

The Lincoln Presidential Foundation and Better Angels Society presents:



*Inspiring young filmmakers to interpret history
through documentary filmmaking*

Organizations

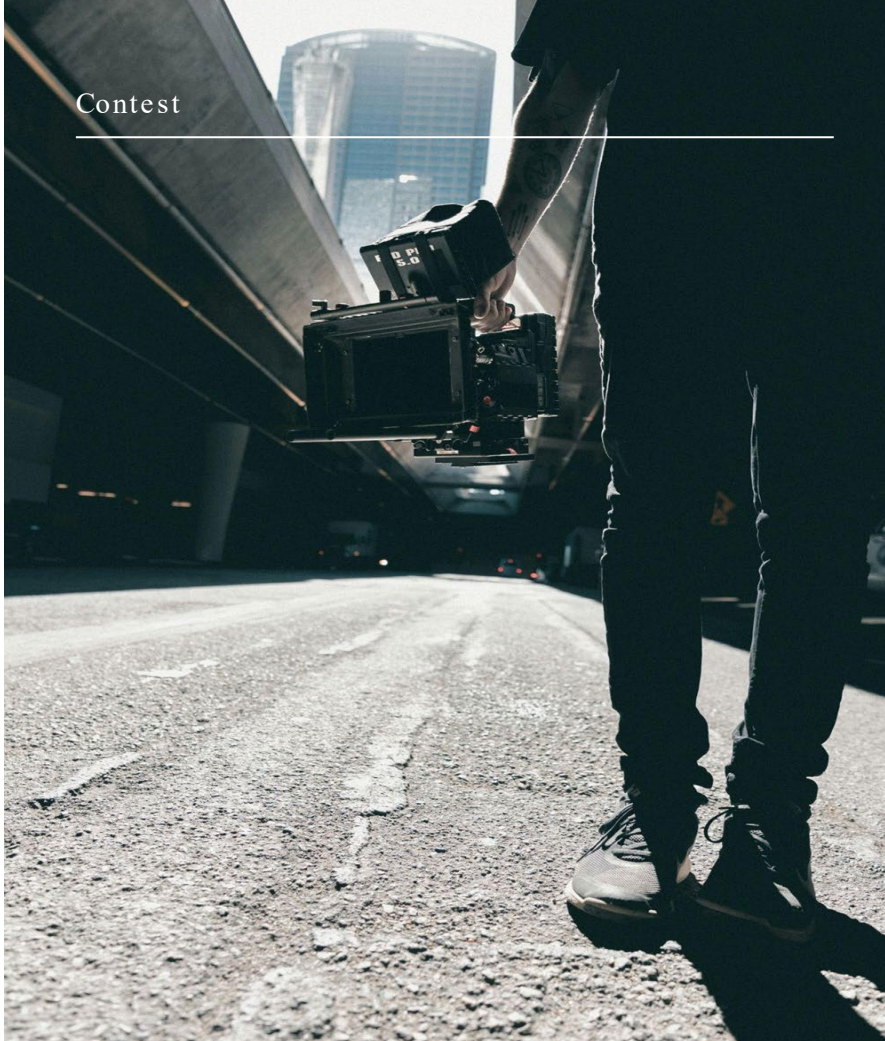


Lincoln Presidential Foundation is nonprofit public charity headquartered in Illinois. It is the only national foundation focused on increasing access to history, educational programs, exhibits, and sites highlighting the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln. The Foundation does its work in cooperation and partnership with others locally, nationally, and globally. Its vision is a world where freedom and democracy flourish, inspired by the life and work of Abraham Lincoln.



The Better Angels Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating Americans about their history through documentary film. Our goal is to educate, engage and provoke thoughtful discussion among people of every political persuasion and ideology. We work to ensure historically significant films are completed, broadcast, promoted, and shared in ways that reach and inform as many people as possible through robust educational and civic outreach. The Society is currently raising funds for Ken Burns's films in production and planned over the next ten years.

Contest



Inspired by Abraham Lincoln's question to an Indianapolis crowd during his inaugural journey—*"Shall the Union and shall the liberties of this country be preserved to the latest generation?"*—the contest encourages young filmmakers aged 14-22 to create documentary films that explore history.

