

Getting to Know Your Camera

Imagine living in the 1920s when video cameras had only recently been invented and were big, basic, and very expensive. This meant that only very few people could make their own movies.

Things have changed a lot since then with the introduction of digital camcorders and even more recently the smartphone. Now more people are able to record video anywhere they go, either on a camcorder, a digital stills camera, or a camera on a phone, which just increases the options you have to make your own movies.



Just take a moment to think of all the really clever people who were involved in making the video camera what it is today so that we can create our own movies at home — thank you, clever people! How do they fit all that camera technology into a smartphone?

You don't have to have a \$50,000 camera to make your own movie; you can make it with any video camera you have access to. You don't even have to own a camera or smartphone as long as you have access to someone else's. I started writing films before I had a camera, and I invited my friends to help me make them with their cameras. A good filmmaker uses the skills of people around them to make their movies.



TIP

Using someone else's camera equipment is a fine way to begin filming inexpensively. However, always be sure you have permission to use the camera equipment or the smartphone if it belongs to someone else.

As a filmmaker, you can choose to either shoot a movie yourself or you can invite other people to operate the camera while you direct. Either option is fine. Your choice may depend on what you're filming and whether you need help. Many documentaries, for instance, are shot and directed by the filmmaker in order to simplify and reduce the number of people around when filming. Usually, more people are needed to shoot a movie in which dialogue needs to be recorded and lighting set up. Also, don't disregard the value of additional opinions: Having people working with you can make the filming process easier, quicker, and more enjoyable.

How Does Your Camera Work?

Don't worry: I'm not going to go into great detail here but it's useful to know the basics of how your camera works.

A video camera works in a way that's similar to the way your eye works. Your eye sees things as a series of still images or *frames* and your brain then puts them together so quickly it looks like smooth movement — it's clever stuff, isn't it?

The camera does a very similar thing: It captures movement in a series of frames. In cameras, this movement is measured in *frames per second*. (See Figure 1-1.)

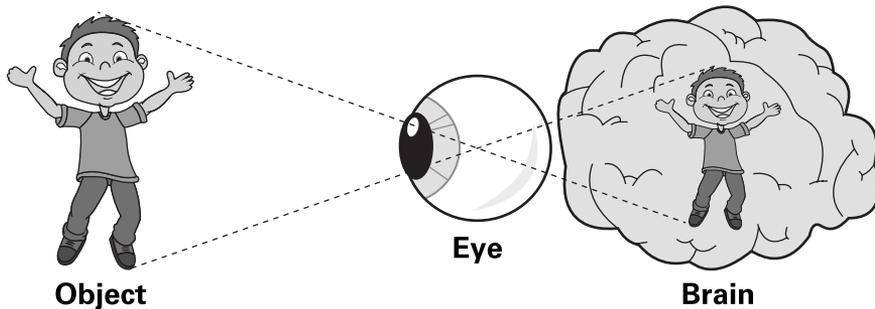


Figure 1-1

Also, like your eye, the camera records the images using light from the scene you are filming. The light enters through the lens and the images are captured by a microchip inside the digital video camera. These images are then sent to your media card, internal storage, or tape. A smartphone camera works in exactly the same way. Figure 1-2 shows how a digital video camera records an image to a media card or disk.

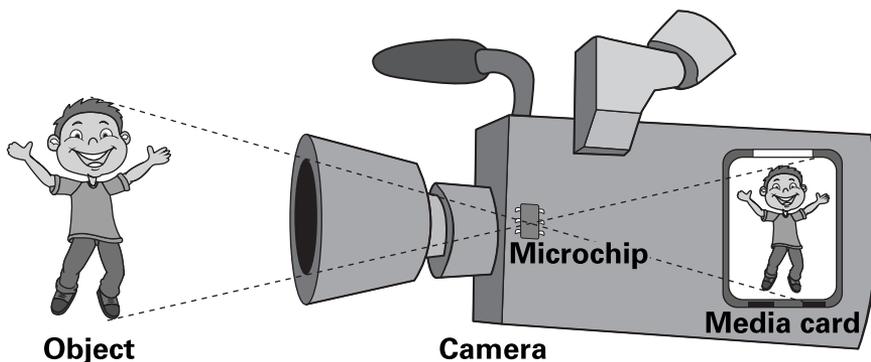


Figure 1-2

The introduction of digital video cameras and smartphones has made the movie making process simpler and less expensive. Traditional film cameras captured film footage as a series of still

