

Section 5: Record Narration and Assemble the Rough Cut

You now have a verified article, an approved video package plan, and a complete two-column script. Section 5 turns that script into the first complete version of the video package. You will record the reporter narration, place the planned audio and video on a timeline, and build a rough cut that can be watched from beginning to end.

A rough cut is not supposed to be perfect. It is the first complete working version of the story. It should contain the correct narration, sound bites, B-roll, natural sound, photographs, graphics, and basic source identifications in the planned order. Its job is to prove that the story works before the team spends time polishing every edit.

Bellville ISD issues every student a Chromebook, so the class workflow is designed to work on a Chromebook whenever possible. Use the narration and editing tutorials assigned on BellvilleAV.com for exact screen-by-screen instructions. You may use Microsoft Clipchamp, CapCut, Adobe Premiere Pro, or another approved editor. The buttons will differ, but the production process in this guide remains the same.

By the end of this section, the team should have a saved, complete rough cut with understandable narration, correctly placed sound bites, purposeful visuals, basic graphics, and an accurate running time. Another person should be able to watch it once and understand the story.

Understand What a Rough Cut Is

The rough cut is the stage where the written plan becomes a watchable package. It allows the team to test the story order, timing, narration, sound bites, pictures, and ending together. Problems that were difficult to notice on paper become obvious when the package plays.

A rough cut should have	A rough cut does not need yet
The complete story from opening through ending	Perfect color correction or advanced visual effects
The correct narration and selected sound bites	Decorative transitions between every clip
Purposeful B-roll covering the narration	Final music, animation, or complicated motion graphics
Usable natural sound and basic audio levels	Every audio adjustment perfected to the final level
Basic lower thirds and necessary information graphics	Final font spacing, animation timing, or design polish
An accurate estimated running time	A final export ready for publication

Complete comes before polished. Do not spend twenty minutes choosing a transition while half of the story is still missing from the timeline.

Use the Editor That Lets You Finish

The editing program is a tool, not the assignment. Microsoft Clipchamp is available for the Chromebook-first class workflow, and the BellvilleAV.com tutorials show the assigned method for recording and editing. Students who already know CapCut, Adobe Premiere Pro, or another approved editor may use it if they can complete the same requirements and submit the correct finished file.

Before committing to an editor confirm

- ☐ It works on the device you will actually use.
- ☐ It can import the team's video, audio, photographs, and graphics.
- ☐ It can place several video and audio items on a timeline.
- ☐ It can trim clips and adjust audio levels.
- ☐ It can add lower thirds and other required text.
- ☐ It can save the project and reopen it later.
- ☐ It can export the required video format and resolution.

Choose one program and stay with it unless it cannot complete a required task. Switching editors after the timeline is built can waste work and may break links to media files.

Know the Production Order

Students often open the editor and begin dragging in random clips. Use the same order every time so the project stays manageable.

1. Confirm the script and assignment requirements.
2. Create the project and save it immediately.
3. Gather and organize every media file in one project folder.
4. Prepare the recording space and microphone.
5. Practice and record the narration in short sections.
6. Import and label the media.
7. Build the audio backbone in script order.
8. Add B-roll, interview video, photographs, and graphics.
9. Adjust basic audio levels and remove obvious gaps.
10. Watch the complete rough cut and record needed changes.
11. Save, back up, and submit the requested rough-cut version.

Step 1 Lock the Script for Recording

Read the final Section 4 script aloud one more time before recording. Confirm that the narration fits the target time and that all names, titles, dates, numbers, pronunciations, and attributions are correct. The recording session should not become another writing session.

Small changes may still be necessary when a line sounds awkward aloud. Correct the written script first, then record the new wording. The script and recording must match so the editor, captions, and fact-checker are working from the same version.

- ☐ The narration is written word for word.
- ☐ Sound bites have final filenames and timecodes.
- ☐ Production directions are clearly separated from spoken words.
- ☐ Pronunciation notes appear beside difficult names or terms.
- ☐ The person recording knows which lines are narration and which are not spoken.
- ☐ The script has a version name or date so the team uses the correct copy.

Step 2 Create and Save the Project

Open the chosen editor and create a new project. Give it a clear name that includes the story and team. Save it before importing media. If the editor saves automatically, confirm which account and location are being used.

