



Video Awards 2011

Important Contest Documents Document

As of September 7, 2010

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On May 3, 2011 we shall gather at Victory Assembly of God church behind the Lakeland Square Mall for the Polk County version of Academy Awards Night. The Video Awards Night Ceremony is a star-studded gala at which we honor the best in TV production from around our district. This multimedia extravaganza will include lavish praise, enthusiastic applause, childish shouts of glee, certificates, trophies, audience voting, and special electronic prizes. In accordance with the evening's importance, please honor yourself and your school by dressing as formally as possible.

Like last year, we are splitting our ceremony into two sections. At 5 p.m. we shall honor all of our elementary schools and at 7 p.m. we shall celebrate the success of our middle schools and high schools. No one will be admitted into the church between 5:30 p.m. and the end of the elementary awards program.

All TV production teams and their teachers are encouraged to attend so we can celebrate our successes together and so that everyone can see what other schools are doing. Parents are also welcome, but students will be held responsible for their parents' behavior. Even administrators will be admitted.

Schools may enter videos in any or all of 10 categories but only one entrant per category per school is permitted. Judging will be based on recognized television production standards as described in the *ITV Best Practices* document on the ITV website. This document, as well as copies of the specific scoring sheets that judges will use to evaluate videos, is posted in the Video Awards section of the ITV website.

While technical merit (sound, lighting, editing, etc.) is very important, a strong emphasis will again be placed on creativity. One school may enjoy an equipment or facility advantage over another but people are creative, not equipment.

Trophies, digital camcorders and Apple iPods will be presented to the top TV production student at the elementary, middle and senior high levels. Nominees should be leaders who are in good standing in all their classes. Students nominated by their schools will be presented with medallions and certificates, and will assist in the distribution of category awards at the ceremony, as well as in the opening act.

In each category, the judges, all of whom reside outside Polk, will identify those entries which meet a threshold of 70% of best practices for that category. This group of entries will be labeled as **Outstanding** and there is no limit as to number.

Outstanding entries will be recognized on the large screens at the Awards Ceremony by means of a still picture with accompanying school graphics. Certificates will be awarded after the ceremony to all **Outstanding** entries.

The judges will also choose the **Best** entry from among this **Outstanding** group for special recognition at the Ceremony. Judges will seek to break ties by looking at technical merit scores and a special designation of *Judge's Award for Excellence* will be awarded to the runner-ups in all tiebreaking situations. TV production crews who produce a **Best** entry will come down to the stage at the Ceremony, with one spokesman allowed to step to the mic, except for category 6, Anchor Teams. Those Students who are not dressed for the occasion or who are chewing gum are asked not to speak. Inappropriate remarks may result in the revocation of an award. This is a VERY PUBLIC EVENT which gives our entire school system a chance to shine.

General Contest Rules

☒ All video entries must be received by the Instructional Television office at the Jim Miles Professional Development Center by 5pm, Friday, March 11th, 2011.

☒ Each randomly selected news show must be submitted as a self-contained QuickTime movie on a USB flash drive supplied by ITV. All other entries must be submitted as separate QuickTime movies. If a category involves more than one clip, put all the clips in the same QuickTime movie, but use graphics between clips to separate them (Clip one:, Clip two:, etc.). Put no more than 5 seconds of black between clips. **Remember that in Category 1 (Daily News Show) shows 4 & 5 must be separate QuickTime movies.**

☒ Using computer graphics, identify in the video itself, approximately 5 seconds before the video begins, the title, the category, and the school. In category one, identify the date the news show aired. Every video entered in categories 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10 must have a title. In categories 4, 5 & 6, instead of a title, identify the anchors' names and their grade in school. **Put any credits at the end rather than the beginning of your entry.**

☒ Only school board personnel, currently enrolled students, and school board equipment may be used in the production of all videos. Home video and computer equipment is also acceptable but professional editing facilities or equipment may not be used.

☒ Copyrighted music and the use of scenes from prerecorded tapes are permissible but the use of such copyrighted material **must be acknowledged in a graphic while a prerecorded video clip is playing** ("footage provided by Universal Studios", for example). If copyrighted music is involved, the artist and recording label must be acknowledged in the credits. **Schools are strongly encouraged to produce their own music** with school choruses and orchestras, local bands, or with music creation programs like Soundtrack and Garage Band.