For more information on the contest:

<https://www.lincolnpresidential.org/events/latest-generation-film-contest/>

Filmmaking connects to standards & benchmarks in multiple disciplines!

- Social Studies
- English Language Arts
- Visual Arts



Standards & Benchmarks:

National Council for the Social Studies

- **Culture:** Through the study of culture and cultural diversity, learners understand how human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture, and appreciate the role of culture in shaping their lives and society, as well the lives and societies of others. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum
- **People, Places, and Environments:** This theme helps learners to develop their spatial views and perspectives of the world, to understand where people, places, and resources are located and why they are there, and to explore the relationship between human beings and the environment. In schools, this theme typically appears in courses dealing with geography and area studies, but it is also important for the study of the geographical dimension of other social studies subjects.
- **Individual Development & Identity:** Personal identity is shaped by family, peers, culture, and institutional influences. Through this theme, students examine the factors that influence an individual's personal identity, development, and actions. This theme typically appears in courses and units dealing with psychology, anthropology, and sociology.
- **Global Connections:** The realities of global interdependence require an understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies. This theme prepares students to study issues arising from globalization. It typically appears in units or courses dealing with geography, culture, economics, history, political science, government, and technology

Standards & Benchmarks:

National Council for Teachers of English

- Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Standards & Benchmarks:

National Visual Arts Standards

- **Anchor Standard #1.** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- **Anchor Standard #2.** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- **Anchor Standard #3.** Refine and complete artistic work.
- **Anchor Standard #4.** Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- **Anchor Standard #5.** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- **Anchor Standard #6.** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- **Anchor Standard #7.** Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- **Anchor Standard #8.** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- **Anchor Standard #9.** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- **Anchor Standard #10.** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- **Anchor Standard #11.** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

I. Classroom Film Projects

Producing the Short

Benefits of Classroom Film Projects

- It's a visually dynamic way to engage in history and present research and reflections.
- You don't have to be an expert; short -form content is second nature to those who consume YouTube, Instagram & TikTok reels every day.
- Film is by nature collaborative and helps build bonds and foster community.



Creating Film Teams

- Everyone will do their own research, story development, and prepare a pitch that concisely explains the what, why, and how of your film project (see Story Development curriculum).
- You will then pitch your short documentary film to the class allowing for classmates to ask follow up questions.
- Vote for the film concepts you feel most resonate; make sure you put your name on their voting slip.
- The short film concepts with the most votes move forward to production.



Assigning Film Roles

Discuss amongst yourselves which role fits each person best; you can either hold a specific role for the duration of the project or the group can share roles.



- **Director:** guides the vision of the story. This role typically goes to the person who won the pitch.
- **Producer:** handles all the logistics of the shoot. They might include managing the group chat where all pertinent information is shared including the shooting schedule, transportation, and any weather considerations.
- **Director of Photography:** in charge of filming. They should have a clear idea of what needs to be captured for the film by reviewing the shot list with the director.
- **Sound Person:** makes sure that the audio quality is clean during filming. If the equipment is available, they might be in charge of putting the lav on the subject, setting up an external microphone, or holding a boom pole. They might also help find the music for the film when editing occurs.
- **Editor:** edits the film by sequencing all the footage capturing, filling in b-roll where needed and adding sound/music. Sends at least two rough cuts to the team to review and give notes. Adds title cards and credits to the film at the end.

Steps to Making a Documentary Film

- 1. Develop a story.** (See “Story Development” Resource!)
- 2. Create a script and/or line up subjects and locations.**
- 3. Record the script and/or prepare interview questions.**
- 4. Find b-roll** (archival video and images).
- 5. Edit the film.**

II. Production Tips

Producing the Short

Filming on Mobile Devices

Before filming, watch how to get the best footage with an iPhone or mobile device.



Includes:

- settings for best quality
- turning on framing grid
- selecting lens
- don't Zoom!
- shoot landscape
- lens distance
- framing
- using natural light
- sound
- hand holding

The Importance of B-roll

B-roll footage is any supplemental video that is considered to be secondary to your primary footage (script lines / interviews). B-roll can be gathered by filming it, acquired from stock footage, or obtained from any source other than your principal filming.



