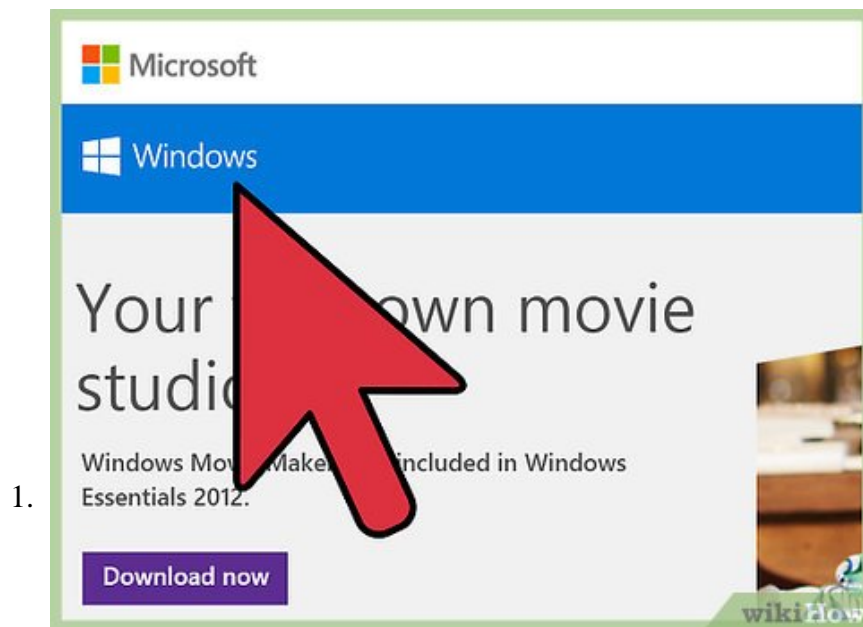


How to Make a Movie Trailer on Windows Movie Maker

Windows Movie Maker is a simple, free video editor that you can use to make a variety of simple movies. It is perfect for trailers, since the simple layout and features make it easy to create short movies with minimal hassle. That said,...

Method 1 of 2:

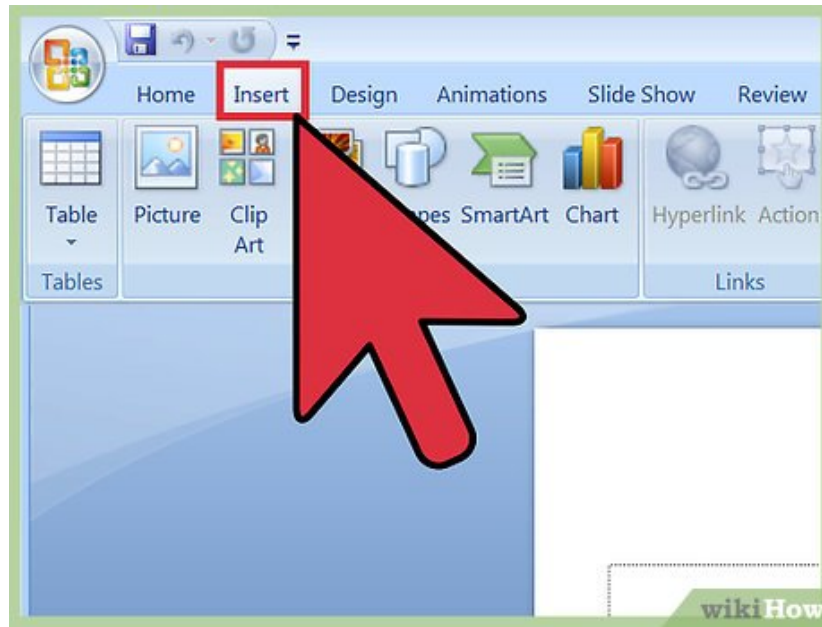
Making Basic Trailers



Learn the basics of Windows Movie Maker (WMM). WMM allows you to order video clips and pictures into a movie, put on some basic effects and titles, and share your trailer with the world. There are a surprising number of features available to you, but there are only a few key aspects that you should know well for a trailer:

