

It is important that you get to know how to use the camera you will use for your One Day on Earth project before the day of filming. Please take out your cameras and investigate them. Here's a list of questions that you can answer about your camera to help you better understand what it can do and how best to use it.

## Investigating your camera

### **Find the following items on your camera:**

- On/Off button
- Start/Stop button
- Tape Dock or Card Dock
- LCD Screen or Viewfinder
- Record button (generally red)
- Menu Button
- White Balance Button
- Exposure Button
- Display Button
- Zoom Button or Knob
- Focus Button or Knob
- Microphone Jack
- Headphone Jack
- Battery
- AC adaptor or Power cord
- Lens Cap

**Journal:** Now make a list of anything you find on your camera that is not on this list, next to the name write down what you think it does.

**Now that you have located all of the controls on your camera, let's find out what they do:**

### **Zoom Exercise:**

Turn your camera on and point it at a subject. Find your zoom button or knob and push it, watch as your camera zooms in and out.

### **Auto Focus Exercise:**

Turn your camera on. Find your auto focus button and turn it on. Now experiment by moving around with the camera and watching how the auto focus shifts as you get close to a subject, or move quickly away from a subject. Try pointing the camera at a light and turn it off and on to see what happens to the auto focus.

## Using Your Video Camera

Before you shoot, there are a few things you should do to prepare your camera to get the best footage.

### Check list:

- First, turn your camera on and remove the lens cap if it has one.
- Make sure you have a full battery. If you do not, you can either plug your camera in or charge your battery. Remember to fully charge your battery before you use it each time.
- Make sure you have a blank tape or card to record on.
- If you are using a shotgun mic, make sure it is on and receiving sound input. You can check your sound by plugging in headphones into the headphone jack and listening; set your sound levels accordingly.(refer to your manual)
- If you are using a tripod, set it up, mount, and attach your camera to it; make sure it is level and locked off.
- Adjust for white balance.
- Adjust for exposure.
- Choose manual or auto focus depending on what you are shooting. When working with shifting light, manual focus is best. When shooting handheld, auto focus is helpful, but not necessary.

### Manual Focus Exercise:

Make sure your camera is set to manual focus. Focus your camera. Point your camera at a subject, zoom in as close as you can, and then focus manually by adjusting with your manual focus button or knob. Zoom back out and everything should look sharp and in focus. This is called getting *critical focus*.

### Exposure and White Balance Exercise:

Set your white balance indoors depending on weather you're indoors or outdoors, then set exposure on your camera. Try to find a setting that matches the most natural looking light of the space you are in (skin color is a good detector of proper exposure). Now go outside and white balance again. Then try setting exposure for outdoors. What changes did you have to make? If your camera has a Zebra Function you can use it to detect over exposure. Turn on the Zebra Function, wherever you see striped lines on your view finder, this indicates over exposure. Adjust the exposure until most of the stripe lines go away.

### Handheld Exercise:

Try holding the camera and moving around with it. How can you best stabilize the camera so that the image appears still? How can you give your shot a smooth floating quality? Try to hold the camera still and focused on one point for 10 seconds.

**Perspective Exercise:** Using the rule of thirds, and considering the framing and composition, shoot a subject from 10 different perspectives, making sure that they are framed using the rule of thirds.

# Lesson 4 Worksheet

**Composition Exercise:** Take several shots of the horizon, using it as a line to divide the space horizontally. For example, 1/3 sky and 2/3 ground, or the opposite. How do these compositions differ?

**Framing Exercise:** Find 4 natural frames to shoot such as a doorway window or a hallway.

**Tip:** When framing, always leave some space around your subject. For example, leave head room when shooting a torso head shot, if your subject is moving through space, be sure to leave space in front of them so they always have space to move into within the frame. If you are filming a full body shot, leave space below the feet, above the head, and on either side of the body.

**Rule of Thirds Exercise:** Take a photo or video shot with the subject in the center. Now move the subject to one of the lines or intersections described by the rule of thirds and take another shot. Compare the photos or footage side by side and discuss which version you prefer. Repeat this with 5 different set-ups.

## **Assignment:**

This is a shooting exercise to help you get comfortable with the camera. Practice using a tripod, handheld camera techniques, auto and manual focus, zoom, panning, and tilting while filming a subject. You can do this exercise in groups. You will need one camera with a blank tape or card to record onto, and a tripod.

## **Tripod Practice:**

Working with your subject, place the camera on the tripod and attempt each shot two times, first with auto focus and second with manual focus.

- Let a subject enter into frame and exit out of frame.
- Zoom out to the farthest point or widest angle and design a frame. You can position the camera however you want: low, medium or high. Shoot your subject within the frame you have designed for one minute.
- Pan your camera and follow your subject in your widest shot.
- Pan your camera and follow your subject in a medium shot.
- Pan your camera and follow your subject in a close up shot.
- Shoot your subject from above.
- Shoot your subject from below.

# Lesson 4 Worksheet

## Handheld Practice:

Holding the camera by hand and using autofocus, try experimenting with different ways of handling your camera for different kinds of movement.

- Have your subject stand still and circle your subject while shooting.
- Try turning or rotating your camera around in your hands while shooting a subject (be careful not to drop your camera).
- Shoot your subject from below.
- Try pushing in slowly, and pulling out slowly.

## Tracking Practice:

You can attempt these shots by riding on a wagon pulled by a third person, or by sitting on a wheelchair pushed by a third person.

- Have your subject stand still and have the third person push you towards the subject and pull you back from the subject.
- Have your subject move towards the camera as you are being pushed towards the subject. Have your subject retreat from the camera as you are being pulled back from the subject.
- Have your subject stand still and either, walk with your camera, or have someone push past your subject sideways.
- Have your subject move along with you as you are pushed at the same speed along side.
- Have your subject move in the opposite direction as you are being pushed so that you pass by each other.

