




SCREENHOUSE

FACTUAL
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TV RESEARCH
TV RESEARCH

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FACTUAL TV RESEARCH

This course is for new researchers and runners who want to take their research skills to the next level, and for graduates looking for their first job in the industry.

This one-day course covers basic research techniques. The key objectives are to give delegates:

- An understanding of what makes a good television story.
- Strategies for tracking down people and checking facts.
- Scriptwriting skills – how to tell a story visually.
- The ability to set up an efficient shoot.
- An understanding of the researcher's role on location, including the importance of time-code, and how to handle an interview.
- Basic knowledge of legal and ethical issues: copyright and music; location and contributor releases; impartiality and fair dealing.
- Plus the five golden rules to follow if you want to be a great television researcher.

This course runs for one day, from 10am until 4pm. It's illustrated throughout with clips and behind-the-scenes footage. The tutor is Susan Walls, a TV researcher, writer and producer, whose work has won several awards, including a BAFTA and a New York Film Festival Gold Medal. Susan also lectures on research techniques.

10.00 – 10.30	<p>1) What does a researcher do?</p> <p>A great researcher can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come up with great ideas. • Track down the people, places and facts needed to tell the story. • Write visual scripts. • Organise a shoot. • And know enough about the law to avoid the production getting sued...or worse.
10.30 – 11.15	<p>2) How to spot a good story, and make it work on TV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failsafe way to tell if your idea is good. • How to exercise your ideas muscle. • How to sell your story to your producer. • What your story needs to make it work on TV.
11.15 – 11.30	Coffee
11.30 – 12.00	<p>3) How to find people</p> <p>Whatever genre you work in, you nearly always need people to film. This session covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to track people down – this is the fun part; it's a bit like being a detective. • How to charm contributors: a good researcher can get just about anybody to do just about anything. • How to find the human interest in your story.
12.00 – 12.30	<p>4) How to find (and check) facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the internet is a dangerous place for truth-seekers. • The journalistic rule of 'three sources' • Why you should always check your facts from the horse's mouth.

12.30 – 13.00	5) Rules, regulations and the law Things you need to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright and music use • Trespass and location releases • Contributor releases.
13.00 – 13.30	Lunch (not provided)
13.30 – 14.15	6) Writing research briefs and scripts Good TV writing is all about structure. Here's how to put your ideas down on paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why TV scripts are like symphonies. • Why 'signposting' matters. • How to think visually about your story. • How to keep it simple – what you leave out is as important as what you put in.
14.15 – 14.45	7) Setting up a successful shoot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of recces • Information needed for call sheets • How to make your shoot watertight
14.45 - 15.30	8) The researcher's role on location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of time-code and good notes. • Keeping an eye on content. • Looking after the paperwork. • Looking after the crew and contributors. • Self-shooting. • Interview techniques
15.30 – 16.00	9) Impartiality, fair dealing and ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to deal with your contributors. • Does it matter if you fake 'factual' TV? • Impartiality and fair dealing – what the official guidelines say.