



The Ripple Effect Film Project: Short Film Making Guide

ELIGIBILITY: This contest is open to filmmakers of all experience levels in Pre-K through 12th-grade living in Athens-Clarke County and neighboring counties. An individual or team can submit entries. No entry fees; win cash prizes! Films must comply with OFFICIAL RULES posted at www.rippleeffectfilmproject.org.

SUBMIT ENTRIES TO: <https://filmfreeway.com/RippleEffectFilmProject>

Step 1: Come up with a great story!

Build a short story or message with a beginning, middle, and end. The Ripple Effect Film Project has one overarching theme with four subthemes to choose from:

- 1. Healthy World, Healthy People:** We rely on water to keep our bodies clean and healthy. From washing our hands to prevent illness to cleaning our dishes to clean drinking water, we could not go a day without H₂O. How does water keep you healthy?
- 2. Healthy World, Healthy Environment:** Point and non-point source pollutants, such as litter, pesticides, and leaking automotive oil, decrease the beauty of our natural world and can negatively affect our water quality. Show us how we can protect our waters.
- 3. Healthy World, Healthy Community:** We depend on our community helpers and water infrastructure to keep our schools, businesses, and hospitals open. We rely on water for fire protection and to keep our economy flowing. Water professionals work behind the scenes 24/7 to treat our water right and protect our environment. We also need clean water for recreational purposes, such as swimming, kayaking, and fishing. Introduce us to water professionals, explain our hidden infrastructure, or share how water activities keep us healthy.
- 4. Healthy World, Healthy Home:** Every year, the EPA's WaterSense promotes Fix a Leak Week to encourage people to find and fix leaks in their homes. Tell us about leaks, how to fix them, or promote the WaterSense label.

To learn more about water conservation and protection, visit our websites for inspiration:

- [Ripple Effect Film Project](http://www.rippleeffectfilmproject.org)
- [Athens-Clarke County Water Conservation Office](http://www.athensclarkecounty.com/waterconservation)
- [Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful](http://www.athensclarkecounty.com/keepathensclarkebeautiful)
- [Athens-Clarke County Stormwater Management](http://www.athensclarkecounty.com/stormwater)
- [EPA WaterSense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)



Step 2: Script and Story Board

Now that you understand the themes and have some initial ideas, it's time to write your script and storyboard. Storyboards help organize your thoughts, plan out your video, and communicate your message effectively. Your film should tell a story and deliver your message in 30 to 90 seconds.

- Write your script and create a storyboard for each shot of the film. Here are links to a few places to get you started:
 - [Blog and video on building a storyboard](#)
 - [Storyboard Templates](#)
- Find royalty-free music to add to your video:
 - [Blog on Using Royalty-Free Music and links](#)
 - [Free Music Archive](#)
 - [Mix Kit Free Sound Effects](#)

Step 3: Lights, Camera, ACTION!

Now that you have your script and storyboard, it's time to get rolling!

- Make sure to charge your camera. You don't want to yell "Cut!" before you're ready.
- Gather all your props, recording and sound equipment, and costumes before your planned shoot.
- Scout locations for filming and determine your cast.
- Check the weather forecast when scheduling your video shoot. The weather can affect your lighting. If planning to film in the rain, plan how to protect your equipment from the wet
- Background noises can be distracting to your audience. Keep your ears open for any background noises. Put the dog away, silence phones, listen for faraway sirens, turn off the TV in the other room, etc. If you discover you have background noise that you can't remove with editing or can't reschedule the shoot, consider a voice-over.
- Consider the lighting needs for your film. Proper lighting creates atmosphere, a visual mood, and adds to your story. Experiment with pinpoint lighting to focus on a cast member. If your set is too dark, your audience can't see your creative props and stars. If it is too bright, the cast appears washed out. Also, pay attention to glare, especially if a cast member wears glasses.
- Shoot everything twice to ensure you have enough footage with which to work. Capture "B-roll" footage to add filler, cutaways, provide context, and visual interest to help tell your story.
- Pay attention to the background. Does the tree behind your star look like it is growing out of their head? Is a random person walking into the frame?
- Equipment suggestions: iPhone or Android phone, tripod, microphone, DSL camera
- Need equipment? Check out the [Ripple Effect Film Equipment Lending Library](#) to borrow tripods, microphones, and adaptors



Step 4: Post-Production and Editing

Once you have all the footage you need, you are ready to edit.

- Free editing software options for desktop computers:
 - Blog: [27 BEST FREE VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE PROGRAMS IN 2021](#)
 - Sample software from the link above:
 - [Shortcut](#)
 - [LWKS](#)
 - Blog: [Tom's Guide to the Best Free Video Editing Software](#)
- Editing tutorials:
 - [Wondershare Filmora: Editing Software for Beginners](#)
 - [Mini-tool Movie Maker for Windows](#)
 - [Introduction to Basic Editing in iMovie](#)
- Remember to keep the video between 30 and 90 seconds of content with 5 seconds of black at the beginning and end. The black space will not count towards your time limit.
- Double-check your audio levels and music copyright before submitting.

Step 5: Submitting Your Film

- High definition videos are strongly encouraged (1280x720 or 1920x1080). Suggested frame rates are 24fps (23.98) or 30fps (29.97).
- Be sure to submit your film to Film Freeway by **11:59 p.m. on January 31, 2022.**
 - <https://filmfreeway.com/RippleEffectFilmProject>

Additional Tips

- Do your research! Content knowledge can prove helpful to your film's story.
- The best films are engaging, fun, clever, and thought-provoking.

