



**VIDEO:**  
**How to Bake a Holiday Fruitcake**

**DESIGN DOCUMENT**

[\[Project Video\]](#)

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# CONTENTS

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BACKGROUND OPPORTUNITY	2
INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH	
DESIGN DECISIONS	4
FEEDBACK SUMMARY AND RESPONSE	7
LESSONS LEARNED	9
BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
APPENDIX	11



## Background Opportunity



The holidays are a time for friends and family to get together, and if you're invited somewhere this winter, you may be asked to bring something to the occasion. If it's food, one of the most iconic festive options out there is fruitcake. The problem is, proper fruitcake recipes call for all kinds of prep time and weeks of soaking in a cheesecloth before they're ready to eat, and chances are you don't have that kind of time. Luckily, there's a recipe for fruitcake cookies that takes just an hour to make. This recipe is only recently available thanks to a gnome known as Blake. With Blake's family recipe in hand, an instructional video was made to teach even the most novice of cooks how to bake a tasty batch of fruitcake cookies to share with their friends and family this snowy season.

Upon watching this video, learners will be able to apply the instructions in the recipe to prepare their own version of Blake's fruitcake cookies. My goals for designing a solution to meet these objectives include using a unique approach to an otherwise typical recipe video. I will use a figurine gnome I have named Blake to act out the story I have created - that of creating a fruitcake to share with his friends at an upcoming party. I will rely on humor in the script and some basic but effective video special effects to keep the content interesting and unique in order to keep the learner's attention throughout. Since the main actor of the movie will be a static figurine, the ability for this video to remain interesting will rely on my creative approach to animating the steps required in the recipe and in providing a compelling backstory on Blake and the problem at hand, so Blake and the situation is relatable to the audience watching.

## Instructional Approach



The final learning solution will be a 2-4 minute video on YouTube that is an instruction on how to bake fruitcake cookies. It is important for this video to incorporate elements of storytelling, have instructional value and a call-to-action, be unique from other recipe videos out there, showcase my creative design capabilities, and incorporate non computer generated design elements. For my approach, I am choosing to use a figurine as a main character in an otherwise live action movie, give that gnome and his recipe a backstory and problem to overcome, and use some stop-motion special effects during filming.

In terms of instructional value, there is a recipe for fruitcake cookies that will be covered step-by-step for viewers so they can follow along as they make their own. It will begin with the ingredients required, act out steps of the recipe, and encourage viewers to make their own batch because it is so fun and easy. How this timeline will unfold will be through a story



about a gnome needing to bring something to an upcoming company holiday pot luck party. Blake the gnome realizes there may be others out there facing a similar situation, and he happens to have a great holiday recipe in fruitcake cookies. So he decides to make a video and share his recipe so others have an easy answer for what to bring to parties this season.

While there will be a considerable amount of video editing and graphic design work on a computer involved with this project, there will be significant amount of media that is non computer generated. Most notably, this is a live action film. That is, there won't be much animation on screen since the actor will be real images of a figurine and the shots will be of various stages of a recipe set inside a real kitchen. Stop motion may be used in the final video as well, but it will still be of real images, not those computer generated.

I want to offer a creative approach to the video production by using strategic cuts of before and after actions of the recipe to make it look like this gnome figurine is actually moving and acting out the required steps in the recipe. For example, knowing ahead of time I am trying to create an effect of a gnome chopping up some dried fruits, I can film the gnome in the act of winding up, about to chop the fruit, then cut the filming and chop up the fruit on my own, then place the gnome back in the same frame position over the now chopped fruit, and start filming again. The effect will be as if the gnome had some sort of magic power to help him with what otherwise would be an impossible task in the recipe. It should be funny as well since he'll act as if it is totally normal and he does it all the time. Taking creative approaches like these through the recipe and script will keep the learner engaged with the content, because the effect is not only fun, but something not commonly found in other recipe videos. The video will have voice over intended to be the voice of Blake the Blackhawk telling his story and narrating the baking experience for the audience. It will be recorded into a computer using a headset microphone and added as an audio track during the final video's production.





