

### The Six Types Of Documentaries In Film-

The following six types of documentaries were developed by American documentary theorist Bill Nichols in order to distinguish certain traits and conventions of numerous documentary film styles.

#### Poetic

Poetic documentaries aim to show images, the world and experiences from an unique viewpoint. The purpose of this type of documentary is to evoke a certain mood or feeling from the audience and is considered to be an avant garde form of storytelling. It usually relies on the visuals, artistic style and music to create an emotive cinematic experience. There is often less narration and more imagery used. This style of documentary does not focus on maintaining continuity from scene to scene and often uses several different shots to show the audience a new and unfamiliar perspective. A poetic documentary approaches a subject in a more experimental and abstract manner than most documentaries. Since this form of documentary primarily focuses on producing a particular mood or emotion it lacks traditional narrative as neither characters nor storyline progress.

#### Expository

This is one of the most common types of documentaries and it's used to help inform and persuade viewers whilst trying to bring light to an issue. A narrator who speaks directly to the viewer is used all throughout. An expository documentary uses verbal commentary and images to argue a certain subject. This form of documentary is a direct way of storytelling therefore making it the best way to share a message. Re-enactments, stock footage and archival footage are frequently included. Unlike observational documentaries, expository documentaries are quite heavily researched upon and pre planned footage is used in order to create a strong argument which can be presented to the audience. In contrast to poetic documentaries (where the visuals have an artistic or emotional purpose) expository films use visuals as a means to support their claims. Therefore, it is expected to see images on screen that are being explained by a narrator when viewing this type of documentary.

#### Reflexive

The reflective documentary form emphasises the interaction between the filmmaker and the audience, challenging viewers to reconsider their worldviews and concepts of reality. Instead of attempting to elicit strong emotional reactions from the audience, the reflective documentary promotes careful reflection on the subject matter. Due to the subject matter often being the process of filming, a camera operator will shoot behind the scenes footage. Therefore, this type of documentary is where the audience is aware of the film making process and it usually includes interviews, the entire film production process, editing, pre-production and post-production. The reflexive documentary form and the participatory documentary mode are quite similar as both feature the filmmaker's involvement and typically include the cameraman and camera as part of the film.

### Observational

Observational documentaries aim to observe the world/reality around them and often have an omniscient perspective rather than a one person's point of view. They focus on a style that attempts to capture real life people, events and situations without interfering with them. Therefore, filmmakers use this to capture everyday situations as if they were not even there. An observational documentary attempts to present reality and objective truth from all angles without expressing a particular opinion on the subject. The observational style doesn't tell any stories; it just observes. This enables the audience to draw their own conclusions from the film. Minimal equipment is used as handheld cameras are almost always used due to tripods and massive cameras being quite difficult to manoeuvre. Also, a handheld camera allows the camera operator to follow the events more naturally. Due to there not being any narration, voice overs or interviews as everything being observed is happening in real time which ensures everything is happening organically. Long takes without cuts are commonly used to show a simple flow of events, which helps to create a sense of reality. There is little to no preparation/planning, this allows for unexpected events to possibly occur which can change the direction of the documentary.

### Performative

The aim of performative documentaries is the filmmaker's interaction with the subject, which serves as a springboard for examining more expansive, subjective facts about politics, history, or certain social groupings. A cinematographer is frequently asked to cover the documentary-making process as well as close-up shots that show the direct and frequently intimate contact between the subject and filmmaker. Performative documentary filmmaking tends to be very personal as it relies on a subjective lens, sharing the filmmaker's experiences and sentiments while portraying the reality. The filmmaker's involvement is frequently highlighted in this non-fiction film genre since they frequently serve as the focal point of the work, directing the action, communicating with subjects, and gathering data. For the purpose of evoking an emotional response from the audience and advancing the plot of their film, the director exploits their own emotions and experiences.

### Participatory

This style of documentary involves the filmmaker actively participating in the storyline and interacting with the subjects of the film. In this kind of documentary, the director may be seen on camera alone, be heard as voiceover from behind the camera, or be in front of the camera during an interview. Therefore, the presence of the filmmaker may have little or a significant impact on the story. Due to the filmmaker being either seen or heard in the movie, they become a character and their presence becomes almost as important as the subject being discussed. Through the filmmaker's perspective, the audience can understand how the director felt at the time and imagine how they could have responded in the same circumstance. In other types of documentaries, the interview questions are cut out after the subject's responses. However, in this form the audience is allowed to see or hear the filmmaker asking the questions. By doing so, the interaction between the interviewer and subject is made clearer, and the viewer gets a better "behind the scenes" picture of how the subject was interviewed.

Referance- <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/film-documentary-guide>