



You Oughta be in Pictures

Windows Movie Maker is a free program packaged in Windows XP. Normally, it is found by clicking "Start," "Programs," "Accessories," and "Entertainment." This is a simple and under-utilized program that creates reasonably high quality movies using any digital photos or videos. There are better programs, but for classroom use, Movie Maker is more than adequate. The following is a brief tutorial on the basics of Windows Movie Maker.

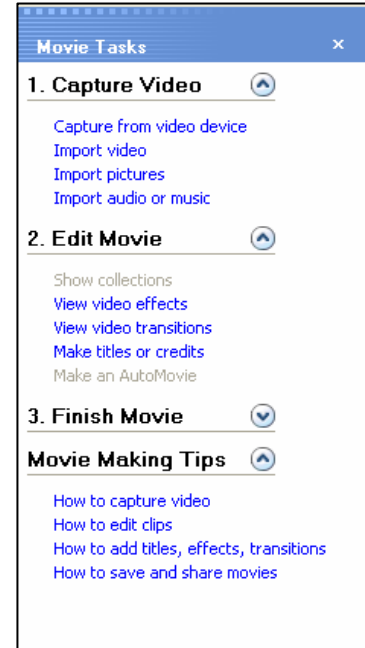
When you open Windows Movie Maker, the default screen features a task pane that displays all of your basic functions. They are organized in the perfect sequence to help you create your movie.

Organization is of vital importance when using this program. When collecting photos or organizing those you have taken, be certain to name each and place them in folders. If you assemble photos from several different disks, you may end up with a number of them named Picture 1, which confuses Movie Maker when attempting to find the correct file.

Ok, How do I get started?

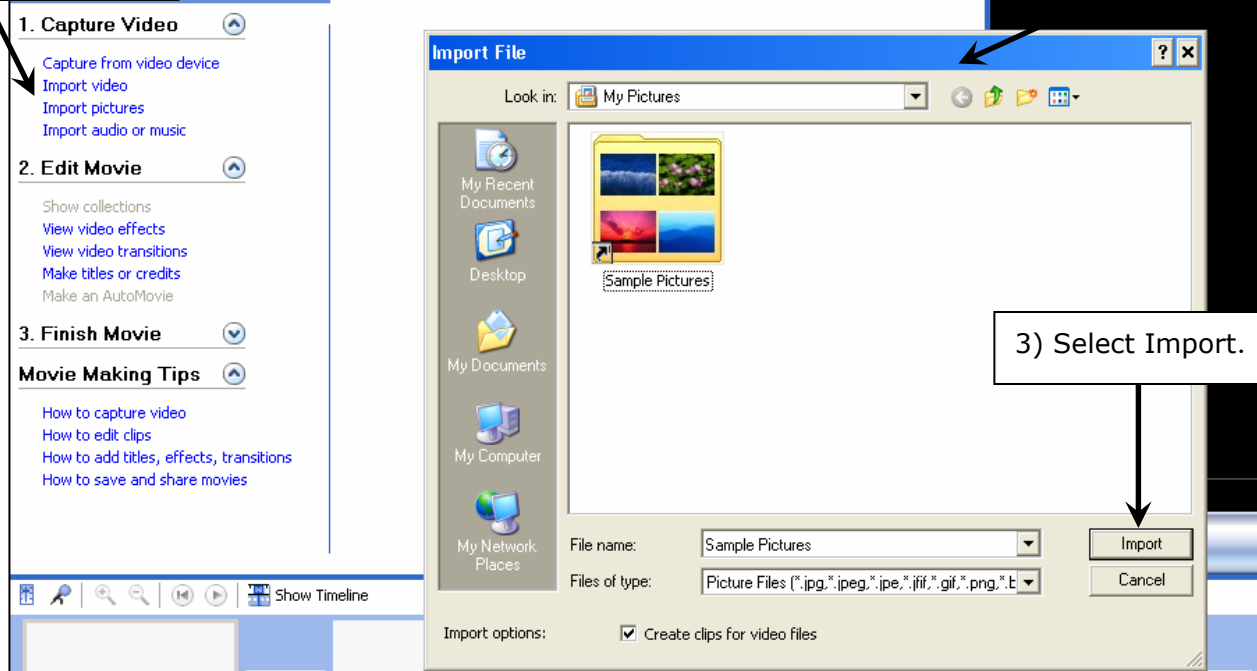
First, you have to assemble your collection of images. This is like grabbing a pile of pictures to put into a scrapbook. Your "pile" will appear in the center pane labeled **Collections**.

To import pictures, simply select **Import pictures** in the **Movie Tasks** pane. This will bring up a search box. Use the drop down button beside the **Look in:** menu to find the folder in which you placed pictures (again organization is of vital importance.) Once you find the folder or photos, select **Import**. Video and music can be imported in the same way.



1) Select which media you wish to find.

2) Find the folder or drive in which you saved your pictures.



