

- **Shoot using natural light** - in a sunny room, near a window, or outdoors if you can, in the morning or afternoon. This is when the sun isn't as bright in the sky and you'll get the softest light. If natural light isn't available, experiment with moving table or floor lamps around.
- If shooting on your phone, **use a tripod** or set it up so the camera won't shake or wiggle. **Recording from your laptop** is also a great option.
- **Consider your background.** What can you see in your shot? Make sure it reflects the look and feel that you want to convey in your recording.
- **Always shoot in landscape mode (horizontal wide shot instead of a tall, narrow, vertical shot).** This is the most basic tip, since portrait mode gives you those ugly black borders in your final video clip.*
- **Frame your shot** so that we see you from mid-torso up. You might need to experiment a little to get that right.
- **Clean your camera lens before you shoot.** Wiping dust or grease away with a microfiber cloth takes literally 10 seconds and doesn't hurt to do.*
- **Don't use the zoom function.** Using it will likely make your video look grainy.*
- **Use the exposure lock.** Most smart phones automatically focus on the subject in your shot and adjust to the proper amount of lighting your camera "lets in," or exposure.*
- **Put your phone in Airplane mode.** This is to avoid getting unnecessary interruptions and sounds from notifications while you're shooting.*
- **Read the poem aloud** to yourself (or to a friend!) a few times to get a feel for the words and rhythm of the piece. Print a copy and mark it up with places where you want to pause, underlining words you want to emphasize, etc. Whatever works for you!
- Consider **printing the poem in large font and tacking it to the wall** behind your camera so you can read it while looking into the camera. If you're recording on your laptop, you can press record and then pull up the poem as a document and read from the laptop.
- **Have fun!** Pretend like you're reading the poem to a specific favorite person. This will color your voice and body language. Try it a few different ways! Unleash your creativity!

(*from [an article by Stephanie Lee](#) for *Lifehacker.com*)