



## DOVES: A Documentary Director's Guide

DOVES™ is an acronym which stands for the Director's Outcome, Vision and Editorial Statements.

Created by New Doc Editing, its purpose is to clearly establish the director at the helm, define the director's goals and vision, and provide a compass that keeps the entire editorial team working harmoniously on the same film.

A well-composed DOVES™ will foster amity. DOVES™ is composed of three statements, which New Doc Editing is happy to help the director craft:

### 1. Outcome Statement

The Outcome Statement defines the director's tangible, quantitative goals for the film. It specifies the demographics of the primary audience, the projected release date, desired film festival screenings, specific broadcast outlets. It may also include the film's influence on larger tangible goals such as policy or legislative changes.

### 2. Vision Statement

The Vision Statement describes the psychographic profile of film's ideal viewer as well as the film's emotional effect on them. Specifically, how does the director want viewers to *feel* after watching the film? What does the director want viewers to feel motivated to do? The film's tangible *outcomes* (above) depend on the film's emotional *vision* being successfully realized.

### 3. Editorial Statement

The Editorial Statement specifies the storytelling strategies the director is choosing to achieve the above emotional vision and tangible outcomes. In the Editorial Statement, the director defines such things as the film's genre, protagonist's quest, structure, central question and length.

## FICTIONAL EXAMPLE

Here is a fictional example of a DOVES™ that a director of *An Inconvenient Truth* might have written:

### 1. Outcome Statement

I want *An Inconvenient Truth* to be finished by May 24, 2006, premiere at major documentary film festivals, win awards and air on HBO in order to reach its primary audience of American viewers between the ages of 18 and 65. At a societal level, I want the film to put global warming on the forefront of everyone's mind, persuade people to conserve energy, pressure politicians into passing laws that severely limit carbon emissions, and inspire business to build green and develop renewable energy.

### 2. Vision Statement

I envision *An Inconvenient Truth* as a wakeup call of an impending global crisis that cannot be ignored. I want the film to speak to ordinary, somewhat informed American citizens, people in the vast middle of the political spectrum who may have heard about global warming, but are too busy with their work and family lives to do anything about it. After watching the film, I want them to feel *jolted into awareness*. I want viewers to feel inspired to take immediate action, contact their politicians and demand more sustainable policies.

### 3. Editorial Statement

In order to reach large audiences, effect policy changes and wake people up to a crisis, I will create a powerful essay film that will make the case that global environmental disaster is looming. The central question of the film is, "Is global warming real and dangerous?" and the film answers with a resounding "Yes!"

The chief components of the essay's structure are: 1) establish the premise that the earth is "sick with a fever"; 2) debunk the naysayers of global warming; 3) scientifically prove that temperatures and sea levels are rising; 4) present the catastrophic effect that severe water shortages and drought will have on a geopolitical scale; 5) confront the psychology of apathy head on and 6) propose solutions.

## YOUR DOVES



We invite you to use the following template to compose your DOVES™.

### 1. Outcome Statement

I want \_\_\_\_\_ (film's title) to be finished by \_\_\_\_\_ and premiere at \_\_\_\_\_ (list applicable festival, television, theatrical and other broadcast outlets) in order to reach its primary audience of \_\_\_\_\_ (describe demographics such as age, location, socioeconomic status, etc). At a societal level, I want the film to \_\_\_\_\_ (list some of the larger goals you want the film to achieve, if applicable).

### 2. Vision Statement

I envision \_\_\_\_\_ (film's title) as a \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the film and its emotional effect in a few words). I want the film to speak to \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the psychographics of your ideal viewer). After watching the film, I want them to feel \_\_\_\_\_ (identify the main emotion people will have as the credits role). I want viewers to feel inspired to \_\_\_\_\_ (what will the film inspire people to do?)

### 3. Editorial Statement

In order to \_\_\_\_\_ (highlight two or three major goals from the outcome and vision statements), I will create a powerful \_\_\_\_\_ (specify genre: such as essay-based, character-driven or hybrid) film.

## ESSAY-BASED DOVES

If your film is essay-based, describe the case you want to make, the central question as well as your answer to it, and the chief components of the essay structure.

Example:

\_\_\_\_\_ (film's title) will make the case that \_\_\_\_\_ (main hypothesis or thesis-what's the key thing you trying to prove or investigate?) The central question of the film is \_\_\_\_\_ and the film's answer is \_\_\_\_\_.

The chief components of the essay's structure are: 1) to propose \_\_\_\_\_ (list the hypothesis) 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_ and 4) \_\_\_\_\_ (list chief arguments).

## CHARACTER-DRIVEN DOVES

If your film is character-driven, describe the protagonist's quest, the challenges they face, the central plot question and the climax scene.

In \_\_\_\_\_ (film's title), \_\_\_\_\_ (protagonist's name) wants \_\_\_\_\_ (name concrete goal). In pursuit of this goal, he/she faces \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (list three challenges). Will \_\_\_\_\_ (protagonist) achieve \_\_\_\_\_ (name the goal in order to frame the film's central question)? We discover the answer when he/she confronts \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the climax scene in a few words).