1. **Import:** This is how you bring in footage to edit. You must import your movie or clips into WMM to work with them.
2. **Timeline or Storyboard:** This is your work space. You drag the clips onto the timeline, then cut and order them into your final movie trailer. Your timeline becomes the final film when you save the video. Some versions refer to it as the "Storyboard."
3. **Titles:** This is how you put all text onto your video, not just titles. WMM has presets titles for beginning and end credits, as well as a variety of fonts and movement effects.^[1]

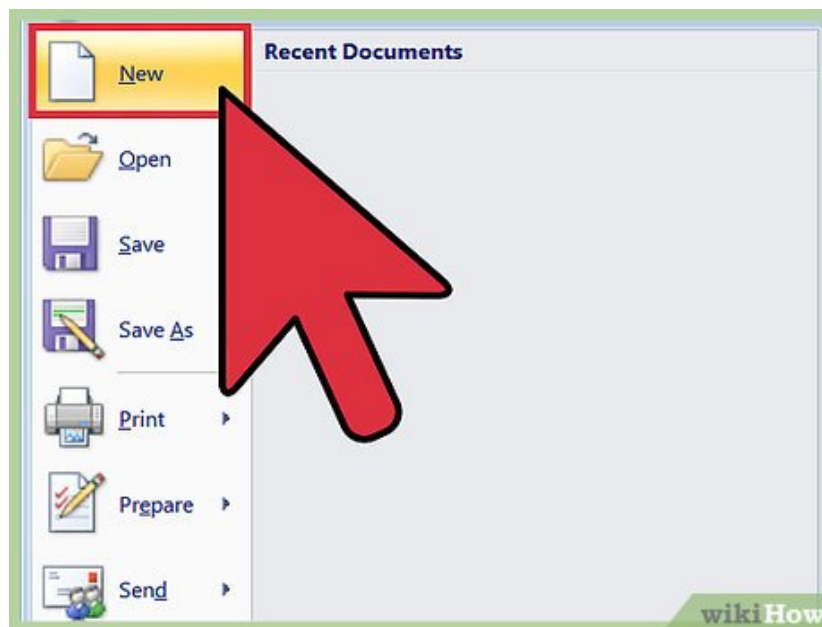
2.



Import the clips you want for your trailer. Click on "File" in the upper right corner, then click "Import." You can also drag and drop the files from an open My Computer window. If the you've already shot the entire movie, grab the actual film and import it.

1. Always pull in more footage than you think you'll need. You want to have options as you edit, and it is always better to have extra footage as your work.

3.



Choose a theme or direction for your trailer. Trailers tell the audience what to expect when they see the movie. Since it is only 1-3 minutes long, however, you don't have nearly enough time to tell the whole story. You need to choose 1-2 compelling aspects of your film and use the trailer to intrigue the audience quickly and succinctly. Watch trailers for movies similar to yours and notice what they play up -- *Batman*, trailers focus on dark, brooding characters and epic fight scenes. Rom-coms like *Trainwreck* cracks some jokes, show some dancing and romance, and features superstar actor LeBron James, a big draw and good way to sell tickets. Think about what will sell your movie to your audience and focus on that in the trailer.

Some ideas include:

1. **The Hook:** If your movie has a wild or original premise, you might want to focus on explaining it to the audience. If you had to describe your movie in one sentence, what would it be? How is your movie going to be unique or different from the rest?
2. **Genre Focus:** Does your movie appeal to a very specific group of movie goers? Horror trailers, for example, generally mimic the movies, starting calm and peaceful before hinting at something terrible under the surface. Comedies usually feature 2-3 jokes that represent the general sense of humor in the movie.



