Production

Production is where the plan meets reality. Your only job on set is to be present and capture the raw material a great edit will need.

LESSON 1 OF 3

The shoot-day protocol

A shoot day runs on protocol, not vibes. Open with a 15 minute morning huddle to align everyone on one thing: the story objective for the day. If the crew cannot say in a sentence what the day is about, you are not ready to roll.

GEAR CHECK, EVERY TIME

Test every mic before anyone speaks. Record 10 seconds of room tone, the pure silence, in every location, because the editor needs it to patch audio later. Clean the lens. Shoot 4K with gridlines on: 24 or 30fps for a cinematic look, 60fps when you want slow-motion.

THE THREE-ROLL RULE

Never cut early. Start rolling 5 seconds before the action and let it run 10 seconds after the peak. The best reactions live in the silence after the explosion, the breath someone takes once they think it is over.

NARRATE AND COVER THE ROOM

Verbalize everything. You are a walking narrator, so say what you feel out loud and that becomes your voiceover. At every location run the golden-hour B-roll protocol: 3 establishing shots from different angles, 5 extreme close-ups of details, 1 high-angle and 1 low-angle.

QUICK CHECK

Your subject finishes a tearful confession, stops talking, and just sits there in silence. Your instinct is to cut. What do you do?

A. Cut right away, the line was delivered and you have it.

B. Keep rolling, do not cut, and let the silence after the peak play out. ✓

C. Ask them to say the line again for a cleaner take.

ANSWER

The three-roll rule says let it run 10 seconds past the peak. That quiet, unguarded moment is often the shot the whole scene is built around.

MATCH THE PAIRS

Match each shot to the story job it does.

▼ THINK IT THROUGH, THEN SHOW THE ANSWER

High-angle establisher	Isolation, the subject looks small
Tight detail of tapping fingers	Anxiety bubbling under the surface
Two-shot over the table	The battlefield where they clash
Walk-and-talk	Momentum, the story moving forward

Every shot is a sentence. The angle and framing tell the viewer how to feel before anyone says a word.

LESSON 2 OF 3

Mastering the reality TV zoom

Two zooms, two completely different feelings. One is filmed live and feels intimate. The other is faked in the edit and feels like a gut-punch. Knowing which is which keeps you from trying to do the impossible on set.

THE RACK FOCUS (CLEAN)

Lock the shot on a tripod and smoothly pull focus from a foreground object to the distressed face behind it. Use a manual camera app like Filmic Pro so you control the focus pull by hand. This one is real, captured in camera, and it feels deliberate and cinematic.

THE SNAP ZOOM (CHAOTIC)

This is a post-production move, not a camera move. Film a clean static shot, then in the edit keyframe the scale from 100% to 130% in 0.2 seconds on a moment of shocking news, and drop a whoosh under it. Do not try to zoom by hand on set, you will only get shaky footage you cannot use.

QUICK CHECKS 0 OF 2 DONE

CHECK 1 OF 2

The fast, jarring snap zoom on a shocking moment is created where?

A. Live in camera, by zooming the lens fast.

B. In post-production, by keyframing the scale on a static shot. ✓

C. With a special snap-zoom lens you buy.

ANSWER

Film it static and clean, then push the scale from 100% to 130% in 0.2 seconds in the edit. That control is impossible to get by hand.

CHECK 2 OF 2

You are framing your subject for an emotional beat. Which composition is the strongest?

A



✓

B



C



ANSWER

Placing the subject on a rule-of-thirds line with a little headroom gives the frame balance and room to breathe.

LESSON 3 OF 3

The end-of-day note

The day is not done when you stop rolling. Before you sleep, spend 20 minutes logging the day's footage while the moments are still fresh in your memory. Tired-you will thank rested-you, and the editor will thank you most of all.

THE FIVE COLUMNS

Log every clip into five columns: Clip | Timecode | Description | Story Beat | Editor Note. The timecode and a sharp note turn hours of raw footage into something an editor can actually navigate.

WHY IT BEATS THE FOOTAGE

This log is more valuable than the raw footage itself. It is the editor's lifeline. It flags the gold, points to the exact moment that matters, and saves the days of blind scrubbing that kill a deadline.

QUICK CHECKS — 0 OF 2 DONE

CHECK 1 OF 2

Why is the end-of-day log called more valuable than the raw footage itself?

A. It lets you delete the original footage to save space.

B. It is the editor's lifeline: it flags the gold and points to the exact moment to use. ✓

C. It is required by the camera before it will export.

ANSWER

The footage is just hours of clips. The log tells the editor where the story is, so it is the lifeline that makes the edit possible.

CHECK 2 OF 2

You are filling in the Editor Note column for a clip. Which note will actually help the editor tomorrow?

A "Great stuff, really good energy here."

B "At 04:12 she goes quiet after the bad news. Use that pause for the act break." ✓

C "This clip is one of the ones we shot today."

ANSWER

A useful note gives a specific timecode plus which moment to use and why. That is what the editor can act on without re-watching everything.

Read the whole course free at realityshow101.com. Module 11.