images onto a light-sensitive reel of tape running through the camera. This reel of tape was expensive to buy and couldn't be reused. It also made setting up and checking shots difficult because there was no easy way of playing back the footage you had captured without going through the complex process of editing those reels of tape. Traditional film cameras create what I call a "cinematic" look, however, allowing for a softer look to the image than you can get with digital video. It's more difficult to get this cinematic look with a digital video camera, especially with lower-range camcorders, which often have trouble dealing with the lighter and darker areas of a shot, and whose image tends to be sharper and more crisp.

Deciding on a Camera to Use

Digital video cameras vary in price, size, and quality. For under \$100, you can buy a compact HD camcorder that will record great video, but it may not have all the functions a professional filmmaker would expect. At the other extreme, you can find video cameras that cost over \$50,000, which are used to shoot blockbuster movies — but even these have their disadvantages.

As a filmmaker, I like to use different types of digital video cameras for different reasons. In the following list, I describe the different types of digital video cameras currently available:

- ✓ **Smartphones:** A smartphone is a cellphone that can capture still images and video footage. (See Figure 1-3.) Smartphones are more lightweight and compact, which makes it easier to capture video in smaller spaces. The latest iPhones and Android phones can capture stunning photos and video footage and have helped to reduce the need for digital compact cameras.

Most smartphones don't offer the best quality for picture or sound, but they're great for capturing video simply and quickly. Many of them can record in resolutions above 4K and have optical image stabilization built in, which helps reduce wobbly shots.



Figure 1-3

Because smartphones are perfect for capturing offhand moments you couldn't film with larger, more professional cameras, I use them occasionally to capture video and images for behind-the-scenes projects or for moments when I don't have time to get the big cameras out.

- ✓ **Tablets:** No, I'm not talking about the medical kind, but the electronic device. Most tablets don't have smartphone quality cameras, but they can be used to record video and edit with. There is a great selection of apps for editing, which I discover later in this chapter. Some tablets have powerful processors that can edit high-resolution video. Tablets are usually bigger than smartphones, but they can be easier to hold and have a larger screen to make monitoring your shots easier.
- ✓ **Camcorders:** A camcorder (see Figure 1-4) is a portable handheld video camera designed to record video and audio. Camcorders usually have lenses built into the camera body and are designed to make recording video quicker and more simple.



Figure 1-4

Recently, camcorders have become more affordable, which is great news for home-video filmmakers. The affordable range of camcorders offers some great features and fantastic quality. Most of the cameras in this range offer “automatic” functions such as autofocus, which searches for the subject in the scene you’re filming and focuses on that subject, rather than on things in the background. Some of these camcorders have face-detection features so that the camera focuses on the people in the shot. Other nice features include *auto-iris*, which adjusts the brightness of the picture depending on the amount of light available, and *auto-white-balance*, which adjusts how warm or cold the picture looks, depending on what is needed in the scene.

- ✓ **Professional camcorders:** Professional filmmakers need more from their cameras than most home video makers do. The ability to manually control all the settings on a camcorder is very useful to a professional filmmaker because they like to be able to choose what to focus on and how

bright or warm the picture should look. The camcorders in this range are normally used by news teams to record outside broadcasts, and by production companies for corporate film projects.

Usually, the higher you go up in the range of professional camcorders, the bigger the cameras get and the more manual features they have. The bigger camcorders are heavier and can take longer to set up. The quality of the lens on the camcorder normally increases along with the quality of the picture and sound, too.