☒ All videos must have been produced after March 6, 2010. News Shows entered in Category 1 must have aired *as is* during the 2010-2011 school year. **Do not alter a news show after airing it to make it look better for the contest.**

Category Rules

Category 1: Morning Announcements Show

This is the big daddy of all the categories since news shows are the focal point of school television production. In fact, the entire ITV program was started during the 1989-1990 school year specifically to provide schools with the equipment and the training to produce daily news shows and reduce comparably ineffective intercom announcements. Awards will include certificates and trophies for all *Outstanding* winners, and certificates, trophies and electronics for the **Best** news shows.

Videos entered in this category must include actual morning announcements shows which were broadcast *as is* over a school's closed-circuit television system during the current school year. Judging will be based on the creative motivational power of the show to get students to pay attention to the news (25%), on technical merit (25%), on use of graphics (25%), and on comprehensiveness (25%). **Do not** submit shows that are more than 8 minutes long. The 8-minute deadline includes credits and bloopers.

Schools should produce news shows every day of the week, although exceptions for special circumstances are allowed. Producing news shows only four or fewer days on a regular basis is not permitted.

Comprehensiveness includes those elements of a news show that take it beyond the realm of two people sitting in front of a camera reading announcements, an undesirable technique referred to in the broadcast industry as the *talking head syndrome*. Such elements include video clips, feature segments, interviews, reports, and music.

Two of the shows submitted for category 1 are at the discretion of the school but three shows will be chosen by the ITV department during the school year. Random dates will be selected and announced within one week's time of the date. Schools who wish to enter this category should keep a copy of all news shows for at least one week.

Each random show needs to be submitted as a separate QuickTime file on a USB flash drive supplied by ITV. The other two required shows need be submitted as separate QuickTime Movies on the hard drive that ITV supplies for all Video Awards entries. Be sure that your random shows are not also submitted as one of the other two entries and always include the date. Mark down the dates of the random shows you submit for your own records.

Label the random shows as Random Show 1, Random Show 2, and Random Show 3. Label the other two shows as Show 4 and Show 5, with 4 being your best choice between the two.

Category 2: Commercial/Public Service Announcement

Videos entered in this category should promote any school activity or worthwhile cause, including sporting events, club functions, field days, yearbook purchases, library use, fund raising, etc. Judging will be based on the motivational power of the commercial to get people to go to the event, use the service, buy the product, or follow the advice (25%), on how clear your sales message is (25%), on how creative you are (25%), and how technically smooth your taping and editing are (25%). The maximum length for any commercial or PSA is 60 seconds.

Category 3: Music Video

Videos entered in this category should combine any style of music with a selection of video scenes smoothly edited together. Music videos need not tell a story or make a point, although many times having them do one or the other does make them more entertaining. Entries involving original songs performed by students often score higher if the singing or instrumentation is good. Judging will be based on creativity (40%), on the artistic match between music and video (30%) and on technical merit (30%). A great deal of latitude will be extended in judging technical merit since unusual lighting, special effects and offbeat camera angles are often the hallmark of popular music videos. Good taste is expected.

Category 4: Solo Male Announcer/Reporter

Entrants will be judged on the basis of eye contact (25%), enthusiasm/personality (25%), versatility (25%), and voice inflection and clarity (25%). A sense of humor can be a positive attribute for any announcer but beware of distracting silliness. Showing your nominee in a variety of settings is desirable because it demonstrates versatility, a strength for any announcer. Clips should be approximately 1-2 minutes each.

Category 5: Solo Female Announcer/Reporter

Entrants will be judged on the basis of eye contact (25%), enthusiasm/personality (25%), versatility (25%) and voice inflection and clarity (25%). A sense of humor can be a positive attribute for any announcer but beware of distracting silliness. Showing your nominee in a variety of settings is desirable because it showcases versatility, a strength for any announcer. Clips should be approximately 1-2 minutes each.

Category 6: Announcing Team

Entrants will be judged on the basis of eye contact (20%), voice inflection and clarity (20%), enthusiasm/personality (20%), and team interaction (40%). The key in this category is a natural, unforced interaction between the anchors. Clips should be approximately 1-2 minutes each.

Category 7: Reporting & Interviewing

Entrants will be judged on the basis of script smoothness & preparation (25%), natural sound and B-roll (25%), reporter's voice inflection and clarity (25%), and importance and variety of topics (25%). At least five of the entries should feature a reporter on camera, although that reporter need not be the same person in every case. Submit no clip longer than five minutes.