## 1. Use of Humor as main tone for the learning.

There were a few design decisions that went into producing this video to ensure it would be funny to then allow the use of humor to help educate. Given the sheer volume of recipe videos available on YouTube (the search “recipe” returns approximately 24.7 Million results), it was important to incorporate some unique elements into the filming in order for the lesson to be memorable (Heath & Heath, 2007). There are many ways to create a memorable learning experience, and those that elicit a positive emotional response are connecting with the learners and increasing those chances (Medina, 2008). Humor is simply one option I went with this time. This was done using special effects, script dialogue, sound effects, and music selection. Ah yes, and with the use of a few garden gnome lawn ornaments as the main characters.

## 2. Use of Connection Plot story archetype.

As outlined by Heath and Heath (2007) there are three main story plots: The Challenge plot, The Connection plot, and the Creativity plot. Each has its own best use case depending on what the author wants the story’s outcome to be. My main character is a gnome chosen mainly for comedic purposes, so in order to incorporate a story element to this video, I chose the connection plot story archetype and tried to find ways in my script writing of making the gnome relatable to the audience. This type of story is “...about people who develop a relationship that bridges a gap...the Connection plot doesn’t have to deal with life-and-death stakes...the connection can be trivial. Connection plots are all about our relationships with other people.” (Heath & Heath, 2007, p. 229). By giving Blake the gnome a back story of how he is “just like you” in that he hangs out with his friends, does activities humans would do, and has a job just like humans, it gives the learner some characteristics about Blake they can relate to. Therefore, when the learner is then presented with the problem of Blake needing to make something in time for a company pot luck party, it’s more believable and the learner can empathize with the issue. Having the learner able to empathize is yet another way to engage with the learners and better the learning experience thanks to an emotional connection with the material (Getty, 2017).

## 3. Use of voiceover

Given the main character is an inanimate object, and there is a story scripted to make this object seem real and relatable, it is obvious there was a need for voiceover work. The voice type in a presentation can have effects on the perception of the audience and its outcomes (Campbell, 2005). While I wanted my filmed visuals and special effects to be funny, the soul of the humor in this video lied in the scripting and delivery of the dialogue between gnome characters, the tone of narration used during the recipe, and using my voice for sound effects. This video is not to be taken seriously, and the beginning visual of a gnome narrating a video sets that theme in motion. I decided to keep my tone light and less instructive, and more like I was telling a story in a conversation. This narrative approach allows for humor to be less forced into the lesson. This natural flow is important (Duarte, 2010).



Con conversationally, I wrote in some back and forth joking banter between characters in the opening thirty seconds. Then there are times when the gnome falls down or panics, and the narrative voice changes accordingly. I also do not try to pretend the sound effects are anything except my voice by deliberately keeping these recordings unedited. This casual, almost crude approach also allows me to get away with some pretty obvious areas of the video where you can tell someone is using their hand to animate the gnome on screen. This all fits into the theme that the video is not to be taken too seriously and that's it's perfectly acceptable to be laughing.

#### 4. Use of Music/sound effects

Just as the addition of voiceover was going to be important to the humor element of this lesson, the use of music allowed me to further extend the winter holiday theme of the video. The story is about a gnome needing to make fruitcake cookies for a holiday potluck party so I chose a version of "Deck the Halls" without lyrics and simple instrumentals to be my video's background music. The pace of the music fit with the pace of the steps to the recipe. The simple instrumentals allowed me to talk over the music easily without being drowned out, and the repetitive nature of the song allowed it to be true "background noise" to the learner that wasn't distracting but more enhancing the learning experience by being tied in to the theme of the video (Heath & Heath, 2007). Conversely, the use of sound effects allowed me to heighten the learner's attention at key points of the video to make an important point or call out (Reynolds, 2009). I added them to showcase the cookies in the beginning of the video, and during times of the recipe where had I note used them, the steps may have been more easily missed.

#### 5. Use of authentic images / not computer ones

According to the article "The Power of Visual Storytelling" on Getty Images' blog, there are four factors to an image that make it powerful, and among them are the image's authenticity (Getty, 2017). The more authentic, the more powerful. This is an instructional video on how to bake cookies. What is implied by the visuals is that it could be something the learner could do at their own home. To ensure this is the case, it was important to film this video in a typical kitchen scenario. By typical, I'm meaning nothing that looks like a professional cook's kitchen, and should include typical ingredients and utensils most people would be able to afford or have in their home already. A good example would be the fact I filmed the gnome mixing ingredients by hand, not using an expensive mixer. Viewers may get the wrong idea that they *need* a mixer in order to do the recipe. I also was perfectly content filming my final cookies on a simple plate and not worrying about them looking perfect, since that's unrealistic. This approach helps with the visualization of the story by the learner, which is important because "we can't imagine events or sequences without evoking the same modules of the brain that are evoked in real physical activity" (Heath & Heath, 2007, p. 150).

