Video Editing

Short notes for beginners · Premiere Pro · YouTubers · freelancers

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I. Video Editing Basics

- *Editing = selecting, cutting, arranging and polishing clips, audio, graphics and effects to tell a story. Workflow:* ***Ingest → Organise → Rough cut → Fine cut → Audio → Colour → Graphics → Export****.*
- *Non-linear editing (NLE) software such as Premiere Pro, DaVinci Resolve, Final Cut Pro keeps the original files untouched. All edits are just instructions, so you can undo anything.*
- *Pre-production (script, shot list) saves hours in the edit. Good editing is mostly about pacing and story, not fancy effects.*

➤ Common terms

Term	Meaning
Clip	A single piece of video or audio footage
Sequence / Timeline	The place where clips are arranged in order
Bin	A folder inside the Project panel to organise assets
A-roll / B-roll	Main footage (interview, speaker) / cover footage that supports it
Rough cut	First assembly of clips, no polish
Render	Computer processes effects to give smooth playback
Export	Final output of the sequence as a video file
Proxy	Low resolution copy used for smooth editing of heavy 4K files

EXAMPLE A video at 30 fps and 60 seconds long has 30 x 60 = 1800 frames. At 24 fps the same minute has 1440 frames.

2. Video Fundamentals

- **Frame rate** = frames per second (fps). 24 fps gives the cinema look, 25 fps is PAL (India, Europe), 30 fps is common for web and TV, 60 fps for sports, gaming and smooth slow motion.
- **Aspect ratio** = width : height. 16:9 for YouTube and TV, 9:16 for Reels, Shorts and TikTok, 1:1 and 4:5 for Instagram feed, 2.39:1 for cinema.
- **Bitrate** = data per second of video (Mbps). Higher bitrate = better quality and bigger file. **Codec** compresses the video (H.264, H.265/HEVC, ProRes). **Container** is the file wrapper (.mp4, .mov, .mkv).

Name	Resolution	Use
HD (720p)	1280 x 720	Basic web video
Full HD (1080p)	1920 x 1080	YouTube, most social posts
QHD (1440p)	2560 x 1440	High quality web, gaming
4K UHD	3840 x 2160	Premium web, TV, cinema work
8K	7680 x 4320	Very rare, future proofing

- Timecode format is HH:MM:SS:FF (hours, minutes, seconds, frames). Drop-frame timecode is used for 29.97 fps to keep the clock matching real time.

EXAMPLE Bitrate 8 Mbps for a 10 minute video: 8 x 600 s = 4800 Mb = 4800 / 8 = 600 MB (8 bits = 1 byte).

- Interlaced (1080i) draws half the lines per field, progressive (1080p) draws full frames. Always prefer **progressive** for the web.

3. Premiere Pro Workspace

- **Project panel**: all imported media and bins. **Source monitor**: preview a clip and set In/Out points. **Program monitor**: see the current sequence output.
- **Timeline**: V1, V2, V3... are video tracks, A1, A2, A3... are audio tracks. Upper video tracks appear on top of lower tracks.
- **Effect Controls**: Motion, Opacity, keyframes of the selected clip. **Effects panel**: transitions and effects. **Essential Graphics**: titles, templates. **Lumetri Color**: colour tools.
- Start: New Project → Import (Ctrl+I) → drag clip to the new item icon to create a sequence that matches the footage settings automatically.
- Workspaces (Editing, Color, Audio, Effects) change panel layout. Use Window → Workspaces → Reset to Saved Layout if you lose a panel.
- Save often. Premiere makes auto-save copies in the Adobe Premiere Pro Auto-Save folder. Use File → Save As to keep versions (v1, v2, final).

➤ Basic editing steps

- Set In (I) and Out (O) on the Source monitor → press , (Insert) or . (Overwrite) to place the clip in the timeline.
- Insert pushes later clips forward and changes the length. Overwrite replaces what is below and keeps the length.

4. Editing Tools and Shortcuts

Key	Tool / action	Use
V	Selection tool	Select and move clips
C	Razor tool	Cut a clip at a point
A	Track Select Forward	Select every clip right of a point
B	Ripple Edit	Trim and close the gap automatically
N	Rolling Edit	Move cut point between two clips, length same

Key	Tool / action	Use
Y / U	Slip / Slide	Change content inside a clip / move clip between neighbours
R	Rate Stretch	Speed up or slow down a clip by dragging
Space	Play / Pause	Playback
J K L	Shuttle	Play reverse / pause / forward (press L twice = 2x)
Ctrl+K	Add edit	Cut at playhead on selected track
Shift+Delete	Ripple delete	Delete clip and close the gap
Ctrl+M	Export	Open export settings

- **Straight cut** is the most common. **Jump cut** removes a pause from the same shot (vlogs). **Match cut** joins two shots by similar shape or action.
- **J-cut**: audio of the next clip starts before its video. **L-cut**: audio of the current clip continues over the next video. Both make dialogue edits feel smooth.
- **Cutaway**: insert B-roll over A-roll to hide a cut or to show what is being talked about.