- ✓ **Broadcast and studio cameras:** Professional filmmakers need more from their cameras than most home movie makers do. The ability to manually control all the settings on a camera is very useful to a professional filmmaker because they like to be able to choose what to focus on and how bright or warm the picture should look. Broadcast and studio cameras are great for television shows and live event coverage. They are often used in capturing and broadcasting sports events. These cameras can be much larger than camcorders and have detachable lenses, allowing the camera operator to choose which lens they want to use.

Digital video cameras record and store the footage captured through the lens onto a media device. Recently manufactured cameras record onto media cards or drives — these hold digital information that can be read by your computer when editing — whereas older digital cameras record onto other media, often tape cassettes, which record data onto a reel of tape that can be played back through the camera and imported onto a computer using a cable from the camera.

I use broadcast and studio cameras for some of my corporate video projects and event filming for a number of reasons: They can be easier and quicker to set up; they offer auto-focus and zoom control, which are handy when you need them; and most broadcast cameras are designed to be handheld or carried on the shoulder for long periods, so they're comfortable to use. See Figure 1-5.



Figure 1-5

- ✓ **Action cameras:** Recent developments in technology have permitted camera manufacturers to fit more into less space. This has led to the introduction of *action cameras*, which are very small, light video cameras that can be strapped to sport equipment, bikes, or cars and can record video that's normally hard to capture. (See Figure 1-6.) For example, a cyclist could attach an action camera to their helmet to record what they see as they are cycling. Action cameras can also be attached to free runners, skiers, sky divers, and race-car drivers to give the audience a feeling of being involved.

Action cameras are a great, inexpensive way to capture high-quality video. You can expect to pay as little as \$50 for an action camera. Note, however, that the sound quality on these cameras isn't the best, which may influence your decision to buy one. Usually, however, action cameras are used for capturing shots in which sound isn't needed or isn't the primary focus.



Figure 1-6

I've used action cameras to record vehicles as they are driving. In such cases, I've attached the camera either to the windshield inside the car to film the driver or to the outside of the car to capture the car driving on the road.

- ✓ **Aerial cameras:** Shots filmed from the sky can look amazing, and they're now being used more frequently in films and TV programs. Aerial video can be captured by attaching cameras to drones to get stunning wide-shot footage that you couldn't get from the ground. Most drones available now have cameras and can be operated either by a separate controller or with a smartphone. See Figure 1-7.

Before drones were developed, the only way to get footage from the sky was by taking a camera up in a full-size helicopter, an expensive option. Aerial cameras give the same effect for a lot less money. A number of different types of drones are available from camera stores and most start from around \$50.



Figure 1-7



WARNING

In some countries, you need a license to fly a drone and there are restrictions as to where they can be flown, so make sure you know what the rules are where you live.

✓ **DSLRs and mirrorless cameras:** For many years, cameras used two lenses — one through which the photograph was captured on film, and another that passed the image to the viewfinder that the photographer would look through. This approach had some problems, however. Sometimes the images photographers thought they were capturing weren't the ones they ended up with later when the photos were developed. The single-lens reflex camera (and later, the digital single-lens reflex camera, or DSLR) changed that: With the single-lens approach, the image you saw through the viewfinder was the same as what you captured on film.

Basically, a DSLR camera uses a mirror behind the lens to reflect what's happening through the lens into the eyepiece. The DSLR is a still-photography camera that uses detachable lenses and produces some amazing images.

**TIP**

DSLR cameras are now being replaced by mirrorless cameras (see Figure 1-8), which are even more compact than some of the DSLR cameras. They're great for capturing video if you're traveling or shooting in small spaces.



Figure 1-8

Video shot by mirrorless cameras can look very cinematic, which means it looks more like the quality you would see on a blockbuster film in the cinema. The reasons for this are:

They are equipped with bigger sensors, which capture more of the scene you are filming — more light, and a greater depth of field. See the nearby sidebar, “Depth of field.”

They allow you to attach different lenses so you can get a variety of shots. A good lens can create a beautiful shot.



WARNING

I used DSLR cameras for video when they were first released and I've filmed many short films using them. The video was great, but because of DSLR's limitations with sound, I had to record sound using a separate device and then match the sound to the video later, during the editing process. If you're working on a large project, matching sound like this can take a long time.