Useful project name: BVP_CTE_Certifications_Maddison_Michael_RoughCut

Do not name the project Untitled, Video 1, or Final. Those names become confusing when several students use the same device or when multiple versions exist.

Record the basic project information

Item	Team entry
Project name	_____
Editor used	_____
Account or device	_____
Project location	_____
Target running time	_____
Required format	_____

Step 3 Build One Organized Project Folder

Keep the media together before editing. A project file may remember where clips were located. Moving, renaming, or deleting files after import can cause missing-media errors.

Create a main folder with simple subfolders. The exact storage location may be the Chromebook, Google Drive, or another class-approved location, but every team member must know where it is.

Folder	What belongs there
01 Script	The final two-column script and any approved revision.
02 Narration	Original narration recordings and replacement lines.
03 Interviews	Complete interview files and selected sound-bite copies when used.
04 B-roll	All usable supporting video and visual sequences.
05 Natural Sound	Clean natural-sound clips or notes identifying sound within video files.
06 Photos and Graphics	Approved photographs, documents, logos, maps, and created graphics.
07 Exports	Rough-cut review files and later final exports.

Use filenames that explain the content. A name such as IMG_4837 gives the editor no useful information. A name such as shop_student_measuring_closeup_01 is easier to recognize. Do not rename a file after it has been placed in the project unless the editor can relink it.

Step 4 Choose the Best Narration Recording Method

Use the narration method assigned by Mr G and follow the current BellvilleAV.com tutorial for the exact Chromebook steps. Depending on the available tools, the team may record directly inside the editor or

record a separate audio file and import it. Either method is acceptable when it produces clear sound and a file the team can recover.

Method	Main advantage	Important check
Record inside the editor	The narration can appear directly on the timeline.	Make sure the project is saved and the recording can be replaced without losing other edits.
Record a separate audio file	The original narration remains available outside the project.	Save with a clear filename and import the correct take.
Record with another approved device	A phone or external recorder may provide a better microphone or quieter location.	Transfer the original file without using a method that badly reduces audio quality.

The recording method matters less than the result. The voice must be clear, the words must match the verified script, and the team must know where the original recording is stored.

Step 5 Prepare a Quiet Recording Space

A Chromebook microphone can produce usable narration when the space and microphone position are controlled. The largest problems are often room echo, air conditioners, fans, hallway noise, keyboard sounds, and a microphone placed too far from the speaker.

Before pressing record

- ☐ Choose the quietest available room or corner.
- ☐ Close doors and windows when allowed.
- ☐ Turn off nearby fans or noisy equipment when safe and permitted.
- ☐ Silence notifications on the Chromebook and nearby phones.
- ☐ Place the Chromebook on a stable surface so it does not move or vibrate.
- ☐ Keep the microphone a consistent distance from the speaker.
- ☐ Move away from hard empty walls when possible; curtains, furniture, and soft materials reduce echo.
- ☐ Ask people nearby to remain quiet during the take.

Do not cover the Chromebook microphone or tap the desk while recording. Avoid holding the device in your hands. Small movements can create loud bumps and rubbing sounds.

Step 6 Test the Microphone

Record a ten-second test using the same position and speaking level planned for the real narration. Play it back with headphones. Never judge a recording only by watching a moving sound meter.

Listen for these problems:

What you hear	Likely cause	What to try
Voice is distant or hollow	The microphone is too far away or the room has echo.	Move closer and choose a smaller or softer space.
Voice is distorted or crackling	The speaker is too loud, too close, or the input level is too high.	Move slightly away or lower the recording input when available.

What you hear	Likely cause	What to try
Popping on P and B sounds	Air from the mouth is striking the microphone.	Move slightly to the side of the microphone rather than speaking directly into it.
Constant hum or hiss	Fan, charger, air conditioner, or noisy microphone input.	Identify the source, unplug the charger if safe, change locations, or use another approved microphone.
Volume changes	The speaker or device is moving.	Sit or stand still and keep the same microphone distance.
Notification or hallway sounds	The space was not controlled.	Silence devices, wait for quiet, and record the line again.

If the test is not understandable, fix the cause before recording the complete script. Audio repair cannot reliably turn a bad original into a clean voice.