To further extend this project's authenticity, I provided a [printable PDF recipe card](#) for learners to download for easy reference. I could have typed the ingredients, but homemade recipes are notorious for being associated with intimacy, and so I hand wrote the recipe card. I probably should have wrote it with the same penmanship a plastic gnome would have for it to be truly authentic, but I had to make *some* judgment calls.



## 6. Use of minimal text

“Our messages have to be compact, because we can learn and remember only so much information at once” (Heath & Heath, 2007, p. 51). This is particularly true in the case of this recipe video. While it is fun and light hearted, there is still a lot of information packed into the video. A recipe needs to be followed in a particular order, and it won’t work with the wrong amounts of ingredients. I did not want to jeopardize the narrative voice being misinterpreted, so I included the ingredient measurements on screen, but only their measurements, not their entire name. The full recipe was provided as a downloadable PDF as well as written in the video’s description area for more detailed reference, but including this amount of text on screen would be distracting to the learning experience (Reynolds, 2010), resulting in a poorer likelihood the recipe would be replicated. This would counteract the learning objective.

## 7. Use of special effects

While the Getty article “The Power of Visual Storytelling” was directly referring to still images when it as talking about powerful images evoking emotions which lead to deeper engagement with the content, it is easy to conclude the same would hold true for pictures *in motion* as well (Getty, 2017). As previously mentioned, I wanted to use special effects to keep levity and humor throughout the video. I didn’t want to rely on script and music alone for humor, so I decided filmed shots that looked like the gnome was magically creating or mixing ingredients would be funny. For example, knowing ahead of time I am trying to create an effect of a gnome including some raisins, I filmed the gnome in the act of jumping onto a bowl of grapes, then cut the filming and replace the grapes with some raisins, then place the gnome back in the same frame position and start filming again. The effect will be as if the gnome had some sort of magic power to help him jump on grapes to turn them into raisins. This simple, emotional, and powerful image effect gives the content a better chance of being retained because it’s providing deeper engagement with the material.

I also mentioned how I wanted to use sound effects to draw attention to a particular point in the video. I knew special effects would have a similar effect as sound effects in achieving a point in time in the video where are particular point in the lesson needed to be emphasized. This is because color is “can be used to get attention, to direct the ete, to categorize, organize, to crete unity, and evoke emotions or set a mood” (Reynolds, 2009, p. 63). The special effect of having motion pictures suddenly replaced by other motion pictures, with the only difference being a change in one object, was very attention grabbing because it was the immediate color contrast between objects that kept the learner’s attention, cued a positive emotional response, which led to continued and enjoyed engagement with the activity.



## Feedback Summary



### Introduction

Part of the process which has aided in the development of this presentation has been a peer review process in which formative evaluation questions were posed after a first draft, and their responses and feedback were incorporated into the final version. I asked my peers 5 questions. Each of these questions also included an explanation as to why I asked these questions, so that my peer reviewers were able to understand the rationale.

1. Sound Effects - do I need some more? I was using my voice to make some intentionally 'homemade' sounds of otherwise studio-available B-roll. Should I add more, look into actual sound effects from places from the YouTube Audio Library, remove them, or something else?
2. My introduction story is intended to try and make it seem like this gnome is just like you and me. He has a job, hangs out with his friends, etc. Is there something else I could include that would help an audience relate? Is the story doing it's job, or could I be staging some other intro photos/change script and record new voiceover to add to this part of the video?
3. Did you laugh?
4. On Screen Graphics - Another layer of production I could add to this project would be some on screen text restating what the audio is saying. Some kind of lower thirds graphics for recipe steps or something. Do you think on screen text helps/hurts this video and if helps, what kind of on screen text should I consider adding?
5. This is intended for YouTube and YouTube has hyperlink overlays you can add. Should I consider linking to additional content, like the recipe online where I found it (It is currently only in the vid description area) or to my website? I've never added links over my YouTube videos and see them from time to time, so was wondering if anyone out there had experience using them, pros/cons, and suggestions.