The Importance of B -roll



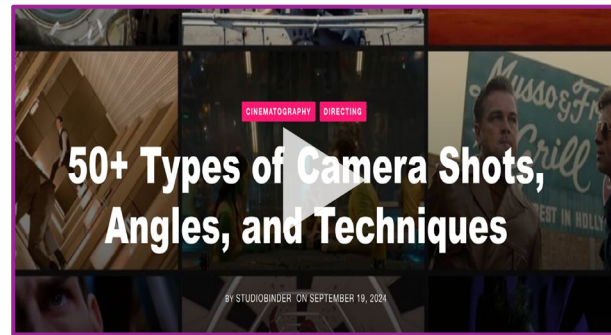
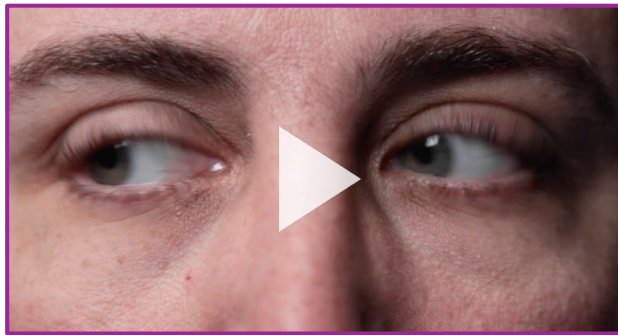
If your documentary is about a geographic location, getting visuals of the area will be very helpful. You should have a list of interesting shots from wide, medium, to closeups with a variety of angles so your editor has a lot to work with. Again, we recommend that the majority of it be stabilized shots (on a tripod) versus moving, zooming, or panning.

B-roll can also be metaphoric. An open sky can connote freedom. Turbulent waters can connote challenges. A leaf blowing in the wind can connote the passing of time.

Power of Composition

What is composition? *The intentional arrangement of what's in frame to emphasize STORY.*

Composition includes the choice of camera shot, camera angle, and camera movement to introduce subtext and establish mood.



[Shot List Scavenger Hunt](#)

Optional Exercise #1

Filmmaking Composition Scavenger Hunt

Each team practices camera shots, angles, movements and compositional tools with a fun scavenger hunt!

Students are given an hour to collect footage.

Afterwards each team's footage is reviewed to see which shots were most effective. Students are asked how they might troubleshoot their challenges (backlit shots, shaky shots, messy compositions). The team who achieved the most shots gets a prize.



Camera shots can be reviewed here:

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-camera-shots/>

Optional Exercise #1.1

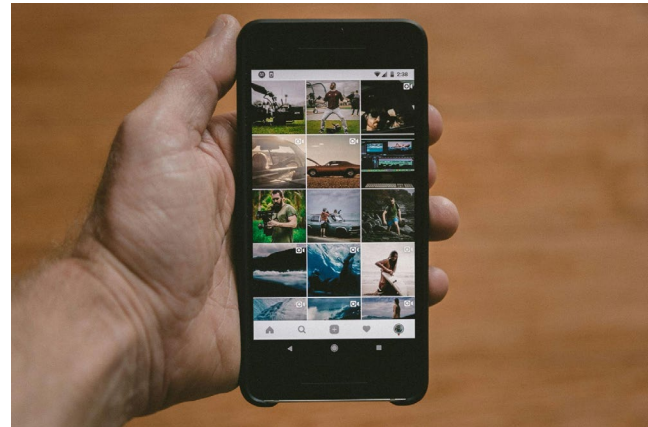
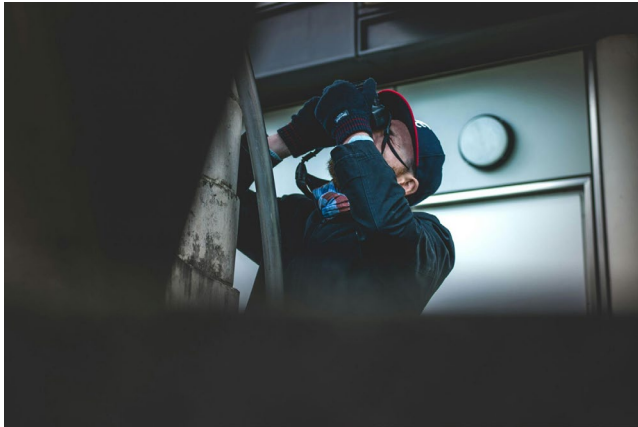
Instructions

- Must shoot a minimum of 10 seconds for each compositional element on the list.
- Shots do not need to be in order; however, each 10-sec clip must be a specific shot from the list. Each clip can only be designated to one item on the list.
- All shots must be stationary (no movement) except for Tilt, Pan, and Tracking.