Find your "key moments" and build the trailer around those. Once you know what your theme is, start finding the clips that best show it off. Of course, you do not want to reveal any spoilers from your movie, but, generally speaking, you want a few clips from every section of the movie, as well as shots of every major actor. A general overview of "essential" clips for a traditional movie trailer would be:

1. **The Conflict:** What is the basic story of the movie. Usually this is a character or narrator saying "we have to do _____."
2. **Main character introductions:** A line or two of dialogue from the major characters, or a few shots of them in the movie showing them in action. Include both the heroes and villains.
3. **Tone & Genre:** Use the rest of the clips to show what type of movie it is. Action movies need to show action, comedies show jokes, documentaries show the issues at hand, etc. If it is a serious movie, show serious faces. If it is light hearted, show off bright, sunny footage and happy people.

5.



Start the trailer with your best, most gripping clip. You want to put in a short, exciting, and eye-catching scene. It needs to be something quick, like a joke, a surprising shift in tone like the one in the *Cloverfield* trailer, or a jaw dropping image or character. Make sure your first clip captures the audience's interest and you're trailer will be on it's way to success.^[2]

1. Check out the trailer for *American Hustle*, which starts with an unedited scene that conveys the tone, plot, and appeal of the movie perfectly in just 30 seconds. It is so good the rest of the trailer is a montage of great shots and music with very few words. The point of the trailer was already proven, even if you changed the channel or turned it off.

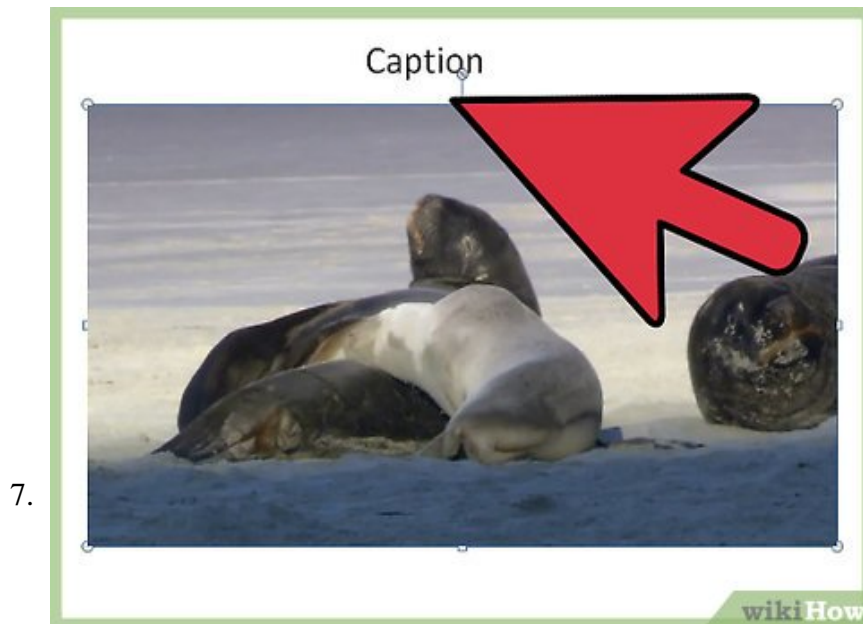
6.



Explain the premise of the movie after your hook. Let a character or narrator breakdown the general plot of the movie once you've grabbed the audience's attention. You want people to know what your movie is about, as this helps them talk to friends and drum up free press for you. Oftentimes you might make a "conversation" between a few different characters to quickly get the point across. Other times you might

use text, or a narrator, over silent clips to explain the story.^[3]

