



# REEL NIKKEI STORIES: Nikkei Family Legacy Project

*A project of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California*

## LIGHTING FOR VIDEO

By Urban Voice

### General information and tips on lighting and how light covers your subject.

1. When choosing a location for your interview, find a room that is well lit with natural light from the sun.
2. Have your subject (interviewee) sit on a couch or chair that is comfortable and not in a shadow or direct sunlight.
3. If it is too bright outside and too much sun is coming through the window, try closing the blinds some or have a thin white sheet cover the window. You can use clothes pins, safety pins or office clips to secure the sheet.



4. Do not place your subject in front of a large, bright window or they will become silhouetted and you will not be able to see them. (see example image - above right)
5. It is best to place your subject at a 45 degree angle from the window so the light hits the side of them and their face as well.
6. You may also want to turn on all lights in the room and/or bring in lamps/lights for additional lighting.

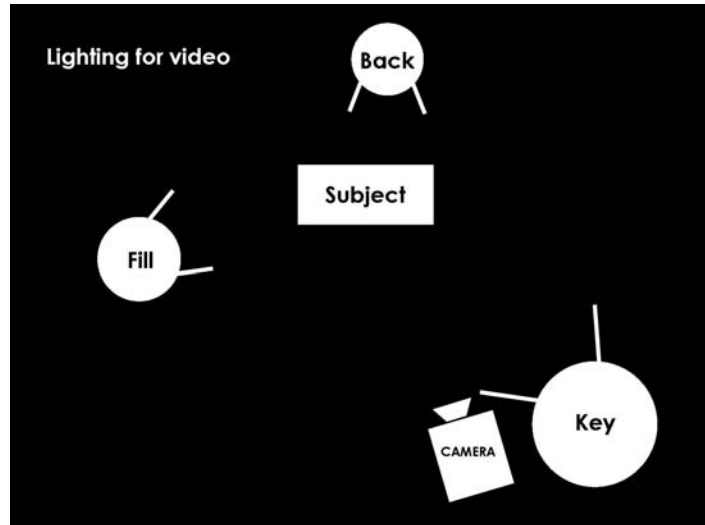




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7. What you want to do is create three light sources:



- KEY Light – is the main light that lights the subject and the room where you will film. You can use natural sunlight from a window as the key light.
- FILL Light – is used to hit the side and the front of the subject not hit by the key light.
- BACK Light – is used for the top back of the head and/or shoulders of the subject.

### 8. FILL LIGHT TIPS:

- You can use a reading lamp on an end table as the fill light.
- It is best if the fill light is 3-4 feet tall.
- The fill light should be placed slightly in front of and at an angle to the corner of the subject's seat, so that their side and part of their front get lit.
- Make sure you can see the eyes of the interviewee so you don't see shadows where their eyes should be.
- Don't place fill (and key) lights on the very sides or directly in front of your interviewee, but at an angle in between.





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### 9. BACK LIGHT TIPS:

- You can use a free standing lamp on a stand that should be at around 5-6 feet tall.
- Try to shine the light on the back top of the subject's head.
- Don't place the backlight directly behind the subject, or it will be seen in the shot. Place at an angle and direct it down towards the subject.



### 10. OVERALL TIPS:

- You want to create a triangle of light around your subject with your key, fill and back lights and also to create a balance of natural and inside light. See image (under #7), for sample angle placement. You may have to make adjustments according to the brightness of natural light and/or artificial light sources.
- Look for an area that is well lit with natural light in the morning or afternoon and bring in a couple of reading lamps for fill and back lights. The hour before the sun sets is considered the "golden hour," because of the color and the glow that it has and how it reflects on your subject.
- Don't use too many lights or make it too bright, or your subject will become shiny and/or get too hot and begin to sweat.
- Avoid dark rooms or very bright rooms filled with windows without shades or blinds.
- Be aware of where your subject is in relation to the lights in the room. Try to avoid using light hitting only the back or front of your subject or they will look flat and/or silhouetted.
- It is best to have your key and fill light hitting your subject at angles between 35-45 degrees from the front of them at slightly different heights and to have a back light slightly to the edge behind them hitting the back of their head and shoulders.
- Avoid hats that shade the face.
- Avoid things in the background that look like they are coming out of the back of interviewer or interviewees head.