

Filmmaking Guide

This guide will take you step-by-step through the filmmaking process with resources to help you get started!

Brainstorm

First, review the [submission categories](#) and [rules](#) to learn about the requirements for your film. Get inspired with examples of existing films below, and remember that you can tell your story in any way you'd like - you can create a traditional PSA, a narrative film, a documentary, or even a spoken word.

- Professional Examples:
 - [“Mental Health Matters PSA”](#)
 - [“Suicide Prevention PSA: MVP”](#)
- Student Examples:
 - Check out example PSA from past contests [here](#).

Script and Storyboard

The script gives you a roadmap to your production and develops the story, characters, and setting. The storyboard lets you visually plan your film and remember all the shots you will need.

- Resources:
 - [Storyboard template 1](#) / [Storyboard template 2](#)
 - [Kids' Guide to Making Movies](#)
 - [Academy of Motion Pictures – Teachers Guide](#)
 - [KQED - Making Videos to Inspire Learning](#)
 - Free Screenwriting Software: [WriterDuet](#)

Shooting Your Film

Keep these tips in consideration before and during filming:

- Bring your storyboard with you and check off each shot that you have filmed. Make sure to get multiple takes, even if you think the first one is perfect.
- If possible, use a separate microphone to make sure the sound is captured well. If sound is too difficult to hear, you may need to re-record dialogue and add it during the editing stage or include captions.
- Take time to look at the area you'll be filming, paying attention to the background.
- Make sure to keep your video files in a safe place and if possible, keep copies on another computer or hard drive.
- Resources:
 - [Shots and Framing](#): Includes the basic types of shots and when to use them
 - [Rules of Thirds](#): A guide to using this photography technique when framing your shots
 - [Lighting Tutorials](#)
 - [How To Use Microphones](#)

Editing

The way you edit your film helps to shape the story and may take even longer than filming! You might have an editing program on your home computer, or you can find one through your school or local library. Tutorials for most editing software can be found on YouTube. Remember, entries are limited to 60 seconds in length.

How-To Resources:

- [Creating a film with your smartphone](#)
- [Video Editing Tutorials-Media College](#): Tutorials on various aspects of editing and software
- [Video Editing Principles](#): Offers tips to consider when shooting and editing your film

Free Editing Software:

- [Avid Media Composer First](#): Free version of Avid editing software
- [iMovie](#): Editing software for Mac and iPhone
- [CapCut](#): Simple editing software for desktop and mobile
- [Canva](#): Simple graphic design and editing software for desktop and mobile

Copyright Free Images and Videos:

- [Creative Commons](#): License info [here](#)
- [Unsplash](#): License info [here](#)
- [Pixabay](#): License info [here](#)

Sounds and Music

Although you can't download your favorite song to use in your film, there are many resources offering free music and sound effects that you can use! **Please credit the website in your film if you use their work.** Although some sites offer “free” music, you may still have to request permission to use it. Check out this [resource](#) to learn more about copyrights and how to license music.

You can also record your own music or find a local band that will record an original song for you and grant you permission to use the song. Check out free audio software such as [Audacity](#), [GarageBand](#), and [Cakewalk](#).

Sound Effect Resources:

- [Artist](#): Explore copyright-free music with music licensing that covers any kind of project (some free and many included in a free trial)
- [Free Music Archive](#): Royalty free music including from independent artists. Safe to use in all kinds of media like YouTube, Facebook and podcast episodes.
- [Incompetech](#): Free tracks, searchable by mood and instrument. The specific credit needed is shown when you download the track. The artist has a [handy page](#) that creates the exact credit to use based on which track you decide to incorporate in your film.
- [FreeSoundtrackMusic.com](#): This page of music is organized by key words (emotion, genre, lead instrument, etc.). Any of the songs listed as “free” can be used for your film. Info on the credits process can be accessed [here](#).
- [BenSound](#): A database of downloadable, copyright-free music and sounds. You will need to credit BenSound - for instructions on how to give credit, visit the [FAQ](#).
- [OurMusicBox](#): A composer who has a range of his tracks posted, free for use under Creative Commons. Make sure to credit the creator and the track name at the end of your film!
- [Free Sound Effects](#): Like the other resources, you can download and use these songs for free as long as you include this credit at the end of your film: “Sound effects by [pacdv.com/sounds](#)”
- [ccMixer](#): A community music site featuring remixes licensed under [Creative Commons](#) where you can listen to, sample, mash-up, or interact with music in whatever way you

want.

- [Mobygratis](#): Offers free 'film music', and is intended for independent and non-profit filmmakers, film students, and anyone in need of free music for their independent, non-profit film, video, or short.
- [Free Sound](#): A collaborative database of audio snippets, samples, and recordings released under Creative Commons licenses that allow their reuse.
- [Purple Planet](#): Free tracks to use for your film. Make sure to credit as written on [this page](#).
- [MusOpen](#): This is a non-profit organization that has classical and other (mostly instrumental) pieces available for free download and use. You have to sign up as a member (do the "Lite" membership for free downloads), and then navigate to the "Recordings" link for a given piece in order to download the song.

Submitting Your Film

You will upload your film as part of the [entry form](#). Vimeo is our video services partner and all technical specifications need to be in line with their requirements, and by uploading your film to Vimeo, you will agree to their [terms and conditions](#).

- [Vimeo upload guidelines](#) and [compression guidelines](#)
- [Troubleshooting upload problems](#) on Vimeo

Export Tips

- **AVOID exporting your film at 4k resolution. Exporting your film at 1080p is sufficient.** Most programs you will be using have an **H.264 codec/format option**. Using this will keep your file sizes smaller while keeping good image quality.
- Different software programs may have different names for **H.264**. If you don't see an H.264 option in your program, look for an **MP4** option or an **MOV** option.

Premiere Pro:

- Export using the codec **H.264**. This codec is efficient and provides good quality at a smaller file size.
- When exporting, click the option to "Match source High Bit Rate". This will help with exporting your film at the best quality.

iMovie (Mac):

- The **MP4** format with **H.264 codec** is widely supported and provides good quality at a smaller file size.

- For most purposes, exporting using the “**High**” quality setting will keep the file size small while retaining the quality of the footage.

iMovie (iPhone or iPad):

- When exporting your video, iMovie gives you options for resolution. Choosing a **lower resolution** will reduce file size. **1080p** is usually a good compromise between quality and file size.

For more info on exporting your video, please view a tutorial on your editing software.

