



How To Enter

Making videos is fun, but if it's your first time, it's nice to have some help. The aim of this guide is to help you produce a short science or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) video at home in a few simple steps.



Step 1: Choose your Topic

Your 'ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME' video can be about **any science or STEM-related topic**. To give you some inspiration, we've suggested eight different themes for you to explore:

- Climate Action
- How Things Work
- Myths Busted!
- Science and Me
- Science Heroes
- Science in Space
- Science on the Farm
- [Healing the Body, in association with CÚRAM](#)

Discuss the themes with your teacher/youth worker/family/friends to see what might interest you and help you select a topic. Maybe you've always wanted to find out how DNA is used to solve crimes, why we love foods that are not healthy for us, or who discovered penicillin. You might like to demonstrate an experiment (explaining the science behind what you observe, of course) or describe the technology we use every day.

Any aspect of the topic may be communicated by your video, so **be creative and original** but don't try to cover too much – you only have a minute! Use this handy [ReelLIFE SCIENCE brainstorm sheet](#) to explore your chosen topic and find a manageable subject for your video.

While the Healing the Body topic can be about any aspect of medicine, including COVID-19, our good friends in the CÚRAM SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices have provided [additional information](#) about their research, which may inspire you to explore The Heart, The Brain or Stem Cells.



Step 2: Choose your Style

Next, you'll want to decide **how your video will look and feel**. Will it be live action or animated? Humorous or more serious? Will it take the form of a demonstration, an interview or even a song? What's the best way of getting the information across to the viewer in a memorable way?

Because of Social Distancing, for 'ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME', you may want to recruit people in your family to help, or perhaps you can **remotely link in with your classmates or friends** so everyone films a section that can be edited together at the end.

Remember you have the advantage of using a **visual medium**, so feel free to dress up, draw, demonstrate, animate, sing, play, experiment, interview, build and recruit friends, family or whatever you need to tell your story. You just can't go far from home to do it!

Using a [storyboard](#) can be a great idea, to plan what will be seen at all stages of the film.

Above is a highlights reel of videos produced for ReelLIFE SCIENCE over the past few years, to give you an indication of the different styles and approaches taken by filmmakers. You can also view all of the winning videos from previous years on our [2013-2019](#) page, while a more extensive range of videos are available to view in our [Video Library](#).



Step 3: Produce your Video

Film the video using whatever **device** you are most comfortable with, whether it's a smartphone, tablet or camera. Just make sure you film it in **landscape orientation** (i.e. **sideways like in the photo above**), rather than portrait, so it looks well on the big screen.

Top 5 Tips for Filming

- Ensure plenty of storage and battery power before starting.
- Turn on gridlines when filming to frame your scene correctly.
- Zoom with your legs, i.e. move towards your subject.
- Avoid distracting backgrounds.
- Clean your lens.

You can also submit an **animated video**. There are lots of free animation software packages online, or you could use stop-motion techniques to animate modelling clay, toys, puppets or drawings. If you are using stop-motion, a tripod is really useful to keep your camera steady.

Getting the sound right can be one of the most challenging parts of film-making.

Sound quality is crucial to good video, and viewers are more likely to forgive poor image quality over audio quality. Sound quality can often be poor if you are filming outdoors, particularly on windy days (*Pro Tip: use an external microphone like the one on many earphones, inside your clothing for better sound outdoors*), and can negatively impact otherwise excellent video footage. If you think the sound quality is poor or inaudible, consider recording a separate voiceover indoors using your video camera or phone voice recorder and adding it to the video afterwards.

Videos can be made in English, Irish or even using Sign Language, although you may wish to consider including English **subtitles** during editing (or when uploading to YouTube) to appeal to a wider audience, particularly internationally.

If you are using a tablet or smartphone, you can simply use its own **video editing software** or download an app to join your clips together, add images, subtitles, music, sound effects, a voiceover or even credits. If you use a camcorder or digital camera, you will probably need to upload your video to a computer, which will come with its own editing software or you can search online for a free software package to use.

The fantastic [DigitalStories.ie](https://www.digitalestories.ie) website curated by [Michael McNamara](#), Digital Technologies Team Leader with [PDST](#), is an excellent resource for expert and beginner filmmakers, with reviews of free and paid-for apps and websites for filming, editing, animating and finding copyright free music and sounds.

Make sure everything in the video has been created by you!

You cannot use any **copyrighted material** in your film without permission, such as video clips (TV, movies, online videos), images, music, sound recordings, etc. When you upload your finished video to YouTube for submission to 'ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME', your audio track may even be removed if copyrighted material is detected by its software. For more on YouTube's copyright policy, [read here](#). Thankfully, YouTube have a [large catalogue](#) of free music and sound effects for you to use with your video.

Remember to keep the **video length under one minute** as longer videos may be penalised during judging. This is where the use of a [storyboard](#) in the planning phase can really help!

Get **parental consent** for any children identified, appearing or participating in the video, ensuring that parents or guardians are fully aware of the nature of the competition, and the subsequent use and display (including online and at public screenings) of the video entries by ReelLIFE SCIENCE, NUI Galway, our partners and potentially the media and general public (e.g. sharing the videos via Facebook, Twitter, etc.).



Step 4: Submit your Video

To submit your video to 'ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME', you will need to first upload it to YouTube and send us the link via our online [Application Form](#) before the submission deadline of **May 29th 2020**.

If you use a **catchy title** for your video – e.g. something that you might search for on YouTube – you are likely to get more views for your video, than just a generic video name.

It is really important to note that **Video Privacy Settings should be set to 'Public'** so your video can be viewed by our judges and the general public. You can find lots of information in the [YouTube Help Centre](#) about [privacy settings](#), [how to upload videos](#), [supported file formats](#), etc.

After judging, you are free to remove your video from YouTube if you wish, as the video still remains yours. However, **if your video is shortlisted**, we will need a high quality copy of the original video file (to upload to the [ReelLIFE SCIENCE YouTube channel](#) and for public screenings and promotion).

Multiple videos can be submitted by schools and groups, but each one must be submitted individually. You can read about [ReelLIFE SCIENCE's Data Protection Policy here](#).

Click the '**Parental Consent received**' tickbox, to acknowledge that consent has been received for all necessary participants, as outlined above. Completed consent forms do not need to be submitted to ReelLIFE SCIENCE, but to complete the application process you must acknowledge that, where required, they have been completed and received.

Click the '**Agree to Terms & Conditions**' tickbox, to acknowledge that you have read and agree to the competition [Terms and Conditions](#).

After you click submit, you should receive an acknowledgement message sent to the email address you have provided. After the competition, all participants will receive a **Certificate of Participation** to download and print.

Winning videos will be announced in June 2020, and you can **keep up-to-date** via our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.