Step 7 Mark the Script for Delivery

Narration should sound like a student reporter explaining verified information, not like someone racing through an essay. Mark the working copy so the reporter knows where to breathe, slow down, emphasize a useful word, and pronounce difficult names.

- Use a slash to mark a short pause or breath.
- Start a new line when the thought changes.
- Underline or bold only the word that needs natural emphasis.
- Write pronunciation help beside unfamiliar names and terms.
- Circle numbers and dates that must be read carefully.
- Cross out production directions so they are not accidentally spoken.

Example marked line: The first group can test in DECEMBER / after completing four practice projects.

Do not perform a fake announcer voice. Speak clearly and confidently in a natural voice. The goal is to help the audience understand the story, not to sound like a movie trailer.

Step 8 Record in Short Sections

Record the narration by story block or by a few sentences at a time. Short sections are easier to redo and easier to place on the timeline. Do not restart the entire script because of one mistake near the end.

1. Say the block number or filename before recording when the method allows it, then leave a short pause.
2. Take one quiet breath and begin at a natural pace.
3. If you make a mistake, stop, pause, and begin the complete sentence again.
4. Record two or three good takes of difficult lines.
5. Leave a brief moment of silence before and after each take for clean trimming.
6. Listen to the take before moving to the next block.
7. Save the chosen take with a name matching the script block.

Useful narration filename: VO_03_student_impact_take2.wav

Do not keep twenty unnamed takes. Mark or rename the selected take so the editor knows which one to use. Keep the original until the project is complete.

Step 9 Check Every Narration Take

- ☐ The words match the latest approved script.
- ☐ Names, titles, numbers, and dates are pronounced correctly.
- ☐ The voice is understandable through headphones and ordinary Chromebook speakers.
- ☐ The pace is natural and not rushed.
- ☐ The volume stays reasonably consistent.
- ☐ There are no distracting bumps, clicks, notifications, or background voices.
- ☐ The beginning and ending are not cut off.
- ☐ The file is saved in the Narration folder with a useful name.

A small stumble, incorrect name, or changed number requires a new take. Do not hope the audience will ignore it. Record the clean line while the setup is still ready.

Step 10 Import and Organize the Media

Import only the material needed for the package, along with reasonable alternatives. Too many unrelated clips make a simple project difficult to navigate. Use the editor's media area, folders, bins, labels, or naming system when available.

After import, open several files and confirm that the picture and sound work. Make sure the editor did not accidentally receive a low-quality preview, an incomplete transfer, or the wrong interview.

Media group	Confirm before editing
Narration	All final blocks are present, understandable, and correctly named.
Sound bites	The correct interview files open and the scripted timecodes match.
B-roll	The planned action and complete visual sequences are present.
Natural sound	The useful sound can be located and heard clearly.
Photos and documents	The correct version, permission, credit, and orientation are known.
Graphics	Names, titles, numbers, dates, and sources match the verified script.

Step 11 Build the Audio Backbone

The audio backbone is the complete spoken story in order: narration, sound bites, planned natural sound, pauses, and any required stand-up audio. Building it first lets the team hear whether the story makes sense before spending time covering it with pictures.

1. Place the first narration or natural-sound opening at the beginning of the timeline.
2. Add the remaining narration blocks in script order.
3. Insert each sound bite at the exact planned location.
4. Trim only the approved start and end of each bite without changing its meaning.
5. Leave planned pauses and natural-sound moments.
6. Remove accidental long gaps, clipped words, and repeated takes.
7. Play the complete audio from beginning to end without watching the screen.

The listener should understand what happened, why it matters, who is speaking, and what happens next. If the audio story is confusing, return to the script. Pictures should strengthen a clear story, not hide a broken one.

Step 12 Add the Primary Video

Place the essential pictures from the script: the opening visual, interview sources on camera, necessary stand-up, important document or graphic, and closing shot. Match each item to the correct audio moment.

When a source begins a sound bite, show the source long enough for the audience to see who is speaking and read the lower third. The picture may then change to related B-roll if it helps explain the words or covers a necessary edit. Do not cover a source simply because the interview background is plain.

Follow the two-column script, but use judgment when the real timing differs slightly. If the narration ends before the planned shot, choose a natural cut point or another useful angle. Do not slow a clip unnaturally just to fill time.

