

# What makes a credible documentary

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



A documentary is successful when it is able to combine both the appearance of historically accurate elements and present believable situations through a false lens, leading the audience to question the reality of what they are seeing. The genre of documentary aims to present a convincing story through the use of credible documentary tactics to portray a "fictional documentary." Every documentary depends on its viewers believing its premise. The illusion of believability is most often either confirmed or destroyed by the credits.

Frequently the audience first learns the people on the screen were actors, and that they have fallen prey to the thick veil of believability that documentary films are so able to portray. To capture the audience's trust directors of documentary films apply many of the tactics and conventions documentaries serve to leave the audience questioning the reality and believability of what they view in the theatre and at home. Documentaries inspire an awareness of being that one has not previously experienced.

The film urges the spectator to reevaluate not only one's breadth of knowledge but also puts forward the message that the documentary is actually made to talk about and the real truth from a person who is not involved with the message. Documentary film is a broad category of visual expression that is based on the attempt, in one fashion or another, to "document" reality. Although "documentary film" originally referred to movies shot on film stock, it has subsequently expanded to include video and digital productions that can be either direct-to-video or made for a television series.

Documentary, as it applies here, works to identify a " filmmaking practice, a cinematic tradition, and mode of audience reception" that is continually evolving and is without clear boundaries. The nature of documentary films has changed in the past 20 years from the cinema verity tradition. Landmark films such as *The Thin Blue Line* by Errol Morris incorporated stylized re-enactments, and Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* placed far more interpretive control with the director.

Indeed, the commercial success of these documentaries may derive from this narrative shift in the documentary form, leading some critics to question whether such films can truly be called documentaries; critics sometimes refer to these works as " mondo films" or " docu-ganda. " However, directorial manipulation of documentary subjects has been noted since the work of Flaherty, and may be endemic to the form. The recent success of the documentary genre, and the advent of DVDs, has made documentaries financially viable even without a cinema release.

Yet funding for documentary film production remains elusive and within the past decade the largest exhibition opportunities have emerged from within the broadcast market, making filmmakers beholden to the tastes and influences of the broadcasters who have become their largest funding source. Modern documentaries have some overlap with television forms, with the development of " reality television" that occasionally verges on the documentary but more often veers to the fictional or staged.

The making-of documentary shows how a movie or a computer game was produced. Usually made for promotional purposes, it is closer to an advertisement than a classic documentary. Modern lightweight digital

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video cameras and computer-based editing have greatly aided documentary makers, as has the dramatic drop in equipment prices. With more visualization effects and bolder directors on the rise, its future holds a firm ground in context to modern cinema.