5. Audio Editing

- Bad audio loses viewers faster than bad video. Record in a quiet room, keep the mic close, and always check levels.
- Sample rate for video is 48 kHz. Keep dialogue peaks around -12 dB to -6 dB, music about -20 dB to -18 dB under speech, and never touch 0 dB (clipping).
- Loudness target for YouTube about -14 LUFS, for broadcast and OTT about -23 LUFS (EBU R128) or as the platform asks.
- **Essential Sound** panel: tag audio as Dialogue, Music, SFX or Ambience, then use Repair (reduce noise, reverb) and Loudness auto-match.
- **Auto-ducking** lowers music when speech plays. **Audio transitions**: Constant Power (smooth), Constant Gain. Add 2 to 10 frame fades at cuts to avoid clicks.

- Use **room tone** (silence recorded on location) to fill gaps so that cuts do not sound dead.

> **REMEMBER** Watching with headphones and on a phone speaker is the best final check. Most viewers are on a phone.

6. Colour Correction and Grading

- **Colour correction** = fix exposure, contrast and white balance so shots look natural and match each other. **Colour grading** = create a mood or look (teal and orange, warm vintage, cold thriller).
- Order: Correct first → match shots → grade last. Do primary correction on all clips before a creative look.

Lumetri section	What it does
Basic Correction	White balance, exposure, contrast, highlights, shadows, saturation
Creative	Looks (LUTs), faded film, vibrance, tint wheels
Curves	RGB curves and Hue Saturation curves for fine control
Colour Wheels	Shadows, midtones, highlights colour balance
HSL Secondary	Pick one colour (skin, sky) and change only that
Vignette	Darken or lighten the edges to focus the eye

- **Scopes** (Window → Lumetri Scopes) are more reliable than your eyes. Waveform shows brightness (keep within 0 to 100), vectorscope shows colour and skin tone line, RGB parade shows channel balance, histogram shows the tonal spread.
- Shoot in a flat log profile (S-Log, C-Log, V-Log) to keep dynamic range, then apply a **LUT** (look-up table) to bring it to normal colours.

7. Titles, Effects and Motion

- **Keyframes** store a value (position, scale, opacity) at a time. Two or more keyframes make animation. Use Ease In / Ease Out for natural movement.
- **Transitions** : Cross Dissolve (time passing), Dip to Black (end of scene), Dip to White, Push, Wipe. Default transition shortcut is Ctrl+D. Use them sparingly, a straight cut is best most of the time.
- **Adjustment Layer**: one layer that applies an effect (colour, blur) to everything below it. **Nesting**: group several clips into one nested sequence to treat them as one.
- **Speed / Duration** (Ctrl+R): change speed. Use Time Remapping and keyframes for speed ramps. Optical Flow gives smooth slow motion from normal footage.
- **Warp Stabilizer** reduces camera shake. **Ultra Key** removes a green screen. **Masks** (pen, ellipse) limit an effect to one area and can be tracked.
- Keep titles inside the **title safe margin** (about 80%) so text is not cut on TV or phones. Use 1 or 2 fonts only and keep strong contrast with the background.

TIP Make a template: one lower-third, one intro and one end screen saved in Essential Graphics. It saves hours on every video.

8. Export Settings

- Choose File → Export → Media (Ctrl+M). Format H.264 for the web, preset Match Source or YouTube 1080p Full HD. Use ProRes or DNxHR when you need a high quality master file.

Platform	Size	Suggested bitrate (SDR)
YouTube 1080p	1920 x 1080 (16:9)	8 Mbps at 24 to 30 fps, 12 Mbps at 48 to 60 fps
YouTube 4K	3840 x 2160	35 to 45 Mbps at 24 to 30 fps
Reels / Shorts / TikTok	1080 x 1920 (9:16)	8 to 12 Mbps, under platform length limit
Instagram feed	1080 x 1350 (4:5)	About 8 Mbps

- **CBR** gives a constant bitrate (good for streaming), **VBR 2 pass** gives better quality for the same size but takes longer. Use Max Render Quality only when scaling up or down.
- Export audio as AAC, 48 kHz, 320 kbps. Tick Use Previews only if the preview files are already high quality.
- Always watch the full export once before uploading. Keep the project, media and final file together in a backed up folder.

9. Editing Workflow and Good Habits

- Folder structure: 01_Footage, 02_Audio, 03_Graphics, 04_Project, 05_Exports. Name files clearly (date_scene_take). Use labels and colours for A-roll, B-roll, music.
- Pace: cut on action, remove dead air, keep the first 5 seconds strong for social video. Vary shot size (wide, medium, close up).
- Use markers (M) for notes and beat points. Cut to the music beat for montage. Keep the story clear: hook, body, call to action.
- Copyright: use royalty free or licensed music and footage only. A copyright claim can block or demonetise the video.
- Heavy files lag? Make **proxies**, lower playback resolution to 1/2, clear the media cache, and render previews (Enter) on complex parts.

10. Most Asked Questions (practice)

1. What is non-linear editing? Name the stages of the post production workflow.

2. Differentiate frame rate, resolution, bitrate, codec and container.

3. What is the difference between insert and overwrite? Explain ripple and rolling edit.

4. Explain J-cut and L-cut with an example. Why are they used?

5. Difference between colour correction and colour grading. What are scopes?

6. How do you remove green screen background in Premiere Pro?

7. Best export settings for YouTube and Instagram Reels.

8. What are proxies, nesting and adjustment layers? Give uses.

9. Calculate file size of a 5 minute video at 10 Mbps.

10. List 10 Premiere Pro shortcuts you use daily.

TIP Interview and freelance rounds: build a 60 second showreel, keep a shortcut sheet on your desk and practise editing with the keyboard only. Speed comes from shortcuts.