Step 13 Cover Narration With Purposeful B Roll

B-roll is not filler. Use it to show evidence, action, place, process, people, details, reaction, or consequence. Every shot should support the words being heard or help the viewer understand where the story is moving.

Use visual sequences

Whenever possible, show an action through several related shots: a wide shot to establish the place, a medium shot of the action, a close-up of an important detail, another angle, and the result or reaction. The exact sequence depends on the footage.

Narration says	Useful pictures	Weak choice
Students must complete four practice projects before testing.	Students beginning a project, measuring, working, instructor checking, and finished result.	One long exterior shot of the school.
The new pickup route begins Monday.	Old entrance, new sign, vehicles following the route, map or official notice.	Random hallway footage.
The team is rebuilding its starting rotation.	New starters practicing together, communication, coach correction, and a completed play.	Unrelated game footage from another season.

Do not use the same clip repeatedly unless the repetition has a clear reason. Avoid five nearly identical wide shots. Choose pictures that change when the meaning changes.

Step 14 Add Natural Sound

Use the script markings to place natural sound. Let a strong sound play by itself when the plan says NAT SOUND FULL. Keep it quieter beneath narration when the plan says NAT SOUND UNDER. Raise it briefly between spoken lines when the plan says NAT SOUND UP.

Make the changes smoothly. A sound should not jump from silent to painfully loud or disappear in the middle of an action. Listen with headphones, then check on Chromebook speakers. Remove or reduce wind, room noise, and unrelated voices that compete with the story.

Natural sound should help the viewer feel present. It should not make the important words difficult to hear.

Step 15 Add Basic Lower Thirds and Graphics

Add the source's verified name and relevant title near the beginning of the first sound bite. Keep the wording short, readable, and visible long enough for a viewer to finish reading it. Check that the text belongs to the correct person.

Add only the full-screen graphics needed to understand important numbers, dates, locations, scores, documents, or comparisons. At the rough-cut stage, the information and timing matter more than animation or decoration.

- ☐ Names and titles match the verified script.
- ☐ Text is readable on a phone-sized screen.
- ☐ Text does not cover a face, captions, or important action.
- ☐ Numbers and dates come from the identified source.
- ☐ Private information in documents or screenshots is hidden.
- ☐ The graphic stays on screen long enough to understand.

Step 16 Make Basic Audio Adjustments

The rough cut does not need perfect final mixing, but every important voice must be understandable. Start by making narration blocks sound reasonably consistent with one another. Then compare narration with each sound bite and stand-up. Finally, place natural sound beneath or between voices as planned.

Problem	Rough cut response
One narration block is much louder	Lower that block or raise the quieter blocks carefully. Re-record if the sound itself is poor.
A sound bite is difficult to hear	Raise it carefully, reduce competing background sound, or choose a clearer approved part of the interview.
Natural sound covers narration	Lower the natural-sound track during spoken words.
Audio changes suddenly at an edit	Use a short fade or adjust the cut so the change sounds natural.
Noise is severe	Return to the original file or re-record narration. Do not depend on heavy effects to rescue unusable audio.

Do not judge loudness only from the shape of the waveform. Listen. Check with headphones for problems and with ordinary speakers for real audience conditions.

Step 17 Use Simple Cuts First

A straight cut from one useful shot to the next is the normal edit for a news package. Add a transition only when it helps show a real change in time, place, or subject. Do not place a dissolve, spin, zoom, wipe, or other effect between every clip.

Effects cannot make weak reporting stronger. At the rough-cut stage, concentrate on whether the correct picture appears at the correct moment, whether the viewer understands the story, and whether the pace feels natural.

Step 18 Watch the Complete Rough Cut

Play the package from the first frame to the last without stopping. Someone other than the primary editor should watch it. That person should not need the written article or script to understand the story.

First viewing watch like an audience member

- What is the story?
- Why does it matter?
- Who are the sources and why should the audience listen to them?
- Do the pictures help explain the words?
- Where does the story become confusing, slow, rushed, or repetitive?
- Does the ending feel complete?