Category 8: Documentary

Entrants will be judged on the basis of comprehensiveness (25%), clarity and organization (25%), importance of topic (25%), and technical merit (25%). Documentaries include videos that deal with sports seasons, programs, people, places, and issues. Traditionally, documentaries that deal with larger social issues and topics outside the school setting seem to have a better chance of winning if they are produced well. Avoid submitting documentaries longer than 7-10 minutes unless the topic is so compelling that the interest of average viewers does not wane. 15 minute time limit.

Category 9: School Promotion Video

Entrants will be judged on the basis of technical merit (25%), creativity (25%), comprehensiveness (25%), and enthusiastic promotion of your school (25%). Videos entered in this category will be added by the district office to each school's website with the purpose of promoting that school's climate, successes, programs, clubs, students, and staff. 8 minute maximum.

Category 10: Short Film

Short films may be original productions or spoofs of TV shows or films. Entrants will be judged on the basis of script/continuity (25%), acting (25%), entertainment value (25%) and technical merit (25%). Make sure that all dialogue is clearly heard and, although there is no specific time limit, be realistic about limited human attention spans. Also remember that these short films are being produced in a school environment and some topics and scenes (two students in bed partially nude, for instance, or one student shooting another) are not appropriate for school viewing. Entries in this category may be comedies, dramas, or non-computer animations.

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The Television Production Student of the Year application will be submitted online. Go to the following link under Video Awards Headquarters on the ITV website (www.formspring.com/forms/itv-soty). Note that the form requires you to also submit a digital picture of your student in the .jpg, .gif, or .bmp format. This picture should be taken or scanned at nothing smaller than 1024 X 768 resolution so that the picture appears in high quality in our program ceremony graphics.

On a separate sheet, write a letter of recommendation indicating why this student should be the elementary, middle, or senior high TV production student of the year. Above all else, the judges will be looking for student role models who have demonstrated leadership skills in addition to expertise in TV production. Include relevant information from prior school years, as well as letters of recommendation from teachers and other witnesses to the student's leadership, including fellow students, church and community leaders, employers, etc.

The online form, the picture, and the portfolio of recommendation letters are due in the ITV office Monday, February 22, 2010. It is very important that your nominee be at the ceremony since nominees open the envelopes and announce the category winners. Please confirm that date with parents, who are, of course, also strongly encouraged to attend. We ask that you not nominate a student who cannot participate in the ceremony.

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Best Practices for Operating a Model ITV Program

These practices justify the allocation of studio space, the purchase of equipment & software, and the training of personnel.

1. Each school produces a daily news show that is viewed by everyone in the school simultaneously in classrooms and other student meeting areas.
2. That news show follows ITV's published Best Practices, preferably taped or computer generated because of the potential quality computer editing provides. Five of these shows are then entered in the district's Video Awards competition so that they may be effectively evaluated.
3. Each school produces other videos, especially of an instructional nature, at least some of which are also entered in the district's Video Awards competition so that they may be effectively evaluated.
4. Students other than those who produce this daily news show also receive instruction on the use of equipment in the studio, insuring the use of the studio throughout the day.
5. Teachers other than those who supervise the news show also receive instruction on the use of equipment in the studio so that their students can produce multimedia projects.
6. Middle schools and high schools have at least one TV production class open to all grade levels. The ideal model is at least three middle school classes, one per grade level, and four high school classes, one per grade level. The continuing success of the program depends on students who return to take all four years of TV production.
7. Elementary schools are strongly encouraged to form ITV teams of two or three adults so that the responsibility for using the TV studio and producing the news show does not fall on the shoulders of any one person. This team could consist of a media specialist, network manager, lab manager, regular classroom teacher, music teacher, art teacher, etc.
8. Schools use their closed circuit system as the primary and, to whatever extent is possible, the only means of communication on a daily basis except for announcements of an emergency nature.

Best Practices for Production of a School News Show

These practices ensure that the news show will function as an effective communication tool and have a significant impact on both the overall atmosphere and the academic success of the school. They also have a direct bearing on the staff's perception that viewing the show is a worthwhile use of class time.

