

Make a 360° Photo Essay or Mini-Film

Time:

30-45 minutes

Take time to experiment with your equipment. No need to build a masterpiece — just try taking photos and short videos, and get used to the basic processes of moving files from the camera to the phone in order to watch in the headset.

Step 1: Take some photos or video.

Pick a visually interesting space that's easy for you to access. Practice placing the camera using the tripod, and take a photo or a short 20 second video. If you like, try taking a couple photos or very short video clips from other perspectives in the same space.

Step 2: View your media.

Practice the workflow of moving video and photo files between your camera, headset (often using a smartphone), and computer. Make sure you can view your media in the headset so you get the experience of full immersion in the scene you captured.

Step 3: Reflect on your media.

- Observe how objects and actions appear — close, far? Does the shot appear different from what you expected?
- How does the composition of the shot make the viewer feel? For example, if the camera was lower to the ground, what effect did that have on the viewer experience?
- If you took a short video, how did the audio turn out?
- What lessons did you take away that will be helpful when you start planning and filming a video?

Want to go further? Here are some suggestions of shots to film with the camera to test out the effect. Each one should be filmed as its own shot (meaning start, stop and restart the camera between each shot) and **viewed in your VR headset.**

Glossary

- Extreme Close Up (ECU): Subject(s) is less than 1 foot from the camera
- Close Up (CU): Subject is 1-2 feet from the camera
- Medium Shot (MS): Subject is 2-5 feet from the camera
- Wide Shot (WS): Subject is 5 or more feet from the camera
- Looking at the camera: The subject is looking at the camera as if the camera is a person
- Looking away from the camera: The camera is only an observer of the subject's actions

Test Shot List

Note: When testing give your subject(s) a constant repetitive action they can do no matter where they are in relation to the camera.

With one subject:

1. ECU looking at the camera
2. ECU looking away from the camera
3. CU looking at the camera
4. CU looking away from the camera
5. MS looking at the camera
6. MS looking away from the camera
7. WS looking at the camera
8. WS looking away from the camera
9. CU walk in a circle around the camera
10. WS walk in a circle around the camera
11. Walk past the camera looking at the camera
12. Sneak up on the camera

With two or more subjects:

1. CU with both subjects looking at the camera
2. CU with both subjects looking away from the camera
3. MS with both subjects looking at the camera
4. MS with both subjects looking away from the camera
5. WS with both subjects looking at the camera
6. WS with both subjects looking away from the camera
7. One subject close to camera and one subject far away from the camera
8. Both subject walk in a circle around the camera at varying distances

Other possibilities:

1. High angle: Place the camera on a tree branch or high bookshelf for example (make sure the camera is secure).
2. Low angle: Place the camera on the ground as if it were an insect.
3. Handheld: Camera movement is not advised in 360 because the slightest movement could make the subject dizzy. However, try experimenting with it anyway in case you find a way to make the movement a justified element of your story.
4. Mounted: Find a safe and secure way to mount the camera to a bike, dashboard of a car, remote controlled car, etc. As mentioned in the handheld section, movement can be disorienting if not done well, which requires lots of testing and refinement of your method.

With each shot ask yourself:

- What does this shot accomplish?
- What do I feel when I watch the subject?
- How do I feel in relation to the subject?
 - Do I feel larger or smaller than the subject?
 - Do I feel more important or less important than the subject?
 - Do I feel like I am a part of the subject's life or obstructed from it?
 - Do I feel like am experiencing the moment with the subject or just observing them?

Once you have watched all of your shots in the headset, you should have a firm understanding of the relationship between the subject and the camera (the audience), and how to manipulate that relationship to capture the performance you have in mind. When you are filming your story, capture multiple takes and camera angles so you have options in post production. Keep exploring and experimenting.