Camera Shots	Camera Angles & Movements	Composition	Mood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing Shot• Wide Shot• Medium Shot (person)• Close-Up (person)• Extreme Close-Up (person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bird's Eye View• Eye Level• Low Angle• Oblique/Canted Angle• Pan• Tilt• Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rule of Thirds• Leading Lines• Symmetry• Contrast (Light & Shadows)• Reflections• Juxtaposition (hard/soft young/old)• Play on color• Framing	<p>Double point category! Use the compositional tools to create the moods listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mysterious• Joyful• Serene• Ominous• Comical

Optional Exercise #1.2

Think about what you need to capture to tell your story and then transfer it into a shot list template where you will decide the camera shot, camera angle, and camera movement. This could also include archival or b-roll materials you will be looking for.



Stable Footage

Think about how you will get stable, clean shots. Given that amateurs tend to “water hose” when filming, we highly recommend you stabilize the camera for the majority of filming outside of creative b-roll.

If your team is shooting on an older DSLR or Mirrorless cameras, make sure you are shooting on a tripod for all of your footage.

If are shooting on a mobile device, image stabilization is much better. But we still recommend a cheap tripod for interviews. A cheap tripod ([Amazon \\$26](#)) can also be used for some really cool cinematic shots. Check out this [great video](#) showing how to emulate cinematic shots (overhead, low, sweeping, etc.) with a mobile phone and a tripod.



Good Lighting

Artificial Light

Typical overhead lights in homes and classrooms are harsh and unflattering and should be avoided as much as possible. If students are not able to shoot using natural light, they might consider a [cheap light ring and mobile stand](#). Likely there will be students who have these already!

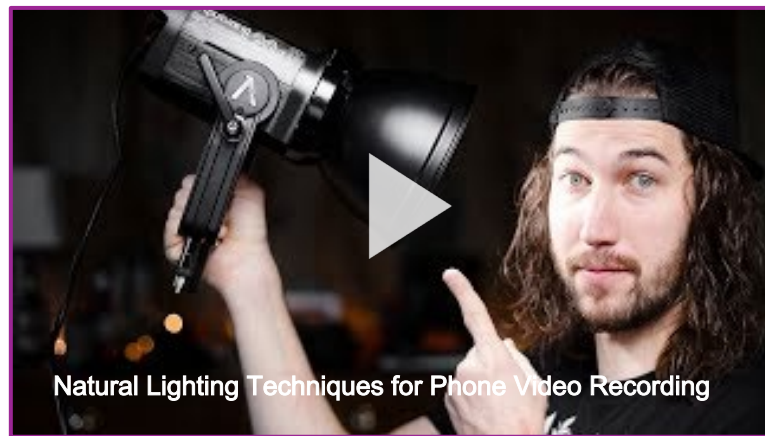


Good Lighting

Natural Light

Natural light is much more flattering but it must be filtered and facing the subject. Review these tips for getting good natural light:

- Avoid shooting outside when the sun is high in the sky as it creates harsh shadows and crushes color and contrast. The best time to shoot outside is early in the morning or late in the day (golden hour) when the sun is low on the horizon.
- Shooting with window light is a great option if one needs to film indoors. The window light should be facing the subject not behind them. All artificial or overhead lights should be turned off so there aren't different light sources/color temperatures mixing. You can't see it with your eyes, but you'll see it on video!
- Other options for great light include shooting on a cloudy day or a fully shaded outdoor area like a patio or alley. Beware of shooting under trees because they create speckled shadows and an unflattering green cast.



Art of the Interview

Basic Format

- In most documentaries, we do not hear the interviewer in the film; this means the interviewer must remain silent while the subject speaks.
- They also have to be careful to wait a few seconds after their subject stops talking to ask the next question, which will make editing the film easier.
- Typically, the interviewer sits right next to the camera, and the subject is instructed to look at the interviewer when answering, not directly in camera.



