STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

Video Lighting for Creators — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Video Lighting for Creators course and gives you a structured space to apply each concept immediately. Complete the exercises, fill in the worksheets, and use the checklists on your next shoot — real improvement comes from deliberate practice, not passive watching. The templates at the end are designed to travel with you: use the Light Setup Log on every shoot until consistent setups become automatic.

Light Physics and the Creator's Vocabulary

Build the perceptual and analytical skills to read any light situation before unpacking a single piece of gear.

Exercise: Room Light Audit

Walk through three different rooms or locations you could use for filming — your home office, a kitchen, a coffee shop, etc. In each room, stand where the subject would sit and observe the light. Do not use any camera or meter — just your eyes and this exercise.

• Describe the brightest light source in each room: what is its direction, approximate color temperature, and whether it is hard or soft?

• Identify any competing light sources (windows on opposite walls, overhead fluorescents, etc.) and describe the problem each would create on camera.

• Which room would you choose to shoot a talking-head video in with zero additional equipment, and why?

• What is one free intervention (moving the subject, blocking a window, bouncing off a wall) that would improve the worst-lit room?

Worksheet: Location Light Properties Log

Record light observations from three real locations you scout or work in. Use your phone's camera in manual mode or a color meter app to estimate color temperature.

Location name / address

Date and time of day

Primary light source (window direction / overhead type / LED)

Estimated color temperature (K)

Hard or soft quality?

Shadow direction on a test hand held in subject position

Competing sources present (yes/no — describe)

Proposed subject position

Proposed camera direction

Free interventions available

Checklist: Pre-Shoot Location Assessment

[ ] Identify the single brightest source and confirm its direction before entering the room
[ ] Check all window orientations and note which receive direct sun at your shoot time
[ ] Turn off all overhead lights and observe what remains — is window light alone sufficient?
[ ] Check for green-cast fluorescents using the camera LCD in auto white balance
[ ] Identify available bounce surfaces (white walls, ceilings, furniture)
[ ] Confirm there is no bright source directly behind where the camera will sit
[ ] Photograph the room from the camera position for reference
[ ] Note the ambient Kelvin reading from a color meter app and write it on a notepad

Three-Point Lighting — The Foundation Setup

Execute and document a repeatable three-point lighting rig through hands-on practice and deliberate ratio measurement.

Exercise: Shadow Pattern Identification Drill

Set up one light (your key light or a desk lamp) and a person or mannequin head as your subject. Move the light through five positions — front-on, 30 degrees left elevated, 45 degrees left elevated (Rembrandt), 45 degrees left flat, directly overhead — and photograph or record a 5-second video at each position. Then review the results.

• In which position does the nose shadow loop without connecting to the lip shadow? This is your loop position — describe where the light was relative to the subject.

• In which position do you see the Rembrandt triangle (small triangle of light on the shadow-side cheek)?

• Which position is most flattering for the specific face you are working with, and why?

• At what distance did the quality of the light noticeably shift from soft to hard?

Worksheet: Three-Point Rig Setup Sheet

Fill in the details of your three-point setup after each session. Keep this sheet at your shoot location for fast recreation.

Date and content type (YouTube / interview / ad)

Key light: make and model

Key light: CCT setting (K)

Key light: distance from subject (cm)

Key light: height (cm above floor)

Key light: horizontal angle from camera axis (degrees)

Key modifier in use

Fill source (LED model / reflector / foam core)

Fill: distance from subject (cm)

Fill: estimated ratio to key (1:1 / 2:1 / 3:1 / 4:1)

Backlight: make and model

Backlight: distance from subject (cm)

Backlight: intensity relative to key (%)

Camera: ISO / aperture / shutter

White balance (K)

Notes on what to change next session

Checklist: Three-Point Rig Quality Control

[ ] Key light produces loop or Rembrandt pattern — no flat front-lit look
[ ] No double nose shadow from fill light
[ ] Fill light positioned at or below eye level, not creating its own visible shadow
[ ] Backlight visible as rim on hair and shoulder but not flaring the lens
[ ] Backlight does not spill light onto background
[ ] Face exposure at 60–75% of waveform or just below histogram highlight warning
[ ] White balance locked in manual — not AWB
[ ] Contrast ratio measured with meter or verified by eye as intentional
[ ] Setup photographed and notes written for next session

Natural Light Mastery and Low-Budget Hacks

Practice controlling and supplementing natural light using free and near-free tools until window-lit setups feel as reliable as a full studio rig.

Exercise: The $0 Lighting Challenge

Shoot a 2-minute talking-head video using only: one window, one piece of white foam core or a white sheet as a reflector, and a blackout curtain or dark blanket to block one secondary source. No powered lights. Review the footage critically.

• What was the ratio between the window side and the shadow side of the face? Was it too flat, too contrasty, or just right?

• How did moving the foam core reflector 30 cm closer change the shadow-side brightness? Describe what you observed.