- ✓ **Digital cinema cameras:** Digital cinema cameras (see Figure 1-9) are often used to film a variety of film projects; they give a more cinematic feel and look to the footage. Like camcorders, digital cinema cameras have become more affordable and more compact. Fifty years ago, you would have needed a truck to carry around your cinema camera and equipment, but nowadays they can fit into your rucksack.



Figure 1-9

Digital cinema cameras can be purchased from most large camera stores and range in price from \$1,000 to more than \$60,000.

Digital cinema cameras are usually the more expensive option: With digital cinema cameras, you buy the body of the

camera only and then add attachments, including lenses, monitors, handles, and batteries later. Some of these attachments cost as much as the camera body.

As with DSLRs and mirrorless cameras, cinema cameras have larger sensors inside the camera body to capture more light and more depth of field.

Cinema cameras tend to have more manual settings and can be complicated to set up. I love the look of my cinema cameras, which is why I use them on most projects, especially when I have the time to set up the camera and change lenses to get the shots I want.

Depth of field

Depth of field is the area around your subject that is in focus. A shot that has a shallow depth of field has a smaller area in focus around your subject. This produces a blurred background that can make your shot look cinematic. As you can see in the figure, the subject, Scarlett, is in focus, but the background is blurry and out of focus.



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A shot that has a wider depth of field, on the other hand, has a larger area in focus around your subject. This is better if you want to get more of your scene in focus or if you have a lot of movement in your shot and you don't want your subject to go out of focus. An example of a wide depth of field appears in this figure. As you can see in this figure, Scarlett is in focus and the background is also in focus.



To have more control over the depth of field in your shots, your choice of camera is important. If you want to create a shallow depth of field within your shots, choose a cinema camera, a DSLR, or mirrorless camera with a large sensor.

Choosing a Video Camera App

The smartphone is an amazing option to film with due to the compact size, the quality of video, and the incredible built-in features that are expensive on a professional video camera. All you need is a camera app on your iPhone or Android smartphone, and there are loads to choose from! Of course, your smartphone will have a pre-installed camera app, which is great for taking a quick photo or video, but may have limited features.

Video camera app options

Let me help with some suggestions:

- ✓ **Blackmagic Camera:** (Available for iPhone and Android)
The Blackmagic Camera app is a free app that turns your smartphone into a Blackmagic camera. Blackmagic Design is well known in the industry for making video production equipment; they have been manufacturing cameras since 2012. They also bring us the powerful editing tool DaVinci Resolve, which I explain in Project 5. The Blackmagic Camera app allows you to manually adjust all camera settings or set them to automatic and let the software do the work for you. It also recognizes the different lenses on your smartphone, which you can select from to suit your shot. You can easily view the video clips you have recorded and share or transfer them to your editing computer. It also has a great feature that uploads your clips to the Blackmagic Cloud as you record and you can edit them later with DaVinci Resolve. See Figure 1-10.



Figure 1-10

- ✓ **Final Cut Camera:** (Available for iPhone only) Apple created their own camera app for the iPhone and iPad, called Final Cut Camera. It's named after their editing tool, Final Cut. This is another brilliant app that allows you to manually change the camera settings or rely on the automatic option. Like the Blackmagic Camera app, Final Cut Camera allows you to view your recorded video clips and share and transfer them to your editing computer. See Figure 1-11.
- ✓ **Filmic Pro:** (Available for iPhone and Android) Filmic Pro is another great app that provides manual and automatic adjustment for all camera settings. It has similar features to the other two apps, but I find it a little more complicated to

navigate. It also requests a subscription, which you can bypass by closing the pop-up, but it can be expensive if you want to sign up. See Figure 1-12.

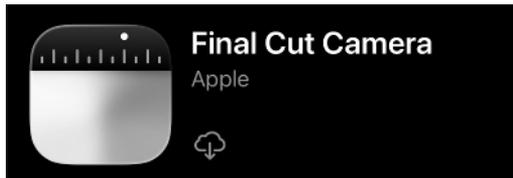


Figure 1-11



Figure 1-12



REMEMBER

Always check with the smartphone owner or bill payer before agreeing to any subscriptions.