Art of the Interview

Interview Best Practices

1. Have a list of questions ready before the interview.
2. Have them fill-out a [video release waiver](#) so you don't forget at the end.
3. Make sure your subject feels comfortable. Thank them for talking to you today! Start off with small chat to get them warmed up.
4. Check sound levels before starting the interview. We highly recommend the sound person wear earphones to hear the quality of the sound coming in.
5. Have a bottle of water and wipes available for your subject. Give them the opportunity to go do a final face check. Kindly point out clothes that might be tugging, hair out of place, or face moisture that might need to be patted dry.
6. Ask the subject to restate the question within their answer. For example, if you ask them how their mother influenced their life, they might answer, "My mom had a tremendous influence on my life because..." Have them practice this a few times by interviewing each other with warm-up questions.

Art of the Interview

Interview Best Practices, *continued*

7. When recording begins, ask the subject to state and spell their first and last name.
8. Ask the subject to wait a few seconds after you ask a question before they answer. If they forget, wait for them to finish answering and then kindly ask them to re-do the question. There needs to be some clean/empty audio before and after each question to make it easier to edit.
9. LISTEN.
 - a) Pay attention to their answers. Make eye contact when they are talking.
 - b) Did they say something interesting that deserves a follow-up question?
 - c) Was something unclear that they said? Or did they not really answer your question? Rephrase your question.
 - d) Are they saying “um” or “like” a lot? Kindly bring it to their attention. Suggest they just pause or take breath if they need a moment in their mind to think about what they will say next.
10. Don't rush through. Take your time to make sure you've got solid answers.
11. When you're finished, thank them again after the interview. Let them know when they can expect to see the film.

Tackling Audio

Recording Narration on a Phone



If working on a narrator-led documentary, you can get really clear sound recording their voice on their mobile phone.

- Record in a very quiet room.
- If available, use quality wired earbuds with a microphone to record.
- Turn the phone on airplane mode to avoid any interference.
- Use a [Voice Recorder App](#) to help gather and organize the clips.

Recording Small Group Interview



If recording a small group, ideally they'll be in an area with minimal noise interference. [Directional microphones](#) will help get cleaner sound than what the mobile phone would get on its own.

- Use the wind guard when shooting outdoors to remove wind noises.
- Keep in mind that directional microphones do not work for subjects more than 6 feet away.

Using Mini-Mic or Lavalier



With emergence of influencers and vloggers, there are many [cheap options for mobile phone lavaliers](#). This is a great option for Vox Pop style interviews on the street. They are also handy to have anywhere that might have noise interference.

- Be sure to test the audio several times before using the lavaliers. Sometimes these cheaper products have duds.
- When filming audio, always turn on airplane mode to avoid any wi-fi interference.

Final Production Checklist

- ☐ If shooting on location, stay safe. Don't travel alone.
- ☐ Always shoot horizontal!
- ☐ Lighting is SO important. Review lighting tips and the lighting tutorial.
- ☐ To avoid your mic potentially picking up audio interference, record with WiFi off or in Airplane Mode.
- ☐ Use a tripod for stable shots. Make sure the front leg stands are in the direction that the camera is facing. Check that the iPad/iPhone is on very securely. You can also use the tripod to get high angles or braced against your body to get a steady pan shot.
- ☐ Turn the "Grid" setting on camera to make sure your horizon lines are straight. Remember not to have too much headroom (open space above your subject's head). Use the rule of thirds for more flattering compositions. Triple check what is in the frame before shooting. Remove anything that could be distracting to the audience...jarring colors, messy items, etc.
- ☐ Natural light should always be behind you or to the side of your subject. Never behind your subject as it will cause a silhouette.
- ☐ To keep the focus and exposure consistent in your video, use the AE/AF Lock feature. Press and hold down where you want to focus to lock the focus and exposure.
- ☐ Remember that you need b-roll visuals. Get a lot. Make them creative. Play with slow motion or time-lapse for variety.

III. Post-Production

Producing the Short

Organizing

Media

Make sure every team is using the same folder organization and naming structure.