1. Whatever you do, do it quickly. You want to get the story out in 10-15 seconds, using 1-3 sentences at maximum.

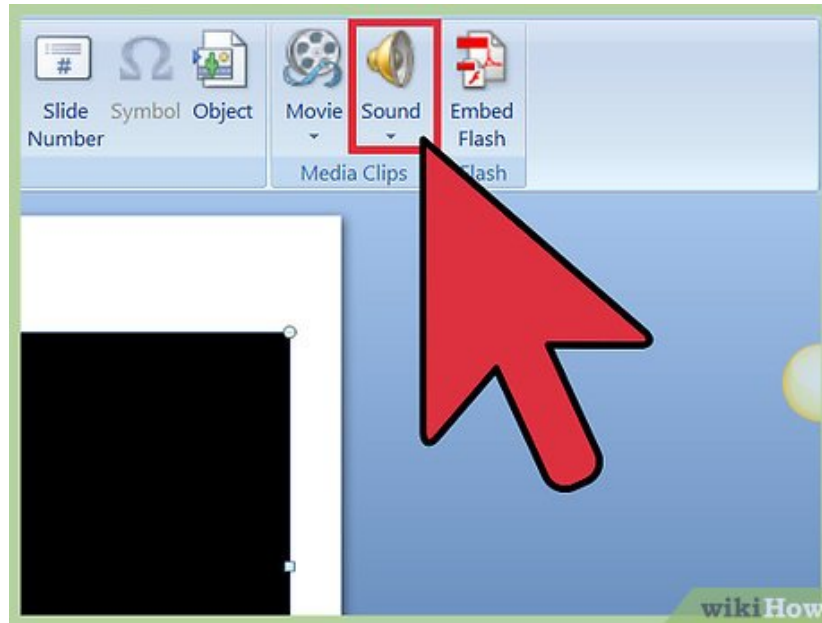


End the trailer on a bang, tempting the audience to see what happens. The best trailers are 2 minutes that build anticipation for 2 hours. You need to compel your audience to see what is going to happen, making them so curious they rush out to see the movie. To do this, you could cut right before a climatic moment, introduce a twist or serious setback, or show off the funniest joke or moment in the trailer so far.



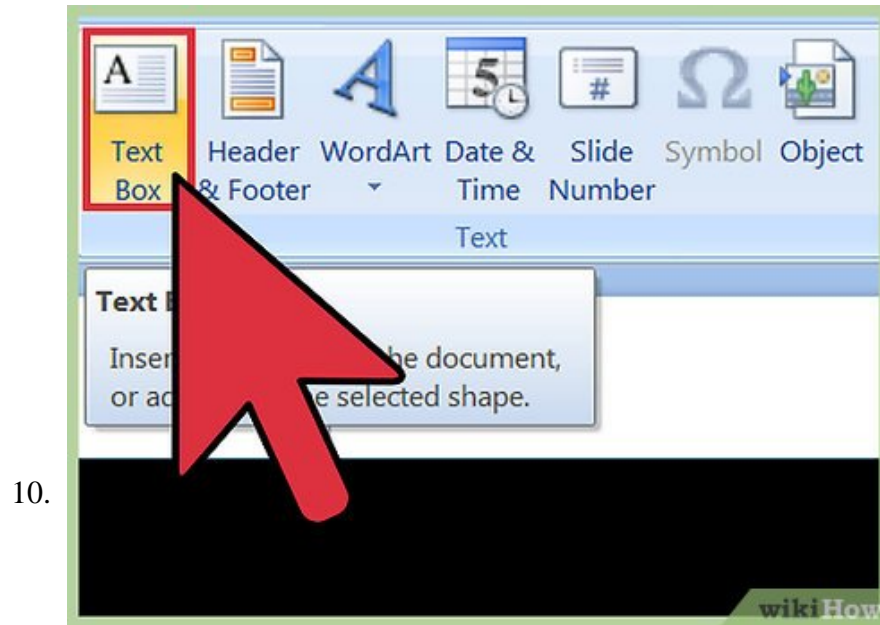
Edit your trailer to under two and a half minutes. This is the cutoff length for a trailer in movie theaters, and audiences are conditioned to expect trailers to be this long. Any longer and people will likely start tuning you out. You should even feel free to go shorter, as it makes it more likely that someone will stay until the end.^[4]

1. Think of your trailer as a peak into your movie's "greatest hits." By focusing on the best moments and leaving the rest to imagination, it entices people to watch and learn more.^[5]

