

## **B-ROLL**

Many documentaries have B-Roll incorporated into them. A quick definition of B-Roll is that it lets you show and not just tell. The A-Roll of a documentary would be a person being interviewed, which is usually not a very dynamic shot. So imagine a documentary about an inmate's life in prison. The A-Roll would be the prisoner sitting down and talking about his experiences. The B-Roll would be cutting to visuals of him in his jail cell, or showing guards and other inmates while we still hear his interview. Placement of B-Roll is critical and will help keep the viewer invested in your show.

In addition to keeping the video more interesting, B-Roll is used to help the audience visualize what is being said. It should compliment the interview, so placing it where it doesn't belong could confuse your audience. Going back to the prisoner example, if the inmate is talking about sleeping conditions in the prison, but your B-Roll is showing him eating in the cafeteria, your footage is actually distracting the viewer from what is being said.

The type of video you are doing and the pace of your edits will help determine how much B-Roll you need. A 30-minute documentary obviously requires a lot more B-Roll than a 30-second commercial. The idea is to keep your audience invested in the video and help create a more visual story.