Types of microphones

In-built microphone

If you are using the microphone inbuilt in your camera, all of the above might pose a real problem because the strength and quality of a camera’s in-built microphone varies from camera to camera. Generally speaking though they usually aren’t as good as an actual microphone.

Plug-in microphone

If you have a microphone that plugs into your camera, great! This might help you get better audio than your camera’s in-built microphone. But you might still encounter similar issues to those we’ve already listed. Some plug-in microphones are designed to sit atop your camera, but if yours isn’t you might benefit from a microphone stand so you can point it at your actors when filming, which is better than holding the microphone directly.

Boom microphone

Using a boom microphone is best. The reason is because boom mics have furry covering or a padded shell that prevents wind from ruining your audio. Oddly enough this covering is sometimes referred to as a ‘dead cat’, which is a bit grim. Boom microphones usually come on an extendable pole so you can get the microphone closer to your actors. These are great if you plan on filming dialogue and sound outdoors, but they work well in all filming scenarios.

You still need to get the microphone close enough to record sound properly though, so proximity to your actors can still be an issue. However, a classic mistake is to accidentally get the boom mic in the shot, so you need to be careful when operating a boom mic, and whoever is behind the camera needs to keep a close eye in case the boom mic moves into the frame.

Lapel microphone

Also great for interviews, but they can work well on film sets if you can keep them out of shot. These microphones clip onto your actors’ clothing around their chest. Lapel microphones can have wires or wireless transmitters, so you’ll need to figure out how to use yours and use it well.

Handheld microphone

Great if you’re conducting an interview but not that good for making films. These microphones need to be close to the person speaking and thus are hard to keep out of shot.