1. School news shows strive to promote academic achievement by recognizing students, teachers, whole classes, and even the entire school for small and large classroom successes.
2. Using a game-show approach or other creative methodology, school news shows include math, science, English, and social studies "problems" which students or whole classes compete to answer.
3. School news shows promote FCAT success by posing example questions and by promoting a positive school attitude towards the exam.
4. The majority of announcements have accompanying graphics, especially graphics which include both text and pictures or clip art. These graphics should be large enough and stand out from the background enough to be read from across a classroom. Animation of graphics is encouraged, but such animation should

- enhance rather than distract from the actual announcements themselves. Legibility is always the most important aspect of television graphics.
5. The majority of announcements are accompanied by interviews, reports, and cutaway shots so as to minimize the unwanted talking head syndrome and enhance the journalistic content of the show. News crews remind themselves constantly that television is a “show me” medium, not a “tell me” one.
 6. Professional name bars are used to identify anchors, reporters, and all interview subjects. These namebars, also known in the industry as *lower thirds*, are usually enhanced with thematic pictures and clip art and are usually animated. Like all graphics, they must be large enough to be seen from across a classroom.
 7. Show segments are taped in the digital format or loaded directly into and smoothly edited on a computer. This best practice strongly encourages the use of taped or digitized news shows rather than live ones.
 8. The video aspects of shows are comparable to that found on regular television, which is only rarely plagued by shaky camera work, dark or out-of-focus video, or silhouettes. A tripod is used in almost every taping situation, the rule of thirds is followed, and only reporters and anchors look right into the camera.
 9. The audio aspects of shows are also comparable to that found on regular television, which has consistent sound levels. Instead of the built-in camcorder mic, clip-on (lavaliere) or hand-held microphones are used in almost all cases. Hand-held mics are not passed to or held by interviewees.
 10. Anchors and reporters have the best on-camera skills available in the school and represent good role models, having been chosen by the combined methodology of audition and teacher recommendation.
 11. Written scripts and storyboards, including effective transitions, are used to provide shows with a more polished look.
 12. All on-camera personnel should practice consistent eye contact with the camera and use emotion and inflection in their voices so as to prevent a robotic voice.
 13. Although the effective use of humor will often increase viewership, such humor should always be in good taste, should have specific relevance in a given news show, and should not be perceived as the misguided efforts of a limited number of TV production students to entertain each other.
 14. News shows should minimize the use of superfluous segments (like asking students what their favorite dog is) and, instead, should include segments with higher journalistic integrity.
 15. School news show teams should pursue comprehensive coverage of not only activities and sports, but classroom projects, community events, and local and national issues of importance to youth.
 16. Music videos, especially ones which showcase large numbers of the student and staff, are incorporated into news shows as often as time permits. Music must be chosen carefully so as to reflect different tastes (not just those of the news team) and must not include any offensive or suggestive lyrics.
 17. Shows open with edited introductions and close with credits. Both should be kept to a reasonable length, however.

Category 1: Daily News Show

Videos entered in this category feature actual morning announcements shows which were broadcast *unaltered* over a school's closed-circuit television system during the current school year. The dates for three of the five shows entered were chosen randomly by the district office; the dates of the other two entries were determined by the schools themselves. Judging criteria are as follows:

Creative Motivational Power (25 points)

Any entertaining elements which encourage viewers (especially students) to watch the show, including a lively pace, the use of music, large numbers of students featured on camera, humor, reporters who have personality and charisma, going on location, and the inclusion of segments which would be of high interest to most viewers.

Technical Merit (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and volume, including the proper placement and use of microphones
- B. Tripod-steady but often creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient leadroom, noseroom, and headroom
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes;
- D. Editing smoothness
- E. Special effects and news sets, including the backgrounds chosen for stand-up segments while on location

Graphics (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following elements:

- A. Size & Legibility (graphics must be visible from the back of a classroom)
- B. Proper use of colors so that graphical elements contrast with background
- C. The use of visual elements like clip art and pictures
- D. Motion (static graphics are not in style in the television industry)
- E. Creative Styling (themed graphics that mesh with show or segment topics)

Comprehensiveness (25 points)

Comprehensiveness includes those elements of a news show that take it beyond the realm of two people sitting in front of a camera reading announcements, an undesirable technique referred to in the broadcast industry as the *talking head syndrome*. Such elements include graphics, video clips, feature segments, interviews, and reports. Comprehensive shows cover school life thoroughly and also branch out to deal with important local, state and national issues and other topics of concern or interest to younger audiences.

