face, or prevent a backlit subject from becoming a silhouette.

Lenses. There are many options. The standard lens is among the easiest to use, as it provides a similar viewing angle to the human eye. A wide-angle lens capture more of the scene than the human eye can focus on. Telephoto lenses are designed to zoom in on very far-away subjects. Macro lenses are specialized lenses that excel at close-up scenes. A prime lens is the opposite of a zoom lens: it has a single focal length, so they can't zoom, but because they have fewer moving parts, they often produce higher-quality images.

Extra Batteries. Don't get caught without enough batteries out on a shoot.

Memory Cards. You'll need somewhere to record the footage you'll be shooting. One memory card will not be enough. They can fill up quickly.

External Hard Drive. A portable hard drive comes in handy if you plan to do a lot of shooting in the field and need to offload your footage from your camera's memory cards.

Camera Bag. You need something sturdy and weatherproof to put all your gear in.

Audio

Audacity. Audacity is a powerful multi-track recording app, and it's easy to use. Audacity allows you to record live audio, record from your desktop, convert old tapes/records, edit various formats, cut/copy/splice/mix audio, add effects, change speed/pitch, and much more. Despite all the professional-level set of features that Audacity has, the simplicity of its user interface is one of its most impressive features.

Levelator. Levelator is a software that adjusts the audio levels within your audio file for variations from one speaker to the next. It is a compressor, normalizer and limiter in one package. The user interface is as easy as it gets: drag-and-drop any WAV or AIFF file onto Levelator's application window, and a few moments later you'll find a get version with improved sound.

Video

Lightworks. Lightworks is considered one of the best free editing programs out there. It features a beautiful user interface, a timeline, multi-camera support, and real-time video effects and easy-to-use trimming tools. Some features are easy, but it is a complex system and the support documents aren't very comprehensive.

Blender. Blender is more than an editor, it's an opensource, 3D animation suite, which allows for modeling, rendering, motion tracking, and more. On the video editing side, there are a ton of features, which means you can produce complex video projects. For the amateur video editor, all the functionality that's available can be a bit overwhelming.

WeVideo. WeVideo is one of the most widely used cloud-based video editing applications. This means you can produce and edit videos from an online interface. Most of the editing features are based on a drag-and-drop design and are very simple. Basic editing is free, but if you want access to more sophisticated editing features you will have to upgrade to their paid plans.

VSDC Free Video Editor. In addition to supporting nearly every major video format, the program offers advanced video effects, including object transformation and color correction, as well as advanced audio effects like volume correction. If you want technical support, you need to pay.

Avidemux. Avidemux is primarily Windows-based, and gives you options for basic editing. This includes easy clip splicing, as well as a host of filters. The editing tools are robust enough to ensure that your videos look professional. The application features an extensive online Wiki for an added layer of support as you learn to edit with the software.