Grades K-5
Mini-Lesson: “How do you make Mystery Doug videos?”

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Hi, it's Doug! Normally, I talk to you like this. But today, I thought I'd show you a different view. This is where I record. Come on in! I know many of you are curious about how we make videos. Someone named Amaya has a question about how we do things around here. Let's give her a call now.

[Video Call]

- Hi Doug!

- Hi Amaya!

- I have a question for you. How do you make a Mystery Doug video?

- That's a great question.

The company I work at is called Mystery Science. We spend every day creating fun science lessons and mini-lessons. We know how curious you are about so many different things, so our goal is to help answer the real questions that you have. Questions like why is the sky blue? Or, could a turtle live outside of its shell? But rather than just telling you the answers, like here's the answer, we try to show you how people figured it out, and along the way, we usually pause to ask questions to try to give you a chance to figure things out for yourself. Let's do that now. One of the questions I get asked a lot is, Doug, how do you answer all these questions? Do you just have to know all this stuff? What do you think, how do you think I'm able to answer all these questions? Now would be a good time to pause the video and discuss. Okay, you ready? Well, I

do love science, and I know a lot about it because I've spent most of my life being curious. I've asked lots of questions. But I definitely don't know everything. For example, each lesson and mini-lesson that we make—I get a lot of help from my friends here at Mystery Science. Sarah—she does research and writing, and Amy and Kelly—they find all the visuals. That means all the pictures and all the video clips that we show you. With each lesson and mini-lesson that we make, we always start with a question. For example, we recently created a mini-lesson to answer the question, why are tornadoes so hard to predict?

- Once we know what question we're doing, I start to do research, which usually means a lot of reading. I usually start by looking at books, like this book. When I was reading about tornadoes I read the section on Tornado Alley. I'll also look up information from the internet, like on websites from the National Severe Storms Laboratory.

Sarah takes notes on what she finds out, and then she uses those notes to create a script, a written page of what she thinks I should say aloud, like this. At this point, we have an answer to the question. But there's something huge still missing. We need to figure out what we're gonna show in the video. That's where Kelly and Amy come in. They start by doing what's called storyboarding. It's what movie makers do when they're trying to figure out what to show on screen during each scene of a movie.

- So Kelly and I come up with ideas of what to show for each part of the script that Sarah and Doug write.

- Like here I found some amazing video of a tornado ripping the roof of a house off, just to show you how dangerous they can be.

After the script is storyboarded, Kelly and Amy have to go and find all the pictures and videos we need. Sometimes they wind up creating new visuals themselves. Then they put all those visuals into a slide show with everything in order just like it is in the script. That's the point where it's pretty much ready for me to record my voice. I read the script aloud as I click through the slide show. A simple push of a button turns that recording into a video which we upload to our website and voila—it's ready for you to watch! This has been the first year of our mini-lessons, Mystery Doug, and it's been so fun. We've had over 250,000 questions sent to us by students from all around the world. We wish we could answer all of them and maybe one day we will, but each week, these are the questions we choose from when deciding what to talk about. So far, we've done almost 50 mini-lessons. You can watch all of them on Mystery Science.com, where we also have our full-length science lessons. That's all for this week's question. Thanks, Amaya for asking it.