

# Make a Video Essay

## Quick Guide

**Raw materials (not inclusive):** video footage, audio (ambient sound, voiceover, audio track linked to video), stills, titles, script.

**Import files into editing program.** (FCE: File > Import > files; iMovie: File > Import > movies)

**Practice reading your script,** if you have one. Assess how this time figures against the length of your video clips and your background or ambient sound audio files. Plot this out on some kind of storyboard.

**Drag video files to timeline** (In FCE. In iMovie, you drag files to the Project area; in Adobe Premiere Elements, you drag to the Timeline).

**If you want to speed up or slow down** video clips, do this by modifying the speed (FCE: Modify > Speed; iMovie: hover over the clip in the Project; see the little gear, click on the down arrow, then select the Clip Adjustments and fool around with either speed or duration.)

**Drag audio files to timeline.** (in FCE. In iMovie, you select an audio file by using the Music/Sound Effect browser, represented by the eighth notes on the right hand side)

**Play around with how the audio and video interact:** do you want audio to begin and end at the same time as the video? Or do you want them all to begin/end at different times?

**Work with stills:** you can drag stills to the timeline or project. In a timeline, (FCE/APE) you have stacked tracks, so you can place the photo precisely where you want it to be, then control its opacity by double-clicking on the still which will open it in the Viewer (FCE); click on Motion, then drop the Opacity slider and make the still more transparent. In iMovie, use the photo browser (the little photo icon on the right hand side) to navigate to a photo, then drag it to the project. You should get a menu of options (replace = replaces a series of frames in the video clip; side by side; insert; cutaway; etc.)—select the one you want. If you don't like what you've done, you can delete and start over.

**Transitions:** You can insert transitions between video clips, at the intro and outro of a still, and at the beginning or end of an audio clip. In FCE: Effect > Video Transitions OR Audio Transitions; in iMovie, click on the transitions icon (to the right of the T [for "title"] icon) and select.

**Record your voiceover.** You might have to do it more than once, just fyi. If you hate your voiceover, go ahead and swear at the end of it or in the middle of it. Then just delete it. Trust me. It's very freeing.

**Add titles.** In FCE: just under the "Viewer," see the little "A"-in-a-piece-of-film icon. Click for the drop down menu, and choose "Text," which gives you another small menu for titles. Choose one, then click the "Controls" tab in the Viewer. Add the text you want. Switch to the "Video" tab and press play—if it's the way you want it, then drag it to the Browser, then drag it to the timeline. There, you can manipulate the speed or duration as you would any other video clip.

In iMovie: click the "T" and choose the type of titles you want and drag it to the Project, where you want it to be in the overall sequence.

When you have things the way you want them, render the sequence (FCE: Sequence > Render All > Both; iMovie renders while exporting), then export to QuickTime. (FCE: File > Export > QuickTime Movie; iMovie: Share: Export Movie OR Export Using QuickTime). If you have a video hosting site other than YouTube (such as Vimeo), look at their specs for exporting and use those specs for your settings.

(See <http://lisabickmore.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/what-is-a-video-essay/> for more discussion about the nature of a video essay. It's a little theoretical—don't let it intimidate you.)