### Feedback Summary and Response

The feedback on the project's rough draft was very positive. Reviewers were impressed and thought the narration was funny, informative, and included great storytelling elements. In general, there were not many suggestions made on how to improve the project except for in a few minor areas.



No one thought sound effects needed editing, but most wanted to see a mention of the fact this video was going to be about baking cookies within the first few seconds rather than over one minute into the playback. Without an early mention, viewers “...would be confused if [they] are watching the correct movie.” As a result, a quick mention of baking fruitcake cookies was added to the first 3 seconds of playback.

On the subject of on screen graphics and if I needed to add anything since the draft had none, reviewers didn’t think it was necessary. However, they did say that if there were to be an addition, they would like to see text mentioning the recipe, or the measurements of the ingredients required. Some suggested I “could even create a simple PDF recipe card.” This feedback was very helpful. While the point of the video is for it to be viewed as a reference guide to their own cooking, a printable recipe card allows another form of media to be used as reference and even increase the likelihood the recipe is shared because it allows learners to choose which method they prefer.

In response, I added on screen text to show the measurements of the recipe ingredients, and made a hand-written set of PDF recipe cards that could be downloaded/printed by clicking on a hyperlink made available in the video’s text description area. To ensure the PDF remains active online, the PDF recipe card lives on my own website’s server. This also allows me to collect analytics on the hyperlink’s click rate, which could act as an indirect measurement of the sharing and referencing to the project to go along with the views produced from housing the video on my YouTube channel.

No reviewers commented on including any form of video overlays or hyperlinks that could be added to the end of my video in post-production using the built-in YouTube features. The response was similar to the idea of including a printable recipe card. I did explore these features in greater detail and discovered video overlays are no longer supported on YouTube. They do allow a YouTube uploader to include “end caps” that can link to a website or another video on YouTube, but these options are not applicable to me. I have no other videos that I would want to link to, and I can’t provide a link to a website until my YouTube channel is more popular. The printable PDF recipe card inclusion was an even easier decision once I made these discoveries.



## Lessons Learned



I spend a lot of my time designing learning projects on serious subject matter, and this was a good reminder that you can use humor and not take yourself too seriously yet still create a very informative, well liked piece of learning that will “stick” with people for a long time. Given the special effects I was trying to use, I learned the use of a tripod and a well-polished script of the video shoot including shot selection and effects needed to accomplish a shot in the video was really useful. Not to mention the video is about making something from other ingredients, and it’s hard - if not impossible to reverse some of the steps of the process similar to how you can’t undo a haircut, so the planning stages of this project were the most important. No matter the planning I did though, there were things during filming I couldn’t have anticipated. If it was a more serious video, the frustrations I felt would have been worse, so I am going to reserve these fun albeit time-consuming videos to projects that aren’t too serious, or make sure I build in a longer production timeline if I ever wanted to pitch this filming style to a potential client or key stakeholder.



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## Appendix



## Script

The following is the script that was used as a reference during the filming of the video.

Scene	VIDEO	AUDIO
Introduction		
1	(SETTING: Blake the Blackhawk is shown hanging out with his friends watching hockey on television)  Open on Blake sitting on the couch, then pan out to show him sitting next to his friends	Hi. My name is Blake, and I'm just like you. I like hanging out with my friends.  We like to watch hockey
2	Shot of Blake and his friends at a table playing cards	Play cards
3	Shot of Blake and his friends at a concert	And go to concerts
4	Shot of a Blake on the lawn and Tom in the background. Then camera focuses to background onto Tom.	Like you, I also work. I'm in landscaping. So is Tom.  (Sound of Tom saying hello)
5	Shot of Tom and Blake with others at an office party.	Tom and I have our upcoming holiday company party, and it's one of those potluck ones. Tom stresses out about this because he's a pretty lousy cook and usually winds up getting something store bought.
6	Shot of Blake and his fruitcake.	It's my fruitcake cookies that are a big hit, and I thought you may like to learn how to make it. Even a gnome like Tom can't screw it up if you just follow along with me. You'll be the hit at this year's party, wherever you go.
Recipe		
7	Shot of a cutting board with a variety of ingredients being introduced as the audio is calling them out. One by one, the ingredients appear on a cutting board and surrounding kitchen countertop until all ingredients are named and shown in frame.	This recipe makes about 50 large cookies and takes about 45 minutes.  You need candied pineapple and cherries, dates, walnuts, and golden raisins.  You'll also need some all-purpose flour, baking soda, butter, brown