When you download these apps, they may ask for permission to access the camera, audio, and storage on your device. This is normal, as the app needs this permission to work properly. Make sure you read any pop-up messages before accepting and ensure you have permission from the smartphone owner if you are borrowing it.

All these camera apps are amazing, but my preferred option is the Blackmagic Camera app, as it is free to download and use, it is available on iPhone and Android, it has some amazing manual features, and the menu system is the same as my Blackmagic broadcast and cinema cameras. Even if you are not planning to use a smartphone to film, I suggest downloading it and getting to know it. You never know, you may be without your camera one day and need to film something quickly.

The Blackmagic Camera app

With this powerful app, you will be filming your movie scenes in no time. To help you understand some of the features and settings on the Blackmagic Camera app, I've included a short summary of each setting and explain how it affects the video image.

When you launch the Blackmagic Camera app, it will open on the camera page, and you should see the viewfinder or live preview of the camera view. If you rotate the phone to landscape mode, you will then see the full camera view, which should fill the screen (see Figure 1-13).



Figure 1-13

At the top of the screen, you will see a row of camera settings, which can be adjusted by tapping them. From left to right you will find:

- ✓ **Lens:** Here you will find all the lenses your smartphone has built in. My iPhone has five lens options, including the front camera. If you tap each option, you will see the camera live preview change, either zooming in or out depending on which lens option you select. These lens options are helpful when you want to change angles when shooting your movie. See Figure 1-14.

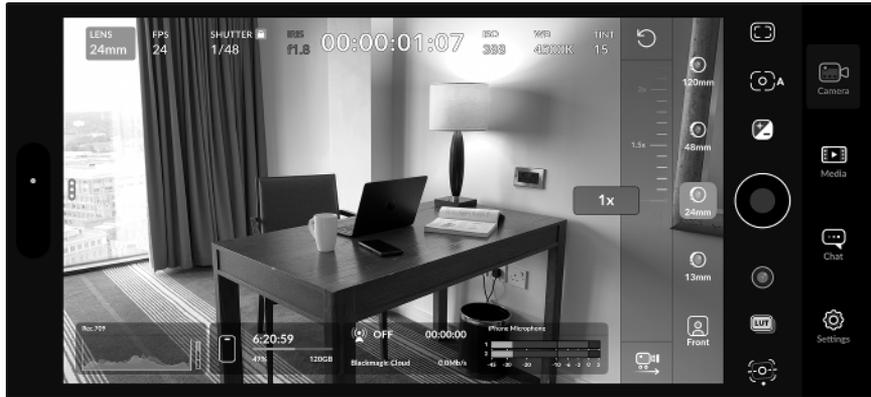


Figure 1-14

- ✓ **FPS:** This stands for *frames per second*, which allows you to change the frame rate of your video. The *frame rate* is the number of still frames or images captured in a second of video. The default is set to 24fps, which is the industry standard for movies. You may want to choose a higher frame rate if you are filming a documentary, capturing slow-motion footage, or filming any fast-paced action.
- ✓ **Shutter:** You can tap on this button to change the shutter speed of the camera. A dial and list will appear on the right of the screen and you can drag the dial or tap the list to change the setting (see Figure 1-15). The *shutter speed* is the length of time the sensor is exposed to light for each frame captured. It is one of the ways of controlling the brightness of the camera image. Shutter speed is measured in a fraction of a second and the default is set to 1/24. That means the sensor is exposed to light for one twenty-fourth of a second, which seems very fast to us but is quite slow to a camera.