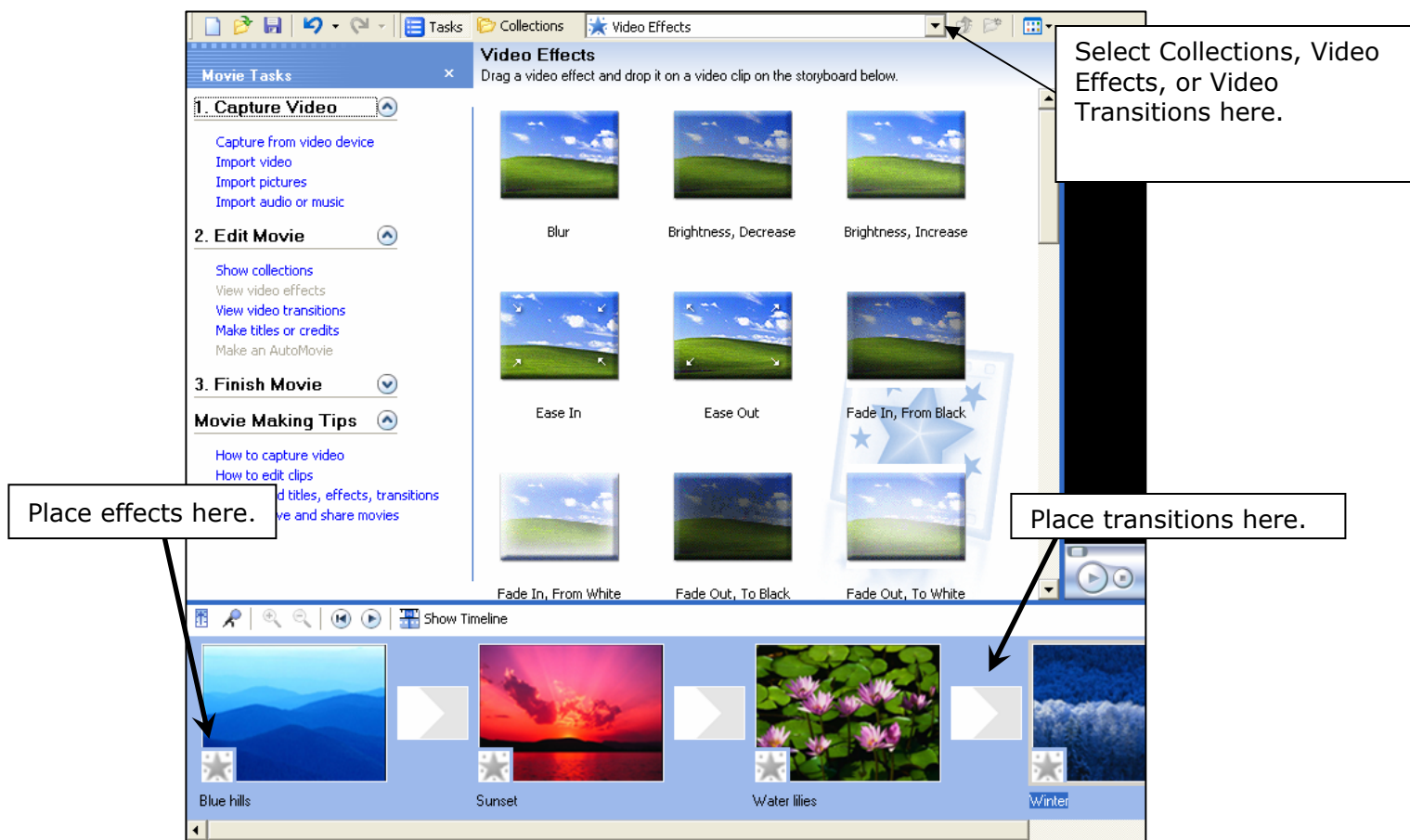
3) Select Import.

Now I have a bunch of pictures. How do I turn this into a movie?

It would probably be a good idea to do some sort of storyboard. You could jot it down in words on paper, draw it in boxes or assemble a simple one in Inspiration. Plan for any text you would like to add on top of the picture or on its on slide before or after a picture. At any rate, once you decided what pictures you would like to use and where you would like to put them, assembling your movie is very easy.

Select the photo that you want and drag it into position on the slides at the bottom of the screen. That is called the **Storyboard view**. It can be toggled to a **Timeline** view, but we will discuss that later.

Once your pictures are there, you can add visual effects to them, as well as transitions between them. You can view the various video effects in several different ways. You can select **View Video Effects** in the **Movie Tasks** pane and select in from the drop down menu at the top of the screen that defaults to **Collections**. Either of these will display all of the available effects in the center pane.



Double-click on any video effect to see a preview in the display pane on the right. Drag the video effect down to the picture in order to add the effect. The gray star will now appear blue to show that an effect will be added.

Video transitions are done the same way. You can select **View video transitions** in the **Movie Tasks** pane or in the same drop down menu at the top. These can also be previewed by double-clicking on the transition or dragging it to the transition icon between the slides. Note: You can preview your movie or any part of it at any time. Select any slide as your beginning and select play on your display pane.

