

How to do a camera test

1. Unpack all the gear. Take inventory:
 - Tripod
 - Camera
 - Battery (should have 2)
 - Battery charger (also works as an adapter, allowing you to plug the camera into the wall)
 - Cables (if necessary, to plug camera into a TV)
 - Video Tape (correct format; also you need to know how long you can record on each tape)
 - External microphones (if available, with cables)
2. Set up the tripod. Choose a height.
3. Attach the camera to the tripod.
4. Level the tripod head so that the camera's view is level.
5. Plug the camera in using the AC adapter/battery charger. (Take the batteries off the charger for this.)
6. Turn the camera on. Most have three positions: **Off**, **VCR** (for playback), and **Camera**.
7. Push the eject button. Insert a tape. (If there is a tape already in there, take it out and put it back in.)
8. Familiarize yourself with the controls. Play with the focus; it is usually easiest and effective to set focus to automatic. Most consumer camera sound levels are set automatically. Some allow you to set them yourself. Find the zoom controls. Find the Record Button. Open up the owners manual and look at the diagram that tells you what all the buttons do.
9. Record something. Do a thirty second test to make sure that you are recording both a picture and sound. Do some zooming. Make sure the tripod head pans and tilts. Do you have a remote? See if that works.
10. Play back the tape you just recorded. Make sure you can see and hear what you thought you recorded. You can probably do this right in the camera by switching over to **VCR** mode at the **Off/VCR/Camera** switch. Otherwise you may have to plug the camera into a TV, or play the tape in a VCR. When you're done, turn the camera off.
11. Unplug the camera power from the camera and try inserting a battery. Make sure you can take a battery off and put one on. Turn the camera on again. Make sure it's getting power from the battery.
12. Charge the batteries. Never trust those who had it before you. Put everything else away. Now you know you've got what you need. Just don't forget those batteries!

Once you're familiar with the set-up, it can be done in about 5 minutes.