It's mostly recommended to set your shutter speed number to higher than double your frame rate. So, if your frame rate is 24fps, ideally you would want to set your shutter speed to 1/48 or higher. The lower the shutter speed, the more blur you will get on movement in your shot. If you are filming someone running, you may want to choose a higher shutter speed to avoid any blurred movement. Of course, you may want this effect in your movie. Some filmmakers purposely shoot car or motorbike chase scenes with a low shutter speed

to make the car or motorbike look like it's going faster than it actually is. Once you've set your shutter speed, you can tap the lock button above the shutter speed list on the right side of the screen, as shown in Figure 1-15. This will keep the shutter speed set at this value.



Figure 1-15

- ✓ **Iris:** Just like your eye, a camera lens has an iris too, which pretty much does the same thing. It controls the amount of light that comes through the lens onto the sensor. This is also known as *aperture*. The lower the iris or aperture number, the more light that comes through and the brighter the image. Usually on a camera lens you can change the iris setting to control the image brightness, but most phones have a fixed iris, which means it can't be changed.
- ✓ **ISO:** This stands for the International Standards Organization, which doesn't really have much to do with the setting on your camera, but with setting standards for the industry. ISO relates to the sensitivity of the camera sensor to light. All cameras will have a preferred ISO number. The further you move away from this setting number, the more visual noise you will get on your video image. This visual noise may not be noticeable so don't worry about this too much. The ISO setting is another way of adjusting the brightness of the image, so you can either set this manually or trust the camera's automatic exposure feature, which will

set the ISO and shutter speed automatically, depending on the amount of light in your scene. To do this you need to unlock the shutter speed setting, and you should then see the ISO and shutter speed change as you move your camera to different spaces. You can also tap the screen to force the camera to expose on a certain area or subject in your shot.

- ✓ **WB and Tint:** White balance and tint are the last two settings on the top row. I've put these together as they both affect the color of your image. You adjust these settings to make the image color look as close to what your eye is seeing as possible.

White balance adjusts how warm or how cool an image looks, and this is measured in Kelvin (K). The lower the number, the cooler you are making the image look, and the higher the number, the warmer you are making the image. You usually set this number to the color temperature of the room. If you are shooting inside with warm color lighting, you set the white balance to around 3200K, and if you are shooting outside in the daytime, the white balance should be set to around 5600K.

The white balance is set to adjust automatically as default. There are presets for different scenarios, which you can select by tapping the WB button at the top and turning off AUTO in the menu that appears on the right. A selection of icons will also appear in this menu. Figure 1-16 shows the Kelvin value of each icon. The white balance can be set manually by dragging the Kelvin dial next to the icons up or down. The lock button above the icons will set the Kelvin value until you unlock it.

The Tint setting affects how green or magenta the image looks. If the light in your scene looks a little too red (magenta), you can set the tint level on the camera to a lower number until it looks natural. On the other hand, if the light in the scene looks a little too green, you can set the tint level to a higher number. Be careful not to go too far with these adjustments, otherwise your actors could end up looking a little like Shrek or like a tomato.



Figure 1-16

The right-side sidebar in the Blackmagic Camera app offers various quick-access tools to control and monitor the camera settings, which also includes the record button. From top to bottom, you will find:

- ✓ **Guides and Grids:** This button provides the option to overlay a variety of guides and gridlines to help with framing and exposing your shots. These guides and grids won't appear in your footage and only appear on your smartphone screen. They are overlays to help with setting the correct exposure, to help keep your subject or actor in focus, and to help frame your shot or subject within your shot.
- ✓ **Focus:** Tapping this button allows you to either set your focus manually using the focus wheel or dial, or to set it to AUTO and let the app be your focus puller. If you choose AUTO, the app will decide what is in focus, which may not always be what you want. You can override the autofocus by tapping the area of the screen you would like the camera to focus on or by tapping and holding to lock the focus in place. Tapping the screen again will release the focus lock.
- ✓ **Exposure:** Changing this setting will affect the brightness of your image. Setting this to AUTO will automatically adjust the shutter speed and ISO to expose your shot correctly.
- ✓ **Record:** Below the exposure button is the record button. This one is simple — you tap this to start recording and you tap it

again to stop recording. The record button will turn red when recording starts. You will also see the timecode at the top-center of the screen turn red and start counting up, showing how long you have been recording. You can change the recording resolution and quality in the Settings menu at the bottom-right side of the screen.