Example

Project Name (subfolders include)

1. Original Media
2. Production Audio
3. Music (MX)
4. SFX
5. Graphics (GFX)
6. Stills
7. Project Files
8. Exports



Mobile device organization recommendation:

create a shared cloud folder with subfolders where they can all access or upload to the categories listed above.

Editing Software

Capcut

- Free
- Very user-friendly; popular platform amongst youth
- Can be used on a desktop or mobile device
- Includes tons of templates for polished looking projects
- Includes AI tools

DaVinci Resolve

- Free
- More advanced features and the full gamut
- Desktop only

iMovie

- Free
- Only works on Apple products (phones, tablets, and computers)
- Very easy to use but extremely limited in what users can do
- Templates are limited which limits originality

WeVideo

- Works with Chromebooks
- Not free
- Voted best video editor for Windows devices

Editing Tips

Editing is an art and will determine the pacing, mood, and story arc.

Two common tricks are to **Cut on Action** & **Match Cuts**. Watch the videos to learn how!



Royalty-free Websites Stock Footage & Stills

Stock Footage

Pixabay
Videezy
Videvo

Stock Photos & Graphics

Unsplash
Pixabay
Morguefile
Freerange
Freeimages
Rawpixel
lifeofpix

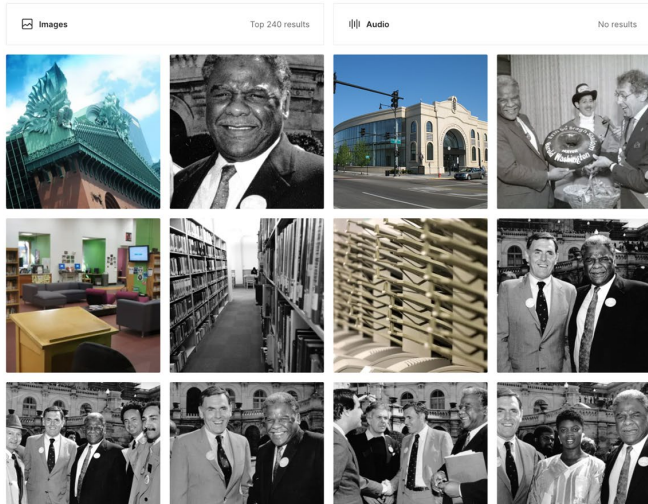


Link to
[Stock & Archival Resources](#)

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Harold washington



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- ☒ Use commercially
- ☒ Modify or adapt

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SAFE BROWSING

Content marked as **sensitive** is not shown by default.

Sensitive results ☐

Show results marked as sensitive in the results area.

Blur content ☐

Blur images and texts to prevent seeing sensitive material.

YouTube



Tim Frakes Productions Inc. Death of Harold Washington

Tim Frakes
880 subscribers

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Online Assets

Wikimedia

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Critical Past

Newsreel.com

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University Libraries

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Studio

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Customization

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Audio library

Music

Sound effects

Starred

Search or filter library

		Track title	Genre	Mood	Artist	Duration	License type	Added ↓
▶	☆	Mirage melody	Cinematic	Calm	Patrick Patrik...	2:53	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	Temple of treasures	Cinematic	Inspirational	Patrick Patrik...	2:42	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	Suniti Souk	Cinematic	Calm	Patrick Patrik...	2:44	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	Jasmine Whipers	Cinematic	Calm	Patrick Patrik...	2:44	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	Veil of mysteries.	Cinematic	Calm	Patrick Patrik...	2:37	▶	Sep 2024
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▶	☆	Dune dancer	Cinematic	Dark	Patrick Patrik...	2:39	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	Sands of serenity.	Cinematic	Dark	Patrick Patrik...	2:46	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	I Don't Think So (Original Speed)	Country & Folk	Happy	The Soundlin...	1:22	▶	Sep 2024
▶	☆	I Don't Think So (Extended)	Country & Folk	Happy	The Soundlin...	1:16	▶	Sep 2024

Search

Track title

Genre

Mood

Artist name

Duration

Attribution not required

Attribution required

Contest



Check out previous winners of the Latest Generation Film Contest:

<https://www.lincolnpresidential.org/events/latest-generation-film-contest/past-film-contest-winnders/>

For more information the contest:

<https://www.lincolnpresidential.org/events/latest-generation-film-contest/>