



Creating Great CSMF Projects: Examples and Playlists

1. **“Clarity”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_h9Qo6UHxw&ab_channel=AmyPitotti shows great use of a camera’s feature of blurring
2. **“Because Writing Is”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHzyNfd9mw> shows effective use of text and great editing
3. **“Valencia Strain”** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mZ3oajUVH0goYqEHwKApwFET8vSsRrWP/view> shows how lighting AND sound impact the story and its mood
4. **“Butterfly Playground”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYiyCgwBdnk> shows very clever use of integrating animation into “live” footage
5. **“Break the Pattern”** [Break the Pattern](#) uses metaphor and creative use of text to tell an important message; great editing lifts it to another level
6. **“Metamorphosis”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_7iUXOzJGE demonstrates Claymation’s unique features
7. **“Boston Tea Party”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LHYZ4EyVP8> uses low-tech and still image animation creatively
8. **“10%”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Caj_v09PU6A&ab_channel=MMETStudents is an extended video story that could be a humor-tinged detective TV show



Tips for Becoming a Finalist! [6 minute video overview](#)

All videos listed below are at the Festival playlist Great Examples from Previous Finalists [here](#):

Technical Expertise:	Content (Story/Concept):	Creative/Innovative:	Media Literacy (Copyright & Fair Use):
Effective and Integrated use of camera work, lighting, audio clarity, and editing to support storytelling.	Clarity and impact of the story, including plot development, pacing, and emotional engagement. Strong projects tell a cohesive story that resonates	Originality in visual style, technique, and storytelling. Innovative projects show creative risk-taking in narrative, tone, and technical methods.	Ethical use of film tools, proper attribution, and awareness of the film's impact on audiences. Note: AI use is OK if cited.

OPTIMIZING YOUR PROJECT TO MEET THE CALIFORNIA STUDENT MEDIA FESTIVAL RUBRIC

Judges review all media projects by using the festival’s rubric ([CSMF 2025 Rubric](#)). The judges scores, based on this rubric, are what determine finalists and, ultimately, the grand prize winners selected from the finalists. The links below go to great examples of entered videos that did well on the rubric scale. These examples are all videos, but the Festival is open to—and encourages— a variety of mediums, such as AI, coding, 3D printing, photography and music .



OPTIMIZING YOUR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE SCORE

Technical Expertise:
Effective and Integrated use of camera work, lighting, audio clarity, and editing to support storytelling.

Whatever medium you use, your work should demonstrate that you know how to use that medium's tools to tell your story. For example, high-quality video/film requires excellent camera work, consideration of light and sound, and post-production editing.

OPTIMIZING YOUR CONTENT SCORE

Content (Story/Concept):
Clarity and impact of the story, including plot development, pacing, and emotional engagement. Strong projects tell a cohesive story that resonates

You want your content, be it a story or report or demo, to be meaningful, clear, understandable, engaging, and compelling.

A. A story needs to have a good plot with interesting characters and settings, a compelling theme, all with good timing.

1. **“Butterfly Playground”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYiyCgwBdnk> a true story but it's told with a literary metaphor that lifts it up

2. **“Below the Surface”** <https://vimeo.com/115609068> “heavy/deep” but great story building

3. **“Valencia Strain”**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mZ3oajUVH0goYqEHwKApwFET8vSsRrWP/view> visuals tell the story compellingly [maybe too creepy for some]

B. Non-fiction content also needs to be accurate and well-researched, as well as told in an engaging way.

4. **“Hayao Miyazaki”**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nNx-gDr1d6P6b_PRfoXbkd3F8Wssbw17/view shares a good variety of authoritative resources PLUS the presenter's own drawings and costume

5. **“ It Doesn't Have to be This Way”**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DLYHFCDM_g uses metaphor and creative use of text to tell an important message



OPTIMIZING YOUR CREATIVITY/INNOVATION SCORE

Creative/Innovative:
Originality in visual style, technique, and storytelling. Innovative projects show creative risk-taking in narrative, tone, and technical methods.

Each medium has its unique features, such as camera point of view and sound effects. Mixing sources such as computer screens and cell phones can add perspective, which is especially impactful with good post-production editing. But for these techniques to be effective, they have to be based on a compelling message. Truly creative and innovative projects push the envelope in both directions.

1. **“Because Writing Is”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHzyNfd9mw> shows effective use of text and great editing
2. **“The Treasure of Immortality”**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-0rc4dB6bo&ab_channel=YouthCinemaProject uses a fanciful story about ethics to cleverly use homemade props
3. **“Metamorphosis”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_7iUXOzJGE shows a clever way to give a parable using analogy
4. **“Valencia Strain”**
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mZ3oajUVH0goYqEHwKApwFET8vSsRrWP/view> tells a subtle and suspenseful horror story; orange you glad you aren’t seeing this at midnight?
5. **“It Doesn’t Have to be This Way”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWHF9-79Szc> uses metaphor and a creative use of text to tell an important message

© OPTIMIZE YOUR MEDIA LITERACY SCORE

**Media Literacy
(Copyright & Fair Use):**
Ethical use of film tools, proper attribution, and awareness of the film’s impact on audiences. Note: AI use is OK if cited.

Media literacy involves using a variety of mediums effectively and responsibly. This part of the rubric focuses on giving credit (also called citing and attributing) to humans and material resources to create your project. This practice is the right thing to do (and legal), AND your viewers may want to check out those sources. And remember to credit yourself! If you make your work public, you need to get written permission for copyrighted visual and sound SO consider using public domain, Creative Commons and your own original work. For more details about copyright, see <https://rb.gy/jzp5gb>

1. **“Butterfly Playground”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYiyCgwBdnk> uses simple credits at the end
2. **“The Treasure of Immortality”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-0rc4dB6bo&ab_channel=YouthCinemaProject reflects ending movie credits with both people and music
3. **“Crooked Parallel Lines”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ju7W5se5QY4> credits leading actors, director and editor at the start
4. **“Hayao Miyazaki”** https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nNx-gDr1d6P6b_PRfoXbkd3F8Wssbw17/view credits sources as they are shown; this practice is useful when you lots of images to help you find those resources
5. **“Boston Tea Party”** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LHYZ4EyVP8> shows a creative way to cite people and resources

[California Student Media Festival](#) 3/12/25