- ✓ **Stabilization:** Holding a camera steady while filming is sometimes not easy, especially if you have been holding it in one position for a while. The invention of image stabilization on cameras and lenses has been the biggest help to any camera operator. Most modern smartphones have image stabilization. Depending on the smartphone you have, the Blackmagic Camera app will use either the camera's stabilization or software stabilization. Either way, it really helps! When you tap the stabilization button below the record button, a list of options will appear. If you have an iPhone, you may have more options for the different types and strengths of stabilization or you can turn it off. I usually choose which level of stabilization I need depending on the look and feel I am trying to achieve from my shot. I suggest trying each option to see which one you prefer.
- ✓ **Zoom:** Tapping the button that looks like a magnifying glass will display a list of zoom options and a dial that allows you to zoom in and out manually. Note that uses digital zoom and not optical zoom. Digital zoom just enlarges a portion of the image using the software, and optical zoom uses the lens, which changes the focal length. Use optical zoom where possible, but sometimes you may need to zoom in a little using this digital zoom function.
- ✓ **Metadata:** Below the zoom button is the metadata button, which allows you to create a digital slate and add metadata for each recorded clip. This works in a similar way to a clapperboard, where it provides information for each clip, which can be used in the edit to identify and sort your footage. On the slate you can add scene and take numbers and shot information. Swiping left reveals another page that allows you to enter the project information. This data is tagged to the clip and carried across to the edit tool.

On the bottom row of the Blackmagic Camera app main page are your recording monitoring tools. From left to right, you will find:

- ✓ **Histogram:** This is a very helpful monitoring tool that provides a real-time visual exposure check. The left side of the histogram shows the shadows, or dark areas, of the image, and the right side shows you the highlights, which is the bright areas of your shot. The height of the graph represents the amount of darkness on the left and brightness on the right. If the graph is bunched up on the left, this usually means your image is under-exposed, or too dark (as shown in Figure 1-17). The histogram may also look like this if you are filming a purposely dark scene.



Figure 1-17

If the graph is bunched up on the right side of the histogram, this could mean your image is over-exposed or too bright (see Figure 1-18). Of course, if your histogram looks like this, it could also mean that you are filming a big pile of snow!

- ✓ **Storage:** The storage indicator at the bottom-center of the screen shows you how much storage you have available and how much recording time you have remaining.



Figure 1-18

- ✓ **Audio Meters:** This provides audio levels for the internal or external microphone, allowing you to visually check if they are too loud or too quiet. The audio levels are measured in decibels (dB) and you want the levels to be peaking at around -12 to -6 dB. If the audio levels are hitting the red area, you may be getting audio distortion on your recording. I explain more about audio recording in the Project 3, “Making Your Film Sound Good.”

Recording and Importing Footage

You may be wondering why I’ve included a section on recording and importing footage here — you just press Record, right? It’s not quite as simple as that. Many people make mistakes at this stage, including me: I set up the camera and was so busy watching my actors’ Oscar-winning performances onscreen that I failed to notice I hadn’t pressed Record — it’s easily done!

Take your time. It’s important not to rush when setting up your camera. Rushing can lead to mistakes. I prefer to make sure everything is set up before I call my actors in. If they arrive early, I get them to read through their lines and prepare for the shot, which gives me more time to set the shot up and make sure everything is ready before I start filming.

Directors often give instructions to cast and crew as part of the filming routine. If you watch behind-the-scenes footage from films, you can sometimes hear the directors calling out instructions to the team. (See Figure 1-19.) These may seem like code if you don't know what they mean. The following list describes some of the most common:

- ✓ **“Quiet on set”**: This grabs the attention of the crew and actors around and warns them you are filming and that everyone should stop talking. If people continue to talk, you may need to shout louder.
- ✓ **“Roll sound”**: This is a cue for the sound operator to start the sound recording (if you're capturing sound separately). It's also an opportunity for them to warn you of any unwanted noises. If all is clear and your sound operator has set the sound recording, they will respond with “Sound rolling” or just give you a thumbs-up. (See Figure 1-20.)



