

Reel Voices Film Festival

Rules and Guidelines

Submission Rules and Categories

There are 3 different categories you can choose from when you create and submit your film to the festival.

- **Original Short Film (Festival and Contest)**
- **The Reel Challenge (Video Contest)**
- **Parody Films and Fan Films (Festival Only)**

When you submit any film, you understand and agree to the following rules and terms:

- Films and videos must be written, produced, and performed by students in a language they are studying.
- You must submit the film with the knowledge and consent of all producers and take responsibility for the voice recordings, images, performances, or any personal information appearing in the work itself.
- The information and materials you provide with your film submission may be used, copied, exhibited, and distributed for educational or promotional purposes as part of the film festival. You release any and all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material for educational purposes in relation to this event.
- You must be over eighteen years of age or, if under eighteen years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign and attach the film release form.
- This film festival is part of a research project funded by JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research #24K04057. Participants entering the film festival may be asked to cooperate with the research by completing surveys before and after the event.

REEL VOICES

Original Short Film

In this category you are free to tell your own original story in any genre you choose—drama, comedy, fantasy, documentary, animation, or anything in between! Your short film must completely original, written, directed, and created by you (or with help from friends or classmates) in another language, and must be under 20 minutes. The judges will rate all films and the top-scoring films will be awarded Grand Prizes! All entries can be watched and enjoyed during the Reel Voices Film Festival, and Grand Prize winners will be featured in our live event.

Entry Rules:

- Films must be written, produced, and performed by students in a language they are studying.
- Films may be any genre: comedy, drama, horror, animation, music video, etc.
- Films must be less than 20 minutes in total length.
- Films may be presented in any language being studied, but all films must be subtitled in English.
- Films containing profanity or inappropriate content will not be accepted.
- Films containing plagiarized or copyrighted content will not be accepted.
- Submission by those under 18 years of age requires a parental signature on the film release form. This form is located on our website, under the rules and guidelines, in the downloads section.

Judging Criteria:

Each film will be rated by our judges and by the audience. The top scoring films will be awarded the Best of Show prize!

Judges will score films on 3 basic criteria:

- Content (Acting/Expression, Action/Performance, Dialogue, Message, Theme)
- Visual Elements (Costume/Prop Design, Lighting/Mood, Location/Set Design, Angles, Stationary/moving shots, Transitions)
- Audio and Technical Elements (Music, Sound Effects, Editing)
- Overall Impression (Creativity/Originality)

The Reel Challenge

This a fun creative video-making challenge with the chance to win a great prize! For this category, we will give you a unique prompt and your task is to make a short video around it, under 5 minutes. Get together with friends or classmates, brainstorm ideas, and film something surprising, funny, or inspiring. All submissions can be watched and enjoyed during the Reel Voices Film Festival, and the top 10 submissions will be featured in our live event. The audience will choose the Grand Prize winner!

The Reel Challenge prompt will be announced in July 2025!

Entry Rules:

- Videos must be written, produced, and performed by students in a language they are studying.
- Videos must be between under 5 minutes in length.
- Videos must contain dialogue by students in their original voice in the language they are studying. This can also include narration or voiceover.
- Videos may be presented in any language being studied, but all videos must be subtitled in English.
- Videos containing profanity or inappropriate content will not be accepted.
- Videos containing plagiarized or copyrighted content will not be accepted.
- Submission by those under 18 years of age requires a parental signature on the film release form.

Judging Criteria:

Each submission will be rated by our panel and the 10 top-rated videos will be selected for the final round. The Grand Prize winner will be decided by a live audience.

Parody/Fan Films Works



Do you have a favorite movie, character, or genre you want to make a movie about? In this category, we're looking for parodies or fan films—your own twist on something familiar! You can mimic or imitate other works, but add your own fresh or humorous idea. This is a easy way to have fun with film, experiment with language, and create something unique without running into copyright issues!

What is a parody? What is a fan film? What's the difference?

- A **parody** mimics or imitates other works, but in order to make a statement or as a joke.
- A **fan film** borrows beloved elements of another work (like characters or world), but creates a whole new story.
- Neither copy the original story—instead they offer something new. Parodies are playful or critical, and making us laugh or think, while fan films celebrate the original work by expanding its reach.

Entry Rules:

- Films must be written, produced, and performed by students in a language they are studying.
- Films must successfully transform the original work. They must offer a significant alteration to the original for humor or critique, or a whole new story. Simple remakes or adaptations will not be accepted.
- Films must be 20 minutes or less in total length.
- Films may be presented in any language being studied, but all films must be subtitled in English.
- Films containing profanity or inappropriate content will not be accepted.
- Films containing plagiarized or copyrighted content will not be accepted.
- Submission by those under 18 years of age requires a parental signature on the film release form.

Vetting Criteria:

Due to copyright liabilities, films may be rejected for the festival if they:

- include copyrighted content from the original work (clips, dialogue, music) not considered fair use.
- fail to transform the original work.
- copy or closely follow original works and retain their core essence (even if there are some minor changes).