• What time of day produced the most consistent, flattering window light in your space, and why?

• What single additional tool (under $25) would most improve this setup for your specific room and content type?

Worksheet: Window Light Conditions Log

Record window light quality in your primary shooting location at four different times of day and in two weather conditions. Use this data to schedule your shoots during optimal windows.

Window orientation (N / S / E / W)

Date

Time of day

Weather (sunny / overcast / partly cloudy)

Estimated color temperature (K) — from meter app or camera AWB readout

Light quality (hard / mixed / soft / very soft)

Usable as key light alone? (yes / no)

Reflector needed? (yes / no — which side)

Secondary source interference? (yes / no — describe)

Overall shoot-readiness rating (1–5)

Notes

Checklist: Natural Light Shoot Readiness

[ ] Confirmed window orientation and expected light quality for the shoot time
[ ] White sheer curtain or diffusion material available to soften direct sun
[ ] Blackout blind or dark curtain available to block competing secondary window
[ ] White foam core or 5-in-1 reflector available for fill
[ ] Black foam core available for negative fill if needed
[ ] Color meter app open with ambient temperature noted
[ ] Camera white balance set to match ambient reading
[ ] Test frame shot and reviewed on external monitor or in color-accurate app
[ ] Subject positioned with main window facing them, not behind them

LED Panels, Modifiers, and On-Location Problem-Solving

Apply a diagnostic framework to solve real lighting problems on-location and design a lighting kit aligned to your content format and budget.

Exercise: Lighting Problem Diagnosis Session

Set up a deliberately flawed lighting scenario — for example, shoot under a fluorescent overhead light with no correction, or place your key light directly in front of the subject on-axis, or place a bright window behind the subject. Photograph or record each problem, then fix it using the course frameworks and document the before and after.

• Describe the exact symptom you observed in each flawed setup (e.g., green cast, flat shadows, blown background). What caused it?

• What was the fix you applied and how long did it take? Could you do it faster next time?

• Which problem was the most difficult to diagnose, and what clue finally identified it?

• Write a one-sentence diagnostic rule you would add to your personal lighting checklist based on what you observed.

Worksheet: Creator Lighting Kit Planner

Design your ideal current kit and your target kit for 12 months from now. Research current prices and fill in the budget column before adding up totals — leave the total rows empty and calculate them yourself.

Content format(s) you shoot most often

Current tier (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

Key light: item name

Key light: current price (research and enter)

Modifier for key: item name

Modifier for key: current price

Fill source: item name

Fill source: current price

Backlight: item name

Backlight: current price

Stand(s): item name and quantity

Stand(s): current price

Supplementary tools (gels / flags / reflectors): items and prices

Current kit total (calculate yourself)

12-month upgrade target item

12-month upgrade estimated price

Priority ranking (which upgrade delivers the most improvement per dollar)

Checklist: On-Location LED Shoot Checklist

[ ] All LED panels charged or AC cables packed
[ ] CRI verified as 95+ for all key light sources
[ ] Bi-color range confirmed compatible with ambient source temperature
[ ] Softbox or modifier assembled and baffle inserted
[ ] Grid attached to backlight to prevent lens flare
[ ] Light stands rated for the weight of each head plus modifier
[ ] Sand bags or weights for stands in outdoor or high-traffic locations
[ ] Gel kit packed (at minimum: CTO full and half, CTB half, +30 and +60 magenta)
[ ] Test recording reviewed on calibrated monitor before subject arrives
[ ] Flickering checked by recording at both 1/50 and 1/60 and comparing
[ ] Setup photographed with distances marked for future recreation
[ ] All lights flagged or banded to prevent spill onto background unless intended

Your Action Plan

1. This week: complete the Room Light Audit exercise in three locations and fill in the Location Light Properties Log worksheet
2. This week: shoot a 2-minute talking-head video using only window + foam core reflector; review footage on a calibrated screen and identify one specific improvement
3. Next 7 days: perform the Shadow Pattern Identification Drill with a desk lamp and document your loop and Rembrandt positions in the Three-Point Rig Setup Sheet
4. Next 14 days: add one low-cost tool to your kit (foam core, 5-in-1 reflector, or daylight-balanced bulb) and document a before/after comparison
5. Next 14 days: lock white balance manually on every shoot — do not use AWB — and note whether post-processing time decreases
6. Within 30 days: complete the Lighting Problem Diagnosis Session exercise, deliberately creating and then fixing at least four common problems

7. Within 30 days: fill in the Creator Lighting Kit Planner and commit to one specific upgrade aligned with your content format
8. Within 60 days: shoot 10 sessions and complete a Three-Point Rig Setup Sheet for each — review the 10 sheets and identify the most consistent pattern
9. Within 60 days: shoot one video entirely outdoors in three different natural light conditions (overcast, open shade, golden hour) and compare the results
10. Within 90 days: build a personal lighting playbook of your five most reliable setups with photographs, Kelvin settings, and camera settings documented