



GENIUS Short Film — Student Guide

Students may submit projects in one of three categories:

- **Narrative:** A fictional storytelling through characters, events, and conflict.
- **Documentary:** A nonfiction film that explores real people, places, events, or communities.
- **Animation:** 2D or 3D animation, hand drawing, stop-motion, clay animation, or other methods.

All films must have a clear connection to an environmental issue, challenge, solution, or theme.

General Requirements

■ Length and Language

- Films should be 2-6 minutes long, including title and credits.
- Films may be created in any language.
- Any non-English dialogue or narration must include English subtitles, which should be clear, accurate, and easy to read
- Film titles should be in English and kept under 25 characters.

■ Originality Requirement

- All major creative elements of the project should be produced by the participating students.
- Your short film should consist primarily of original student-created imagery and footage.
- A film created mainly by combining photographs or videos collected from the internet is NOT acceptable.
- Students may use up to 20% externally sourced imagery when it is necessary to support the story or documentary. For example, limited historical photographs, archival images, maps, or other relevant materials may sometimes be appropriate.
- Any external imagery must be properly credited.
- The goal is to tell a real story through your own filmmaking.
- AI-generated short film is not accepted. The artistic work must represent the student's own creativity and artistic skills.

■ Submission Requirements

- Your completed Short Film must be uploaded to **YouTube**.
- Use the following title format:
- GENIUS Olympiad – YEAR: Title of the Project
 - For example: GENIUS Olympiad – 2027: A River Without Tomorrow
- **Submit the YouTube Link** within your application account as Media Link
 - You can NOT upload video directly into the application account.
 - Your video will be reviewed through the submitted YouTube link for the initial evaluation.
 - Before submitting your application, test the link to make sure the video can be viewed by others.
- **YouTube settings:**
 - Your video does not necessarily need to be publicly searchable, but GENIUS judges must be able to access it.
 - If using YouTube's Unlisted setting, make sure anyone with the link can view the video.



- Do not make the film Private, because reviewers may not be able to access it.
- Keep the submitted video accessible throughout the application and judging process.
- Rights to Submitted Creative Work
 - By submitting your project, students grant GENIUS Olympiad permission to use submitted creative work for purposes related to the program.
 - This may include uses such as judging, event presentations, GENIUS publications, educational materials, program promotion, GENIUS websites and social media

Category Descriptions and Requirements:

SHORT FILM | Narrative

Use fictional characters, events, and storytelling to explore environmental issues.

Rather than simply explaining an environmental problem, narrative films help audiences experience the issue through a story.

Your film might be: Drama, Science fiction, Adventure, Comedy, Mystery, Suspense, etc.

The environmental issue or sustainability may be central to the plot or woven naturally into the story.

- A strong Narrative Short Film usually includes:
 - Characters: Give the audience someone to care about or understand.
 - Conflict: Present a challenge, decision, environmental problem, or tension that moves the story forward.
 - Development: Allow the audience to see how the situation changes.
 - Emotional Connection: Help the viewer experience the issue rather than simply hear information about it.
 - Resolution or Reflection: Your ending may provide a solution, raise a question, offer hope, or leave the audience thinking about the issue.

SHORT FILM | Documentary

Documentary films explore real people, places, events, communities, or experiences connected to environmental issues.

A documentary should help audiences better understand something that is happening in the real world.

Students are encouraged to look around their own communities for meaningful environmental stories.

- A strong documentary is more than a collection of facts or interviews.
- The strongest documentaries help audiences understand both the facts and the human meaning behind an environmental issue.
- It should develop a clear story or message using elements such as:
 - Original footage
 - Interviews
 - Narration



- Observations
 - Data or evidence
 - Historical context
 - Personal experiences
 - Environmental research
 - Visual storytelling
- **Interview subjects** should understand that they are being recorded for a student film project. Students should obtain appropriate permission when filming people, especially minors.
 - Documentary projects should **present information responsibly**. Students should:
 - Verify important facts
 - Use reliable sources
 - Represent interview subjects accurately
 - Avoid misleading editing
 - Clearly distinguish facts from opinions
 - Credit external information when appropriate
 - Documentary filmmakers should **pay particular attention to originality**.
 - The primary footage and imagery used in your documentary should be created or recorded by the participating students.
 - Documentaries should NOT consist primarily of internet photographs, stock images, online video clips, slideshows of existing images. Instead, students are encouraged to
 - Record their own footage
 - Conduct their own interviews
 - Photograph locations themselves
 - Create their own graphics when needed
 - The goal is to tell a real story through your own filmmaking.

SHORT FILM | Animation

Animated films use visual creativity to communicate environmental stories, concepts, or solutions.

Animation allows students to present ideas that may be difficult, expensive, dangerous, or impossible to film in the real world.

Students may also combine animation with limited live-action footage when appropriate.

- Animation Techniques May Include
 - Computer animation
 - 2D digital animation
 - 3D animation
 - Hand-drawn animation
 - Stop-motion
 - Clay animation
 - Frame-by-frame animation
 - Cut-paper animation
 - Mixed animation techniques