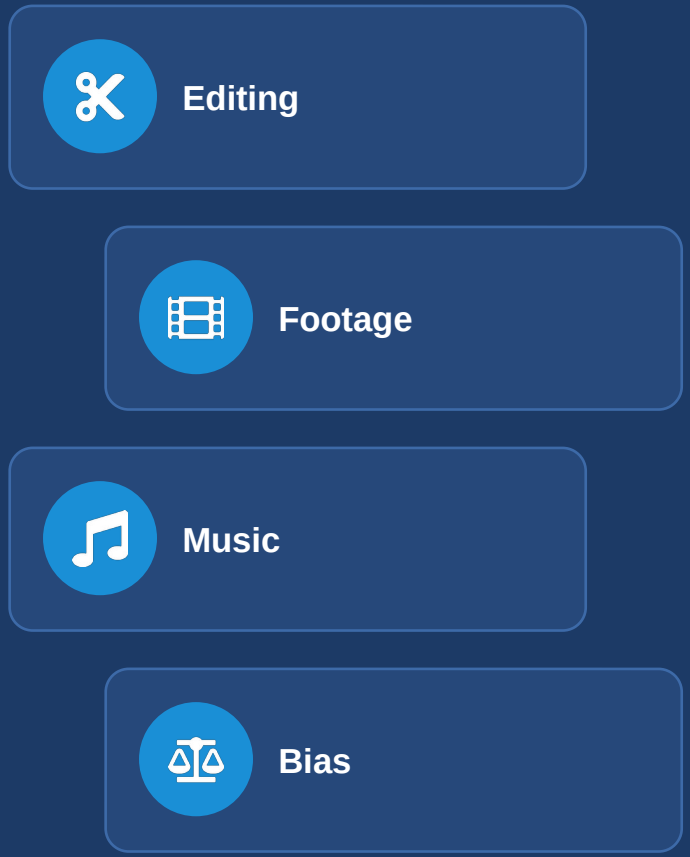
ENG3U Truth on Screen, Lesson 2

The Editing Room

Same footage, different story



Today's goals

We are learning…

- How editing creates meaning.
- To recognize bias created through editing.

I can…

- Explain the Kuleshov effect.
- Sequence the same clips to tell different stories.
- Explain how order, music and narration change meaning.
- Explain when editing becomes distortion.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–10 min	**Kuleshov**	Discuss
10–20 min	**Shot log**	Read
20–45 min	**Two edits**	Edit
45–60 min	**Compare**	Compare
60–75 min	**Ethics**	Discuss

Big idea

Editing is where documentary truth is made. The same twelve clips, put in a different order with different music and narration, can tell two opposite stories.

The Kuleshov effect

Shot 1	Shot 2	What viewers saw in the face
An actor's neutral face	A bowl of soup	Hunger
The same face	A child in a coffin	Grief
The same face	A woman on a couch	Desire

Same face every time. The edit made the emotion.

Try it

A photo of a politician smiling. Placed after a clip of a flood, what does the smile mean? Placed after a clip of a ribbon-cutting?

Sentence starters

“After the flood, it looks…”

“After the ribbon-cutting…”

How it works

- Pairs: 2 minutes.

The shot log (fictional)

#	Clip
1	Wide shot: the empty lot behind the community centre, morning. Weeds, a chain-link fence.
2	Close-up: a teenager's scuffed skateboard wheels spinning.
3	Medium shot: Councillor Patel at the meeting, frowning, reading notes.
4	Interview: Maya, 16: “We just want somewhere we're allowed to be.”
5	Interview: Mr. Doucet, 71, neighbour: “It'll be noise until eleven every night.”
6	Close-up: a hand raised in the crowded council chamber.

The shot log, continued

#	Clip
7	Wide shot: kids skating in the grocery-store parking lot at dusk; a security guard approaches.
8	Close-up: Mr. Doucet's garden, roses, a wind chime.
9	Medium shot: council votes; four hands up, three down.
10	Interview: Councillor Patel: “Budgets are about choices.”
11	Close-up: graffiti on the fence: “SKATE HERE.”
12	Wide shot: the empty lot at sunset.

Build two stories

On page 2, in pairs:

1. Story A: make viewers support the skatepark.
2. Story B: make viewers oppose it.
3. Choose order, opening narration and music.
4. Decide which clips to leave out.
5. Choose your final image.

Model edits

Story A: “A Place to Belong”

- Opens on skateboard wheels and the parking lot.
- Hopeful guitar; Maya's quote early.

Story B: “Noise Next Door”

- Opens on roses and a wind chime.
- Tense strings; Mr. Doucet's quote early.

Both end on clip 12. It means something different each time.

Share your edits



Which single clip changed meaning most between your two stories? Which clip did you leave out, and why?

Sentence starters

“Clip ___ meant… in A, but… in B.”

“We cut ___ because…”

How it works

- Pairs share: 8 minutes.

Editing or distortion?

selection	Choosing what to include. *Unavoidable.*
omission	Leaving out what matters. *When does it mislead?*
juxtaposition	Placing clips side by side to create meaning.
out of context	Using a quote in a way the speaker didn't mean. *Usually unethical.*

Model: a rule for editors

Task: When does editing become distortion?

Editing becomes distortion when the final story would surprise or upset the people in it because it changes what they actually meant or what actually happened. Choosing a point of view is fine; hiding the strongest evidence against it is not. A fair editor could show the edit to every person in it and defend each cut.

Why it works

A clear test.

Separates point of view from deception.

Practical for your own projects.

Exit ticket

1. What is the Kuleshov effect?

2. The clip that changed meaning most.

3. Your rule for fair editing.

Next class: Sound and Voice.

Teacher reveal

Two edits: model orders

Story A (pro-skatepark): Story A: “A Place to Belong.” Order: 2, 7, 4, 1, 11, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12. Narration: “For years, the town's teenagers have had nowhere to go… Tonight, that might change.” Music: hopeful acoustic guitar, building.

Story B (anti-skatepark): Story B: “Noise Next Door.” Order: 8, 5, 1, 11, 7, 6, 3, 9, 10, 12. Narration: “Long-time residents say their quiet neighbourhood is under threat… and council isn't listening.” Music: low, tense strings.

Key insight: No clip was faked, yet each story is misleading on its own. Clip 7 (kids in a parking lot) means “nowhere to go” in A and “trouble” in B.