



They did what? video competition student toolkit

About the They did what? video competition

Help us uncover some incredible STEM stories! Create a 3-minute video about the achievements of an unsung STEM star for the chance to win great prizes and have your video featured on the [The GiST](#) website.

The They did what? video competition is open to all Australian school students. You don't need any fancy equipment, just a creative vision and a great story.

Students in Years 5 to 10 can enter either as individuals or as a collaborative team or class. Entries need to be submitted by a teacher, parent or carer.

Students in Foundation to Year 4 can participate in the competition as part of a class entry, which must be submitted by a teacher. If you are a student in Foundation to Year 4, talk to your teacher about how to get involved.

Entries close 4 December 2025 with winners to be announced on 15 December 2025.

Entry requirements

1. Videos must focus on the STEM achievements of a STEM star contributing to STEM in Australia, or an Australian making a difference overseas.
2. Videos must be no longer than 3 minutes, no larger than 600 MB and submitted as MP4 files.
3. Foundation to Year 4 submissions must be submitted as a class entry
4. Year 5 to Year 10 submissions can be created by one student, or by a team of students up to a whole school class (25 students).
5. All video content must be students' own original work, with third-party content allowed if relevant, properly credited and used in line with copyright guidelines.
6. All entries must comply with the [Terms and Conditions of entry](#) and entrants must ensure that:
 - a. any third-party material (for example, images, video, music) included in film is either copyright-free or is included with the appropriate permission and/or approval. Any film that does not comply with copyright will not be considered.
 - b. appropriate permissions/approvals have been obtained to include images, audio or video of people other than themselves.
 - c. parental consent has been obtained for all participating children/students.
 - d. students' privacy is protected if they choose to appear in the video (for example, students featured in the video should not be easily identified by school uniform, name or location).
7. Schools can submit multiple entries.

Judging criteria

Videos will be assessed according to the following criteria.

- Compelling content
- Creative storytelling

- Well researched
- Story structure and coherence
- Spotlighting an unsung STEM star
- Entertainment value
- Overall video quality
- Adheres to the Terms and Conditions of entry

Prize categories

There will be three prize-winners for each of the four categories. Prize-winners will receive:

Foundation – Year 4 (class/group entries only): \$300 Visa Gift Card to the winning entry and 2 x \$100 Visa Gift Card for runner-up prizes. (Note: All prizes in the Foundation to Year 4 category will be awarded to the school of the winning entry.)

Year 5 – Year 6: \$300 Visa Gift Card for the winner and 2 x \$100 Visa Gift Card for runner-up prize-winners.

Year 7 – Year 8: \$300 Visa Gift Card for the winner and 2 x \$100 Visa Gift Card for runner-up prize-winners.

Year 9 – Year 10: \$300 Visa Gift Card for the winner and 2 x \$100 Visa Gift Card for runner-up prize-winners.

Tips for video storytelling

1. Check out some of the great entries from our last video [competition](#).
2. Watch a range of different videos, consider the features you really like, and make design decisions about the approach you'll take. Think about the following.
 - a) What visual content will you use? Will it be live action, interview, animation or images? Will you have a presenter on-screen or use a voiceover?
 - b) How will you tell your subject's story. What narrative voice will you use? How will you grab and keep your viewers' attention?
3. Research your topic and subject thoroughly. If you're able to interview your STEM star, consider having an exploratory discussion first, to determine what questions you might like to ask, or consider what additional footage you might need to tell the story.
4. Storyboard your video. You can use the template available on the [competition website](#). Think about camera angles and key features of each shot.
5. Share your draft storyboard with others and gather feedback. Adjust your storyboard in response to the feedback.
6. Make a shot list.
7. Gather any still images you will use, ensuring you record appropriate citations and have permission to include the images in your video. If you don't, think about how you could create your own original art/images to use instead. Check out the copyright

handout on the competition website to remind you what you can and can't do with other people's work.

8. Shoot your video. Remember to be on the lookout for unplanned footage as well!
9. Edit your video. Remember to include the title and credits slides, and that the whole video must not be longer than 3 minutes.
10. Share your video with others and gather feedback. Edit your video in response to the feedback.

Acknowledgement and copyright overview

What is copyright?

Copyright is the legal protection creators such as authors, artists and musicians have over the works they have created. Copyright is automatic – you don't have to apply for it, and it doesn't matter if there is no © symbol, if it is your original work, then you own the copyright.

Why is it important for this competition?

The winning entries will be shared online so it is important that they comply with copyright law. In our last competition, we had a lot of great entries that couldn't be accepted because they didn't comply with the copyright requirements. Any entries that don't comply with copyright law will not be judged.

When do you need permission?

