



Photo Montage Instruction Form

Getting Organized

■ Length

The first step to a successful photo collage is determining who your intended audience is and then organizing your collage to their needs. If for instance your collage is to celebrate the life or lives of specific people and it will be presented to a large audience, then it is advisable that the length be between 10 - 20 minutes. If the intent is to document the entire history of your family you could create a project that would be similar to a feature length movie (up to 2 hours). A two-hour production could have as many as 1000 pictures! So, in other words, the first step is to set a rough idea of how many pictures you intend to have to achieve the correct length production. Each picture is generally "on" the screen for 6 seconds or 10 pictures a minute.

10 minute collage = 100 pictures

20 minute collage = 200 pictures

1 1/2 hour collage is 90 minutes = 900 pictures

Photos/slides are the backbone of most collages. Other media such as video, film, audiotapes etc. are best used as accents to the main photo idea of a photo collage.

■ Organization

Once you have an idea of the total number of pictures you are going to need, then it is time to find them and get them organized. We suggest breaking the total number of pictures into more manageable units of time before you start your search. For instance, you may group them by decades, or by specific events. Write these time units down and then determine approximately how many pictures would be appropriate for each unit of time. Here are two examples of possible organization methods.

EXAMPLE 1		EXAMPLE 2	
Time Unit	Number of Pictures	Time Unit	Number of Pictures
Pre 1920	25	Pre Birth	15
1920-1940	40	Birth - 10	25
1940s	35	10 - collage grad	25
1950s	45	single years	15
1960s	40	early married years	20
1970s	40	Kids all born	40
1980s	30	Kids growing up	60
1990s	30	Professional life	25
Current	15	Grand kids	25
Total	300	Total	250



■ Organization *(cont.)*

Each unit of time should have at least 15 pictures. It is best if they have about 30 - 45. Most music is about 3-4 minutes long and we will be trying to fit these pictures to your musical selections later. Two time units can be set to one song and large units can be broken up into two songs. However, if you can target 35 -45 pictures per time unit matching the music will be much easier. It may be helpful to label large envelopes or boxes with the decades or unit of time you are using on the outside so that as you run across pictures you can put them aside in the correct grouping.

Picture Selection

A few things to keep in mind when you are choosing pictures:

1. This transfer process does not enhance the existing picture, so make sure they are in focus, peoples faces are not washed out and the picture is in good condition. Ridges, water damage, etc. can be distracting to the overall picture and can not be removed by Manser Media without additional expense.
2. TV screens are wider than tall, so horizontal pictures fit naturally to the size of a television screen. Vertical pictures may have to be cropped or have black or white bars on each side to fill the screen. This is not bad, but too many of these vertical pictures are not visually appealing, especially if they are right after each other.
3. Pictures need to be removed from any type of frame. MM does not accept pictures that are in glass frames.
4. Slides generally hold up better than photos and mixing the two types of images is fine.
5. If you have some newer pictures that are only available in electronic format, you can burn them to a CD and mail them to MM. File sizes greater than 20 megabytes should be mailed as opposed to sending them via email. They should be cropped and sized to fit 720 horizontal x 480 vertical pixels. The higher the resolution the better (i.e., up to 300 pixels/inch). Photos less than 72 pixels per inch will be very grainy. If your pictures are not sized appropriately, MM will charge \$85 per hour to resize them.



■ Picture Selection *(cont.)*

6. MM can crop pictures to focus on one part of the picture. Handling charges apply if cropping is requested on more than 5 pictures per hundred submitted. If you are requesting cropping, please note this on the instruction sheet under additional comments and place a post it note on the picture itself with specific instructions. MM will do the best we can to have it appear in a presentable fashion, but cropping does limit our sizing flexibility.

7. Pay closest attention to the pictures you are selecting at the very beginning and ending of the project as well as the first picture within each time unit. These may well be on the screen the longest and you may want to add titling to them. In addition, we may be changing music to go with each time unit and it is a nice touch to have an impact picture at the start of a new song.