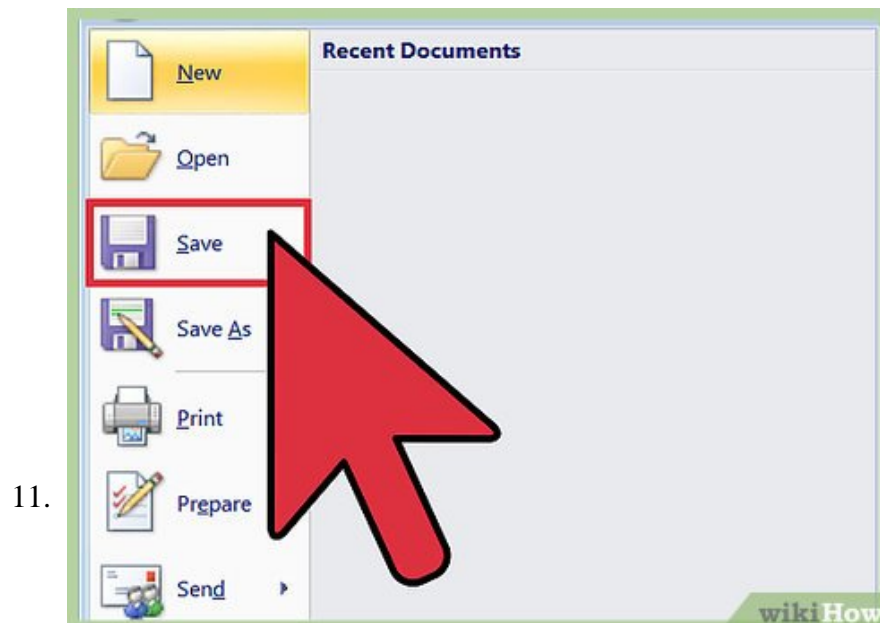


Set the entire trailer to music. Music is an essential part of a movie trailer, and is just as important as the images. Music tells the audience subtly what type of movie they are watching a trailer for. Because you're only working with 2 minutes of footage, the music sets the mood and gives the clips context. For example, *Guardians of the Galaxy's* hit trailer succeeded in large part because of the upbeat, irreverent song in the background, which makes the sci-fi action seem accessible, fun, and comedic.

1. Remember that you generally need to own the rights to music to use it in a video if you plan on making any money off of it. When in doubt, search online for "copyright-free" music that you can use in any clip.^[6]
2. Many trailers use multiple types of music, an effective strategy if you want to show off a couple of different genres. Again, *Guardians of the Galaxy* is a great example, using modern rock music, heart-pounding action scores, and trippy science fiction music.



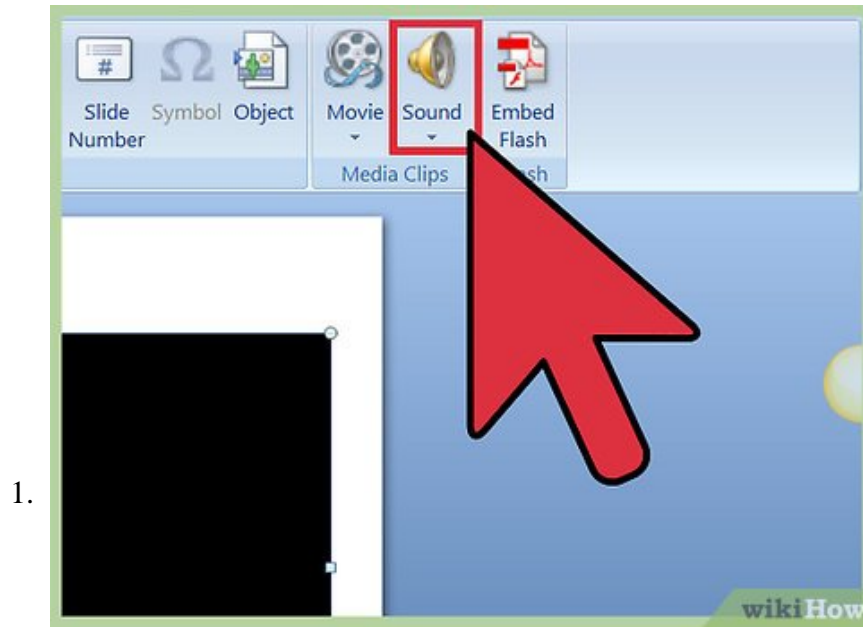
Add your titles last. At the bare minimum, you want to put the title of the film up and the day it will be released. You should also consider putting up the film's website, the stars, the writer, and director. Usually these go near the end, right before the final, gripping clip.