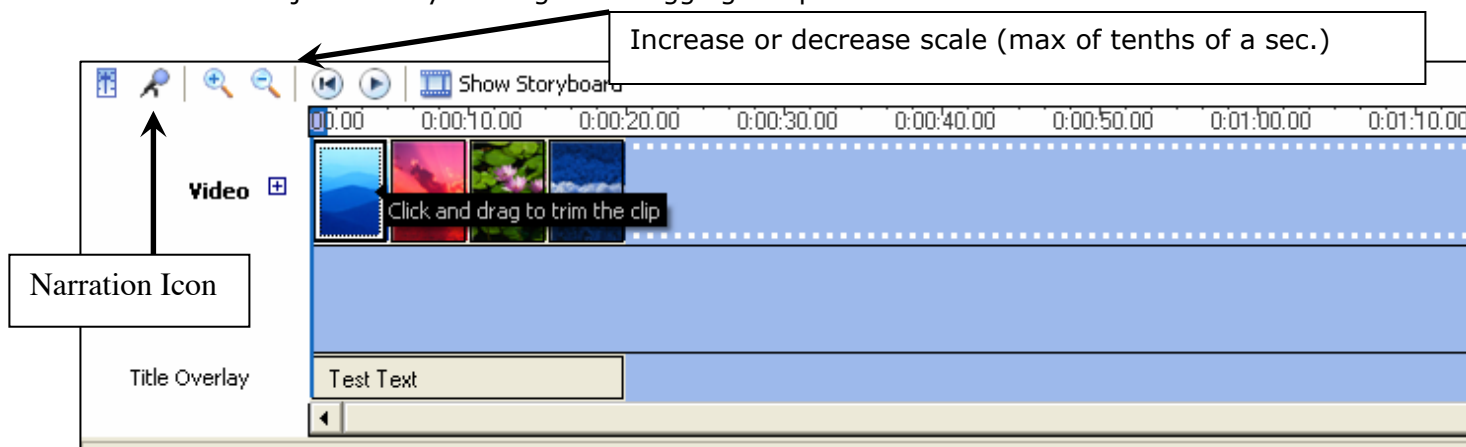
How do I add text?

Select **Make titles and credits**. You can add text anywhere within the movie. Select a slide and then select where you would like the text to appear.

Enter the text as you would like it to appear. There are two more options for text below. You can change the font, color, and size (these options are fairly limited). You might add animation specifically for the text. A preview will be shown as soon as you select an animation scheme. After you customize your text, select **Done** at the bottom of the pane. This operates exactly like the OK button on most windows programs. No changes will be shown if you forget this step, but it will allow you to move on without a response, unlike most windows programs that require that you select OK or Cancel.



You will notice now that the bottom pane has changed to the **Timeline View**. This is the most frustrating part of movie maker. Text that appears on a slide is not connected to that slide in any way. In other words, if you move a photo, you have to move the text on that photo as well. If that photo isn't displayed long enough for all of the text to appear or be read, then the text will continue to the next slide. Before finalizing your movie, you will want to adjust the length the slides appear with this in mind. Select the picture that needs to be resized. When your cursor appears as a two-sided arrow, you can "stretch" the picture to make it larger or shorten it. You can do the same to text to make it appear faster or slower. You may observe that some of your photos overlap. Certain video transitions will automatically do this in order to create a fade between the two pictures. All shatter effects for instance will stagger your photos in this way. You can also adjust this by clicking and dragging the photos.



How do I add Narration and Sound?

It is best to finish everything else involved in your movie before adding narration or sound. Audio files cannot be resized in movie maker. To achieve accurate narration it is best to set your timing before recording. You can still make adjustments afterwards if you need to, but the opposite is much more difficult.

Select the microphone icon above the timeline. Test out your microphone first watching the input level carefully. Adjust the level so that your narration isn't pushing into the red range very much. When you want to begin, select Start narration. Your movie will be displayed in the right display pane. Select Stop narration when you are finished. You will be prompted to save your narration file. Movie Maker will default to a narration folder within the default video folder. It is fine to use this folder; keep in mind that movie maker will need to find this file each time you try to use it.

How do I save my movie?

This is the most frequent mistake with all movie maker users. Saving on movie maker is slightly different than other programs you may have used. If you save as you normally would, you will create a movie maker project. It will remember all of the effects added and pictures and sounds used. However it doesn't save all those components within your project. Whenever you access your movie project, it will automatically attempt to access those components for you wherever you had them saved. This makes it difficult to work from different computers. It is wise to save all files you use in your movie to a common place, be it one computer, memory key, or CD.

If you are not finished with your project, you should save it by selecting **File** in your menu bar. Select **Save Project As** and be certain to save it to the same place each time you edit it. Once you have completed your movie, Movie Maker will alter the files so that it can be burned to a CD or DVD and be viewed using Media Player. Select **Save Movie File**. Now you can select to save your finished product wherever you would like. The pop up menu below will appear. It will ask for a new title as well as the specific save location (similar to any other save as prompt). It will take several minutes or more to save because of all the files it has to save together. Once your project is saved as a movie file, all of the photos and sound clips are integrated into that single saved video file. You can still edit the project file, but would have to save it as a movie file to view it in the same way.