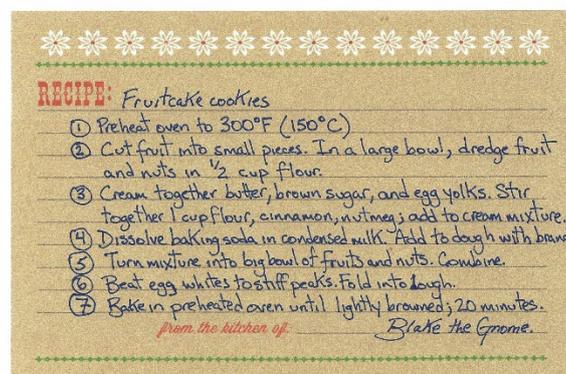
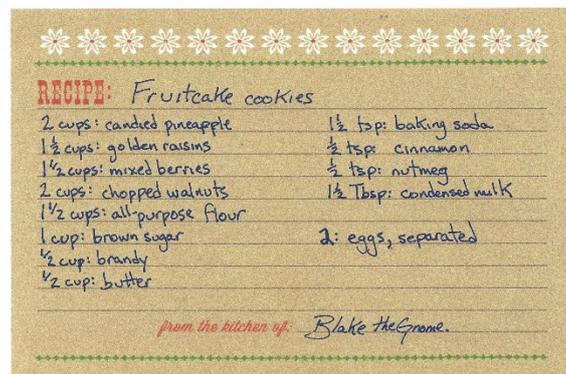
	Then Blake walks into fram and points downwards to act out the gesture of showing that the ingredients can be found in the video description area displayed below.	sugar, eggs, cinnamon and nutmeg. Also some condensed milk and some brandy.  The exact amount of each ingredient is listed below in the video description.
8	Show gnome pushing oven to desired temperature	Preheat your oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit
9	Aa pineapple with a lollipop or a can of diced pineapple with a candy taped to it is being held by the gnome, who throws it against the kitchen wall. There is a cut frame, the fruit is replaced with candied pineapple.	Next, we have to Cut the fruit into small pieces. Stick a lollipop to a pineapple and throw it against the wall.
10	In various cut scenes, show the dates being seemingly magically chopped. The gnome holds a knife above unchopped dates, then with one swoop of the knife all of them are chopped.	Next, use your magic to pit and chop the dates.
11	Show the gnome seemingly cutting open a large group of whole cherries to have candied cherries 'bleed out' onto the cutting board.	Then carve out some candied cherries
12	Show gnome jumping on unchopped walnuts and large green grapes, only to have chopped walnuts and chopped golden raisins be revealed using some video cut scenes.	Chop up the walnuts and golden raisins
13	Show the gnome doing his best job in trying to roll around the mixed nuts and fruits in a bowl.	Next you want to roll the fruit and nuts in 1 cup of flour in a large bowl.
14	Various shots of the gnome acting out the steps of the recipe using video still special effects.	Cream together butter, brown sugar, and egg yolks. Stir together 1 cup of flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add to the creamed mixture. In a small bowl, dissolve baking soda into sweetened condensed milk. Gradually add soda mixture and brandy to the dough. Turn mixture into the big bowl of fruit and nuts. Combine.
15	Various shots of the gnome acting out the steps of the recipe using video still special effects.	Beat egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold into the dough.



16	Various shots of the gnome acting out the steps of the recipe using video still special effects.	In large scoops, spread the cookies onto a lightly greased baking sheet, leaving some room between cookies to allow for them to expand.
17	Various shots of the gnome acting out the steps of the recipe using video still special effects.	Bake in the oven until the cookies are lightly browned but still soft, about 20 minutes. Cool on some wire racks if you have them.
Conclusion		
	Close up of cookies	So there you have it, my homemade fruitcake cookie recipe!
	Shot of gnome with at least 2 other gnomes with plates around a table enjoying the cookies	Make sure to share the holiday goodness with your friends at your next get together!

## Recipe Card

WOOD TYPE HOLIDAY { Recipe Cards }



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