Figure 1-19



Figure 1-20

- ✓ **“Roll camera”**: This is a cue for the camera operator to start the camera recording. When they have done this, they’ll respond with “Camera rolling.” Remember to keep your finger away from the Record button while filming — you may accidentally press it again and stop recording.

If you watch behind-the-scenes documentaries about the making of movies, you might see the camera operator shout out “speed” instead of “rolling.” This is a leftover from the days when the cameras recorded onto reels of tape. On those cameras, the motors inside the cameras needed a few seconds to get the reel of tape rolling at the right speed. Back then, the camera operator would wait until the camera was rolling at the right speed and would shout “speed” to let the director know it was okay to record. This term may be out-of-fashion, but some camera operators still use it. You can use either “speed” or “rolling”; it’s up to you.

- ✓ **“Slates”**: This is the cue for the person with the clapperboard to introduce the scene and take number, as shown in Figure 1-21. (See the nearby sidebar, “Using a clapperboard.”)



Figure 1-21

✓ **“Action”**: This is the last instruction to be called before the scene begins. It instructs the actors to start acting. (See Figure 1-22.)



Figure 1-22

- ✓ **“Cut”**: This instructs the camera and sound operator to stop recording after the actors have finished the scene. It’s important not to shout this too early: You may need the extra video footage later, when you’re editing your movie.



TIP

Using a clapperboard

You may be wondering why a clapperboard is used in movie making. A clapperboard is used when you record video and sound separately, usually on bigger film productions. Details of the movie and scene are written on the clapperboard so it’s easier to organize the different scenes and takes when editing. In the past, the information was written onto the clapperboard in chalk, but these days marker pens are used. When the operator stands in front of the camera and claps the clapperboard, the sound recorded and the video of it closing can be synced together when editing (if you’re recording sound separately).



After many of the instructions called by the director, the crew is expected to respond — to confirm, for instance, that the sound and camera are rolling. Even if I'm filming on my own, I tend to call out the instructions as a reminder to myself and also to let people around me know that I am filming. It's good to get into this habit for when you work with a larger film crew.

Once you've filmed your scenes, it's time to review and import the footage ready for editing. If you are editing using an app on your smartphone, I still suggest importing your clips into a computer as a backup. That way, you can delete these clips from your smartphone (wait until after editing) to free up space for your next movie.

You can import your footage from your camera or smartphone to a Mac or PC in two ways:

- ✓ **Importing directly from the camera or phone:** This involves connecting your digital video camera to the computer directly via a USB, a FireWire cable, or a wireless connection. Your camera instructions can show you where the USB or FireWire connection is on your camera. (See Figure 1-23.)



Figure 1-23

Your computer should recognize when the camera is connected and you can import your footage from the camera to your hard drive.

This is covered in more detail in Project 5, as you import and edit footage from your smartphone.

- ✓ **Importing from a media card:** This involves removing the media card from the camera and inserting it into a media card reader connected to your computer. (See Figure 1-24.)



Figure 1-24

Your computer should recognize the media card when it's inserted and you will be able to import the video clips from your media card to your hard drive.

I use this method because I always remove the media cards after filming to make sure I don't record over them or lose them. Some film projects require many media cards, so I put them into a case and name them, which makes it easier to sort through the footage when editing.

Let's Try This Together

Scan this QR code to watch a quick video where I show you how I record, review, and import video clips using the Blackmagic Camera app.



The video for this project is in the Videos folder and is called `Project_01_video.mp4`. You can also visit www.dummies.com/go/moviemakingforkidsfd to access this video.

Try It Out Yourself

Now that you're armed with some knowledge about the different types of cameras available, and a basic understanding of how to record and import footage, it's time to get to know your camera or smartphone in the best way possible — by getting out there and recording with it. Don't film anything too complicated to begin with; try filming things around the house or in your garden or local park. This will help you get familiar with the functions and features on your camera so you'll be ready when you begin shooting your first movie project.