8. Very small pictures are fine. Additional charges may apply if submitting pictures larger than 8" x 10".

Do not number the pictures until you have selected your music. There is a high probability that you may need to add or delete pictures during this process.

Music Guidelines

There are no rules for selecting great music. Some people choose music that matches the genre of the pictures; others try to match the theme of the pictures to the theme of the music and some just select music they like.

You may send in your own music on audiocassette or CD (burned or original is fine - MP3 not accepted). See price list or order form for additional charges for submitting custom music. Your music will be returned to you with your pictures.

Please make sure to include enough music for your entire collage.



Music Selection

If you grouped your pictures by time period, search through the song list for songs that are approximately the right length and would be appropriate for the group of pictures. Remember there are approximately 6 pictures per minute. This is not an exact science - do the best you can. Please be aware that titling can add an additional 8 - 10 seconds per title page.

Common Music Selection Questions

■ What if the song I like is too long for the pictures I want to use?

1. We can extend the length of each picture up to 8 seconds each (generally better for slower type songs).
2. We can cut out part of the introduction if there is a long lead in, or fade the song out early.
3. You could select more pictures to add to this section.

Please note in the comment field of the project planner if you feel strongly about either option 1 or 2. Otherwise, MM will use best judgment.

■ What if the song I want to use is too short for the pictures I have selected?

1. You can take some pictures out.
2. You could pick another song, so that there are two songs for this section.
3. MM can reduce the time on each picture down to 4 ½ seconds each (best for fast songs).

You may need to modify your groupings at this point to start fitting the pictures to the music. You might find it helpful to place the song name on the box or envelope you are using to group the pictures.



■ Picture Numbering

Order all pictures in chronological order within each group. After all the individual groups are ordered, you are ready to number each picture starting with one and ending with the last number of the project. Each photo should have a unique number. Do not start each group over again with a 1!!!

MM recommends that you write each number on a small sticker (such as Avery Label #05799 - Round Dots) then place the sticker on the bottom right corner of the picture. You can use a ballpoint pen or other smudge proof pen that is easy to read. Colored stickers are fine if your numbers are clear.

Alternatively, you can use a dull pencil to write the number on the photo itself. Keep in mind that you need to write hard enough to see the number, but pressing too hard may leave an impression that can be seen from the front of the photo.

For slides you can use a pencil on the outside paper frame. Number them so that all of the slides are in the same orientation from the number (front right corner is best).

■ Adding a Picture(s)

If you want to add a picture(s), do so by writing the proceeding number plus a letter or series of letters to the pictures you are adding. Make a note of this in the comment field of the project plan as well.

Example: Mary wants to add in three pictures between pictures 122 and 123. She writes out three new stickers 122A, 122B and 122C and places those stickers on the three new pictures to be added and inserts them in the correct order.

■ Deleting a Picture(s)

If you want to delete pictures and are not substituting new ones in their place, there will be a gap in your numbering. This is fine as long as you make notes in the comment section of the project plan. If you choose to completely renumber from where the pictures have been deleted - that is fine too. However, use new stickers as reused ones may peel off.

■ Switching Order

If you simply switch the order, remove the old stickers and make out new ones with the correct number on them. Do not cross off or attempt to write over the old number!! Also, do not put a new sticker over an old one. If it falls off, then we can see only the old number that may still be on the picture.



■ Adding Video Clips

If you wish to add video clips to your photo collage, please number the video cassettes *1* through *the total number* you are sending and fill out the Video Editing Project Planner. Use the comment field of that form to describe where the video clips are to be inserted in the photo collage.

Fill out Project Planner and Order Forms

Once you have labeled all the pictures and have selected your music, you will need to fill out the project planner and the actual order form. Please use supplemental planner and title sheets as necessary.

Please send the pictures securely in order either in one or more envelopes or rubber banded. Also, enclose your project planner, order form and any music or other material you may be sending.

Please consider using a traceable shipping method such as certified US Mail, FedEx or UPS for sending your materials.