Category 2: Sixty-second Commercials

Videos entered in this category feature sixty-second commercials broadcast over a school's closed-circuit television system. These commercials can promote any school activity, including sporting events, club functions, field days, yearbook purchases, media center use, fund raising, etc. Or, they may be public service announcements for worthwhile activities like donating blood, or volunteering for the Red Cross. Judging criteria are as follows:

Motivational Power (25 points)

Any elements which motivate viewers (especially students) to buy the product, perform the activity, come out to the event, contribute to the fund raiser, etc. The more judges are moved to positive action, the higher this score should be, although different people are motivated by different factors. For some, excitement does the trick, while for others a sense of duty or responsibility can be just as powerful a motivator. Still a third group participates because their peers are doing so in large numbers, while other motivational plays target a search for good price bargains or the desire to be top dog in a contest

Clarity of Sales Message (25 points)

Although some national commercials leave viewers scratching their heads about exactly what was being promoted or what they should do after having seen the commercial, our contest encourages schools to air commercials and PSAs with clear messages. Clarity is often achieved with simplicity because, after all, you have only 60 seconds to get your message out. Repeating your message usually reinforces it, as does the use of attention-getting graphics.

Creativity (25 points)

Americans see thousands of commercials each year so commercial producers are motivated to make ads which stand out from the mainstream. That's where creativity comes in. Sometimes being creative means taking an old idea or theme and giving it a new twist, a principle of both commercials and comedy Aristotle ruminated about 2,000 years ago. Many believe, however, that a higher form of creativity involves taking a brand new approach. Hard to explain but easy to recognize, creativity elicits viewer responses like "how clever!" or "I wish I had thought of that."

Technical Merit (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and volume
- B. Tripod-steady but often creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient leadroom, noseroom, and headroom
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes
- D. Editing smoothness
- E. Special effects, props and backgrounds

Category 3: Music Videos

Videos entered in this category combine any style music with video scenes that tell a story or create an artistic impression. Maximum length is 5 minutes and judging criteria are as follows:

Artistic Match between Music and Visual Images (30 points)

One of the biggest decisions any music video producer makes is deciding exactly what video scenes will be on the screen at every moment the song is playing. Many of us hear songs on the radio or on a musical device like an iPod before we ever see the matching video, and then find ourselves amused, disappointed, surprised, entertained, etc. when we see the music video produced to go with that song. Sometimes we believe that the video matches the music perfectly, while other times we disagree with the producer's interpretation of the song's meaning or mood.

Creativity (40 points)

Music videos became a popular form of both art and entertainment in the early 1980s. Since that time thousands of them have flashed across our theatre and television screens on movies, music video channels, and both news and sports broadcasts. With all those models to choose from, it is no wonder that some music videos emulate or parody others, an approach that can still be viewed as a form of creativity. That would be especially true if a school rewrites the lyrics of a popular song or has a vocal or instrumental group or individual within the school perform the song. Many artists, on the other hand, seek their own unique sound and look, writing, performing, and filming from scratch, an approach most would argue represents creativity in its highest form.

Technical Merit (30 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and volume
- B. Tripod-steady but often creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient lead room, nose room, and head room
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes
- D. Editing smoothness
- E. Special effects
- F. Props and backgrounds

Category 4: Solo Male Announcer/Reporter

Entries in this category showcase the talents of male announcers and reporters. Schools submit ten clips of the same announcer, each one approximately 1-2 minutes long.

Judging criteria are as follows:

Eye Contact (25 points)

In our culture, no aspect of public speaking, whether that speaking occurs before a live audience or before a camera, is more important than eye contact. Reporters and anchors should look right into the lens unless a b-roll/voice over combination is being used.

Glancing at note cards is acceptable but should be kept to a minimum. Likewise, co-anchors would be expected to look at each other as well as at the camera. The same is true for reporters talking to interviewees.

Enthusiasm/Personality (25 points)

There is no question that we like to look at and listen to announcers who have charisma and personality rather than lifeless robots. For many years, news anchors and reporters were judged solely by their grandfatherly and staid on-camera presence (think Walter

Cronkite or Edward R. Murrow). Modern audiences, especially younger ones, wish to be entertained at the same time they are informed and therefore put more weight on the charisma of on-air personalities, which is not to say they cannot be professional at the same time.