Put simply, if you haven't created it yourself, then you may need permission to include it in your video.

This includes:

- photos
- music
- illustrations
- book covers
- video clips/footage.

How to make sure you don't infringe anyone's copyright

- Make the material yourself! This is the simplest way to avoid copyright headaches. In our last competition, we saw animation, reenactments and stop motion all used to tell stories! These were some of the best entries. There are lots of free, open-source animation programs available online. Check out [Pencil2D](#), [Blender](#) or [Krita](#). Get creative about how you tell your story!
- Source images from a free image library. Check out our handy list below.
- Ask the person you are profiling if they can provide you with images to use in your video.
- Ask for permission to include the content you want to use in your video. See below for a permissions request form that you can adapt.
- If you are using a program like [Canva](#) to create your video, check out the images and sounds available to use within the program.

- Find material that is available under a [creative commons license](#).

There are many online sites that offer public domain, royalty-free and Creative Commons (CC) music and images that you can include in your video. For example:

- Search using the creative commons search function:
<https://search.creativecommons.org/>
- Wikimedia Commons is a good place for historical images – just make sure you check the licence terms of the desired image:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
- The GiST [image bank](#) is home to a selection of STEM-related images to use that are free for education
- [Pixabay](#)
- [Pexels](#)
- [Unsplash](#)
- [Free music archive](#)

Asking permission

Sometimes you find the perfect image online and you really want to use it. If this is the case, you will need to ask the creator for permission to include it. If it is unclear who owns the copyright, try sending a message through the 'contact us' section of the website. Once you've figured out who owns the copyright to the content you want to reproduce, you need to ask permission.

Here is a template you can adapt and send if you want to seek permission.

Dear <INSERT © holder/content owner here>

My name is <insert your name>, and I am a school student entering a video competition run by The GiST. You can learn about the competition here. I am writing to request permission to reproduce <CONTENT DETAIL> in my video entry. I am seeking permission to reproduce this content for non-commercial, educational use only. The video may be displayed on The GiST website and social media platforms.

Kind regards,

<Insert name>

Tip: Applying for permission from a copyright holder can take a while, so if you want to try get permission to include something in your video, you need to make sure you get onto it early! And have a backup, in case they say no or you're unable to find the © holder.

List and acknowledge sources

You will need to include a list of your sources on the last slide of your video using the template provided in the PowerPoint presentation, available on the competition website.

This is important for two reasons.

- 1) It shows us where you found the content included in your video so we can be confident that you have either sought permission or are adhering to the content license terms.
- 2) Credit is given to the original content creator which is the right (and legal) thing to do!

Some copyright holders or content sites might have instructions about how you credit them. Other times, you might just make it up. The important thing is to include a description or name for the content (so it can be identified) and the name of the copyright holder.

Some example acknowledgement credits.

Flowering gum © Francis Moon, reproduced with permission.

Sydney Harbour Bridge, Greg O'Beirne, own work, Creative Commons BY 2.5,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=550802>

Telescope, [Pexels/Chokniti Khongchum](#)

Picture of Jill Simpson reproduced with permission from Jill Simpson.

[Single steps](#), Ketsa, Free Music Archive.

TIP: Dealing with copyright restrictions may feel like a headache, but it often forces us to come up with creative workarounds. **Tip**

: Dealing with copyright restrictions may feel like a headache, but it often forces us to come up with creative workarounds. In our last competition, we had entries that used animation, stop motion and reenactment to tell their stories. Think beyond pictures and voiceover. And remember, creativity is part of the judging criteria!

Use of AI in videos

If you want to use AI to help create your entry, we ask that you acknowledge this. For example, you might want to use AI to read out a voiceover, in which case you could include a line in the credits that acknowledges this.

Keep in mind that 'creative storytelling' is one of the judging criteria – and there is no match for human creativity!

Protecting your privacy

Any student featured in any of the videos must consent to be included in the video, and permission must also be given by a parent, carer or guardian. This is outlined in the competition Terms and Conditions.

Any students featured in the videos should not be easily identified by school uniform, name or location. Credits should only include students' first names and last name initials.

Supporting resources

There are some resources available on the competition website to help you get started.

They did what? PowerPoint

This presentation includes:

- a short engagement activity
- examples of different approaches to video storytelling
- a step-by-step overview of how to create the video
- a checklist to review prior to submission.

Copyright handout

This one-page overview will help you understand copyright and what you can and can't do with other people's material. Print this out and keep it handy while you plan your video.

Storyboard template

Use a storyboard to help visually plan and organise your video. You can use it to break down scenes, plan action and script dialogue.

For information on how to enter, head to:

www.thegist.edu.au/students/they-did-what-competition