

District 95 Film Festival

FUTURE FILMMAKER FAQ

Sponsored by the District 95 Educational Foundation



Calling all students - you're invited to tell us a story!

Film is not just for Hollywood anymore—it's a powerful art form and storytelling tool. If you like to write, act, make art, or tell jokes and stories, you could be a filmmaker! Make a film and submit it for the District 95 Film Festival—your work could be featured on the big screen in the Performing Arts Center. All District 95 students are invited and welcome to participate, and here is a Q&A to get you started!

Why should I make a film?

It's a fun way to way to express yourself! The skills and experience you gain will help you become a better communicator. Films are used for many purposes, from entertaining audiences, to persuading and educating people, to advertising products. As a filmmaker, you get to decide what your film will do!

What are the District 95 Film Festival rules?

Any District 95 student can make and submit an original short film up to five minutes long for consideration. Films need to be G-rated, featuring school-appropriate content. Categories include Comedy, Drama, Documentary, Animation, and Public Service Announcement. For more information, **AND FOR SPECIAL COVID-19 GUIDELINES**, download the *Film Festival Submission Guidelines* from the Film Festival webpage.

I've never made a film before and I don't know where to start.

The trick is to just jump in and give it a try! Look online for inspiration or ask yourself if you were a filmmaker, what would you want to do—make viewers laugh? Wonder? Reconsider? Learn how to do something? You can teach yourself a lot in the process of making a film.

How can I get film ideas?

Start with a brainstorm. *Can you think of a character that has something to say? Something funny that happens in your household all the time? A message you think your peers need to hear or emotion they might benefit from feeling?* Watching other short films can spur your imagination for your own original stories. You've probably seen lots of genres of short film already, like the [Pixar Shorts](#). If you are stuck, watch some short films and think about what kinds of topics interest your peers the most. You are an expert in your age group!



FOR MORE SHORT FILM INSPIRATION

Book:

“Learn How to Write, Direct and Edit your Own Film Without a Hollywood Budget,”

by Robert Blofield

Websites:

[MiniMoviemakers.com](#)

[Young Moviemakers](#)

[KidsLoveShortFilms.com](#)

[Chicago Filmmakers](#)

[Chicago International](#)

[Children's Film Festival](#)

[Apps for videos & effects](#)

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continued



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I have a film idea, but I don't know how to make it work.

Fabulous! Break down your idea into scenes that you could film. Does your idea have a beginning/middle/end? Do you have a problem/complication/resolution? Could you create a series of riffs on a funny theme? Run your idea by your family and friends. Some directors work on their own when developing ideas, but many directors work with collaborators who help them think through their ideas, scripts and filming decisions.

Can I team up with a friend or group to make a short film?

Absolutely! Award-winning short films have been directed by elementary classrooms, friend groups, and sibling co-directors. So put your heads together and make something fun, entertaining or compelling! You will learn a lot and have fun collaborating!

I don't have my own camera or computer/editing software.

You don't need specialized camera equipment to make a great short film. If you or someone in your family has a school-issued iPad or a phone, you have access to an acceptable video camera! The Ela Area Public Library has [laptops](#) that feature iMovie and other video editing software that you can use for free, and even [GoPro cameras](#) you can check out. If you can borrow a DSLR or digital video camera from someone you know, your photographic quality could be even better. Your school may have computers you can access for this kind of project. Don't be afraid to ask your teacher or a caring adult for advice!

How much time do I need to make a short film?

Some short film directors take months to go from idea to completed film, and others have produced a film in a couple of weekends. It's best to plan enough time to allow you to brainstorm ideas, choose a good concept, write/edit a script, cast your actors and helpers, plan, film, edit and output your work. This work could take 10-20 hours spread out over weeks or months, depending on the complexity of your film. Winter break or long weekends are a nice time to do your filming and/or editing.

How are the winning films selected?

Films are judged based on technical quality, storytelling/communicating effectively, artistic merit, acting, overall effect/emotional impact, and sound/music. Selected films are shown at the Festival, and awards are presented at the elementary, middle school and high school levels that night.



FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FILM

Please see the document on our website: *Directions for uploading to Google Drive.*

FOR OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FILM FESTIVAL

Please contact us at D95FilmFestival@lz95.org

Have fun, filmmakers!