



Documentary (less than 10 minutes)

The **Documentary** contest focuses on creating a longer-form, in-depth story that explores a specific trend, issue, or individual in greater detail. Unlike shorter broadcast segments, a documentary allows students to dive deeper into a topic, using interviews, research, and visuals to present a comprehensive story. The story should be well-researched, engaging, and informative, offering a thorough exploration of the subject.

Key Elements of the Documentary:

1. In-Depth Exploration of a Subject:

- The documentary should cover a **specific topic** in detail, offering insight and analysis that goes beyond surface-level reporting. The subject could be a social issue, a community event, a historical topic, or a profile of an individual or group. The story should provide a thorough understanding of the topic, often with multiple perspectives and layers of complexity.
- Example topics might include a documentary on mental health awareness, the impact of technology on education, or the story of a local figure who has made a significant impact on the community.

2. Research and Accuracy:

- **Thorough research** is essential for creating a credible and informative documentary. The story should be backed by facts, statistics, and reliable sources. If the documentary covers a complex issue or trend, it's important to include accurate data and well-sourced information to support the narrative.
- Interviews with experts, key figures, or individuals directly affected by the issue should be included to provide authenticity and depth to the story.

3. Strong Narrative Structure:

- A documentary should follow a **clear narrative arc**, even though it's longer and more detailed than shorter broadcast pieces:
 - **Introduction:** Begin with a strong hook that captures the audience's attention and introduces the main subject or question the documentary will explore.
 - **Development:** Build the story by presenting background information, context, and the main points of the documentary. This is where most of the research and interviews are included.
 - **Climax:** Highlight the most significant moment, such as a key revelation, turning point, or impactful moment related to the topic.
 - **Conclusion:** Wrap up the documentary by providing closure, summarizing the key points, and offering a forward-looking statement or call to action.

4. Use of Multiple Perspectives:

- A good documentary often includes **multiple perspectives** to provide a well-rounded view of the subject. These perspectives could come from interviews with experts, participants, or individuals with opposing views. By including a variety of voices, the documentary becomes more balanced and credible.



- Example: If the documentary is about environmental conservation efforts, it might include interviews with environmentalists, local community members, and policymakers.
5. **Interviews and Sound Bites:**
- **Interviews** are a key element in documentaries. The interviews should be insightful and add depth to the topic being discussed. Sound bites should be chosen carefully to provide context, support the narrative, or highlight emotional or key moments.
 - Example: In a documentary about local education, interviews with teachers, students, and administrators provide a range of perspectives on the challenges and successes of the system.
6. **B-Roll and Visual Storytelling:**
- A successful documentary relies on strong **visuals** to help tell the story. **B-roll** footage is essential to complement the interviews and narration, offering viewers a visual understanding of the topic. B-roll can include scenes of the subject in action, relevant locations, archival footage, or related events.
 - Example: For a documentary about a community service project, b-roll could show volunteers at work, events being organized, and the impact on the local area.
7. **Emotional Engagement and Connection:**
- While documentaries are informative, they should also **connect emotionally** with the audience. Highlight personal stories, emotional moments, or compelling visuals that resonate with viewers on a deeper level. This emotional engagement helps to draw the audience into the topic and makes the documentary more impactful.
 - Example: A documentary about overcoming adversity might focus on a personal story of someone facing and overcoming challenges, providing both inspiration and insight.
8. **Pacing and Time Management:**
- The documentary must be **well-paced** to keep the audience engaged for up to 10 minutes. Each section of the documentary (introduction, body, climax, conclusion) should have enough time to be fully developed, but none should overstay its welcome.
 - Avoid spending too much time on any one segment or losing focus by including too much irrelevant information. Every element of the documentary should contribute to the overall story.
9. **Use of Graphics and Titles:**
- **Graphics** and **titles** can be useful tools in a documentary to present information, such as statistics, names of interviewees, or additional context. Graphics should be clear, professional, and used sparingly to enhance, not distract from, the visual narrative.
 - Lower-thirds should be used to introduce interviewees, while more complex graphics may be used to illustrate points, such as data or timelines.
10. **Narration and Script:**
- The **narration** should guide the audience through the documentary, providing context and connecting different sections of the story. The narration should be



clear, concise, and engaging, without being overly technical or dry. The script should focus on explaining the significance of what's being shown and tying all the elements of the documentary together.

- Example: "As the community rallies around the new education initiative, challenges still remain. But for many, the progress so far has been life-changing."

11. Audio and Visual Quality:

- **Technical quality** is crucial for a successful documentary. The audio must be clear, especially for interviews and narration. The visuals should be well-lit, in focus, and steady. Any background music should complement the story without overpowering the narration or interviews.
- Poor quality footage or sound can distract the audience and detract from the overall impact of the documentary.

12. Ethical and Responsible Storytelling:

- Documentaries should maintain **journalistic integrity**, ensuring that the information is accurate and the presentation is fair and balanced. Sensitivity should be shown when dealing with difficult or controversial subjects. The documentary should aim to inform, educate, and engage without misrepresenting or sensationalizing the topic.

Criteria for Judging:

- **Depth and Research:** The thoroughness of the research and how well the documentary explores the chosen topic.
- **Storytelling and Structure:** The ability to tell a cohesive, engaging story with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- **Emotional and Intellectual Impact:** How well the documentary connects with the audience on both an emotional and intellectual level.
- **Visual and Audio Quality:** The technical quality of the footage, interviews, and sound, as well as the effective use of b-roll and graphics.
- **Pacing and Time Management:** The documentary's ability to maintain engagement over the full 10 minutes without feeling rushed or dragging on.
- **Balanced Perspectives:** Whether the documentary presents multiple viewpoints and offers a balanced, fair portrayal of the subject.

In summary, the **Documentary (less than 10 minutes)** contest allows students to create an in-depth, well-researched exploration of a topic. It challenges them to combine storytelling, research, interviews, and visual elements to produce a longer, comprehensive broadcast piece that engages the audience both emotionally and intellectually.