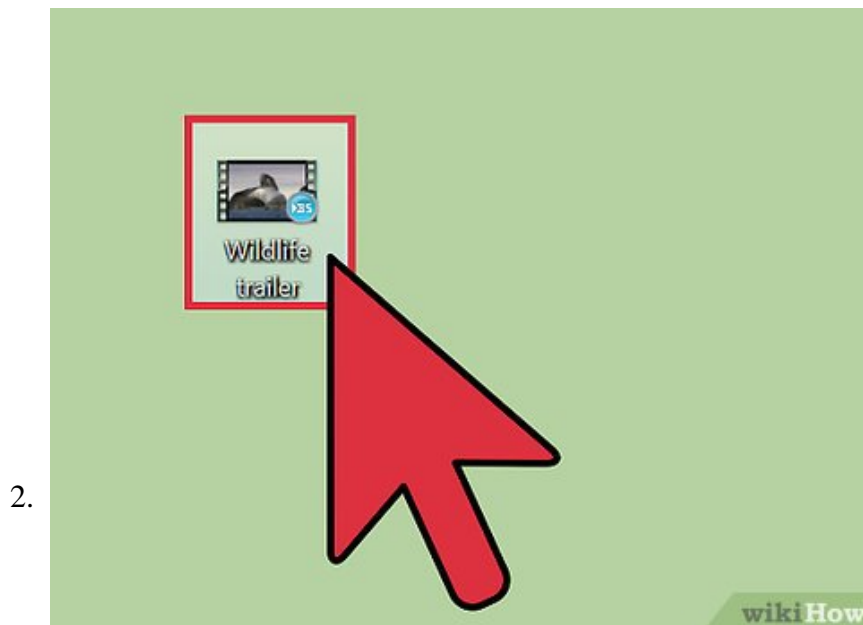
Click "Save Movie" in the upper right corner. Clicking the normal "Save" button will save your workstation, but it won't save the movie as an independent film. To do that, click "Save Movie" and choose the option that works best for you. More likely than not you'll want to choose either .mov (for Youtube and Quicktime) or .mp4.

Method 2 of 2:

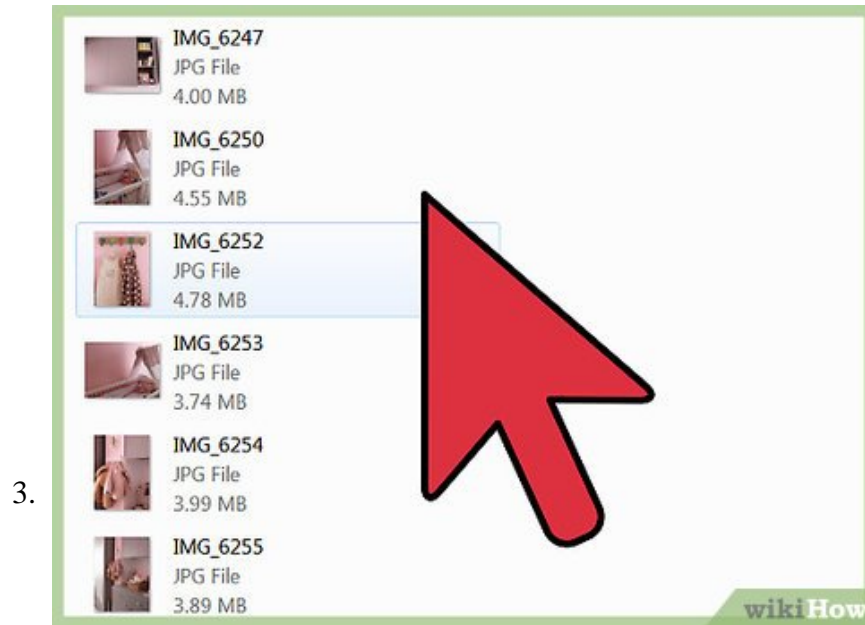
Making Better Trailers



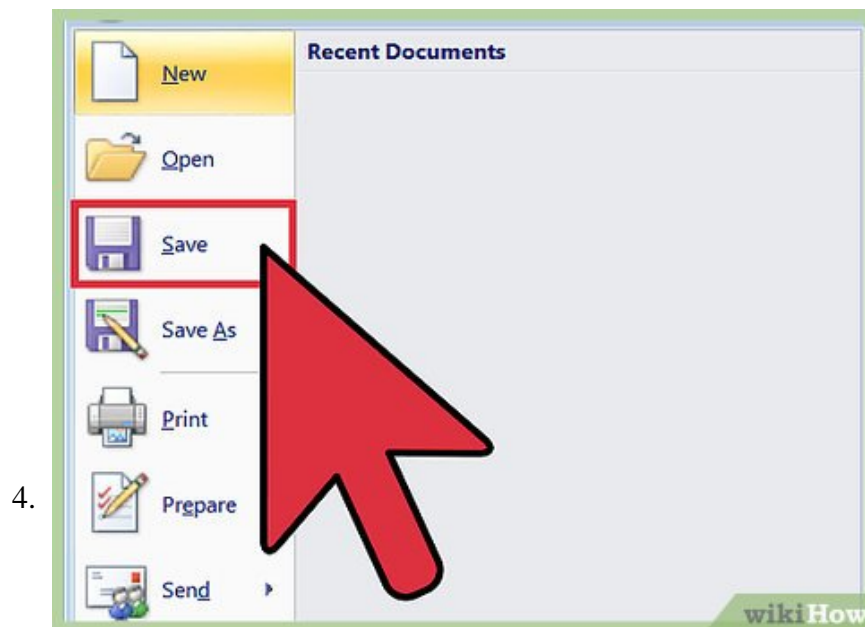
Focus on the rhythm, not just images to keep the audience engaged. The best trailers propel you along, leaving you begging to watch more. They do this through a perfect attention to rhythm. Trailers are often edited like music videos, meaning that the cuts line right up with the beat of the song. Once you know what song you're using, return to the video and cut it so that each transition fits your backing music.^[7]



Make the trailer a mini-movie. Can you tell a short story in the trailer? Think of great trailers you've seen and how they function. They start with a bang, slow down and explain the conflict, then gain steam until a climactic final shot. This is, in essence, the structure of many real movies. Having this mini roller-coaster ride can make your trailer more compelling, which makes the movie seem more interesting as a result.^[8]



Use original footage instead of clips from the movie. Not all trailers need to show clips from the actual movie, though most do need a few seconds of footage. The trailer for *Eternal Sunshine for the Spotless Mind* features a fake commercial for the memory-wiping technology. *The Social Network Trailer* starts with a minute or so of someone browsing Facebook. Sometimes, starting with clips or images that aren't from the movie helps build suspense, capturing audiences used to hearing "In a world where..." every time.



Retain an aura of mystery. Too many trailers try and fit in everything-- the best jokes, scenes, and plot points-- and end up ruining the entire movie. You want the audience to be curious about the movie, not like they just sat through the spark notes version of it. The best trailers will focus on 1-2 elements, exploring them well, while still hinting that there are other aspects of the movie worth seeing. This is mostly about feel, but you should always ask yourself while editing: "Does this give too much away?"^[9]

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