Second viewing watch like an editor

- Are any words clipped, repeated, or mispronounced?
- Are sound bites edited accurately and in context?
- Are there black frames, blank spaces, frozen pictures, or missing media?
- Do lower thirds identify the correct people?
- Are any pictures unrelated, repeated, shaky, or held too long?
- Can every important voice be understood?
- Does the package meet the target running time?

Write the problems down with timecodes. Do not depend on remembering them after the viewing.

Use a Rough Cut Review Log

Package time	Problem noticed	Required change	Person responsible
_____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ —
_____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ —
_____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ —
_____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ —
_____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ —

Step 19 Revise the Rough Cut

Fix the largest story and accuracy problems before small visual details. A missing explanation, misleading bite, wrong name, or confusing order matters more than a slightly late graphic.

1. Correct factual errors, wrong identifications, inaccurate graphics, and quotation problems.
2. Repair the story order, missing context, repeated information, and confusing transitions.
3. Replace unclear narration, weak sound bites, or mismatched visuals.
4. Fix black frames, gaps, clipped words, and rough audio changes.
5. Adjust the running time at a natural pace.
6. Then make smaller timing and visual improvements needed for the next review.

If a revision changes a fact, quotation, story focus, or source meaning, return to the verified reporting and update the script. The timeline is not allowed to become a different, less accurate story than the article.

Save Versions and Protect the Work

Editing projects can be lost through a closed tab, wrong account, deleted file, full device, damaged download, or overwritten version. Save throughout the session and create a recoverable copy at important checkpoints.

- Keep the current project in the approved account or storage location.
- Do not delete original recordings or media after placing them on the timeline.
- Use version names such as RoughCut_v1, RoughCut_v2, and TeacherReview rather than repeatedly using Final.
- Export a review copy when assigned, even if the editable project remains online.
- Open the exported file and watch the beginning, middle, and ending before submitting it.
- Confirm that the correct file was placed in the required submission location.

Useful export name: BVP_CTE_Certifications_RoughCut_v2_2026-10-12.mp4

Common Rough Cut Problems and Fixes

Problem	Fix
The editor starts with random footage	Return to the two-column script and build the audio backbone in order.
Narration sounds distant or echoey	Move closer to the microphone, choose a quieter softer space, and record a new test.
Narration is rushed	Shorten lower-priority wording or record at a natural pace. Do not force too many words into the time.
Sound bites repeat narration	Revise the setup or replace the bite with one that adds experience, explanation, or perspective.
Pictures do not match the words	Use the media inventory and script to choose visual evidence connected to the meaning.
The source disappears immediately	Show the source long enough to establish who is speaking and display the lower third.
The screen goes black	Extend or replace the visual so every planned moment has a picture.
Every edit uses an effect	Return to simple cuts and use a transition only when it communicates a real change.
The project cannot find a file	Restore the file to its original location or use the editor's relink method. Stop moving project media.
The team keeps editing the wrong version	Use clear version names and identify one current master project.

Ready for Detailed Review Checklist

The rough cut is complete only when the team can check every applicable item.

- ☐ The project is saved with a clear name in a known location.
- ☐ All original media remains organized and recoverable.
- ☐ The rough cut plays from opening through ending without missing sections.
- ☐ Narration matches the approved script and is understandable.

- ☐ Names, numbers, dates, titles, and pronunciations are correct.
- ☐ Sound bites use the approved words and preserve each source's meaning.
- ☐ The audio backbone tells a complete and logical story.
- ☐ Purposeful B-roll covers narration and supports the meaning.
- ☐ Interview sources appear on camera and have accurate lower thirds.
- ☐ Natural sound is used intentionally and does not cover important words.
- ☐ Necessary photographs, documents, and graphics are readable and permitted.
- ☐ There are no accidental black frames, empty gaps, cut-off words, or missing files.
- ☐ Basic audio levels allow every important voice to be understood.
- ☐ The package uses simple, purposeful edits instead of unnecessary effects.
- ☐ The complete running time meets the assignment or has been approved.
- ☐ A second person watched the complete package and recorded needed changes.
- ☐ The current version is saved, backed up, and submitted where required.

When every required item is complete, the package is ready for detailed editing, fact-checking, audio balancing, caption correction, visual cleanup, and final approval. Do not call the rough cut finished simply because every file appears somewhere on the timeline. It must already tell a clear, accurate, watchable story.