Versatility (25 points)

Those seeking jobs in the television industry never know what they are going to be called on to do in a studio, at a production house, or on location, so versatility is a valuable skill. (The same could actually be said for the entire job market.) Schools are encouraged to showcase their nominees for best anchor in a variety of settings rather than submit all 10 entries with someone sitting at a news desk.

Voice Inflection and Clarity (25 points)

If eye contact is number one, then voice inflection and clarity are a close second. Although movie and television actor Ben Stein has made a handsome living speaking in a monotone as a spokesman for Visine and as a teacher in *Ferris Buhler's Day Off*, his success is the exception and an integral part of his comedic style. Polished anchors and reporters speak clearly, slowly and with significant inflection in their voice.

Category 5: Solo Female Announcer/Reporter

Entries in this category showcase the talents of female announcers and reporters. Schools submit ten clips of the same announcer, each one approximately 1-2 minutes long.

Judging criteria are as follows:

Eye Contact (25 points)

In our culture, no aspect of public speaking, whether that speaking occurs before a live audience or before a camera, is more important than eye contact. Reporters and anchors should look right into the lens unless a b-roll/voice over combination is being used. Glancing at note cards is acceptable but should be kept to a minimum. Likewise, co-anchors would be expected to look at each other as well as at the camera. The same is true for reporters talking to interviewees.

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Category 6: Announcing Team

Entries in this category showcase the talents of a school's top anchor team. Schools submit ten clips of the same two announcers, each one approximately 1-2 minutes long. Judging criteria are as follows:

Eye Contact (20 points)

In our culture, no aspect of public speaking, whether that speaking occurs before a live audience or before a camera, is more important than eye contact. Reporters and anchors should look right into the lens unless a b-roll/voice over combination is being used. Glancing at note cards is acceptable but should be kept to a minimum. Likewise, co-anchors would be expected to look at each other as well as at the camera. The same is true for reporters talking to interviewees.

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Team Interaction (40 points)

The two anchor team members should look and act just like that: A TEAM. Interaction should be spontaneous, natural, and frequent. Practicing together as often as possible couldn't help but improve this interaction. Good anchor teams draw their viewers in almost as if they (the viewers) are listening in on and participating in a conversation among friends.

Category 7: Reporting & Interviewing

Entries in this category showcase 10 clips taken from reports and interviews broadcast on the school's daily news show. Five minutes is the maximum for any one clip. The purpose of this category is to promote high standards of professional journalism, since

on-location reporting is much more effective than talking studio heads are. At least five clips should feature reporters on camera themselves although those reporters can be a variety of people.

Script Smoothness & Preparation (25 points)

A well-written script is invaluable in both films and television programs. Even though the visuals will tell the story more powerfully than words ever will, most of the time those visuals are based on the script, which should be written in an organized, informative, and, where possible, entertaining manner. Attention-getting lead-ins, effective transitions to and from segments and interviewees, and an appropriate conclusion are all elements of a good script. Reporters should never, however, follow a script so meticulously that they sound like programmed robots devoid of any spontaneity and not responsive to what their interviewees are saying. Winging it from scratch while reporting on location might promote spontaneity but ideal reporting combines spontaneity with preparation. Researching a topic thoroughly so a reporter knows the best questions to ask will impress interview subjects and viewers. Television is often accused of being a shallow medium, an accusation solidified by reporters who ask only superficial questions. Anticipating the complexities of a subject and thinking about the kinds of things viewers want to know about that subject will help in the production of a polished, informative report.

Natural Sound & B-Roll (25 points)

It is amazing, really, how powerful even the simplest sound or most complicated soundtrack can affect our emotions. Think about that “shark under water” low rumble made famous in *Jaws*, for instance. A video showing a frantic basketball rally that includes the natural sounds of a gymnasium crowd whipped into a frenzy has a dramatically different effect on viewers’ emotions than showing the same edited clips with no natural sound. Natural sounds can imaginatively whisk viewers to a remote location far more effectively than just their eyes can. Radio tells but television *shows*. The *talking head syndrome*, which features reporters or their interview subjects standing (or sitting) and talking for long stretches at a time with nothing else to look at, is anathema to all reporters because viewers will tune them out in droves. Reporters themselves, camera operators, and field producers all need to pay very close attention to scripts and interview content to make sure they have sufficient b-roll to cover at least 80 percent of the talking in most situations.

Voice Inflection and Clarity (25 points)

If eye contact is number one, then voice inflection and clarity are a close second. Although movie and television actor Ben Stein has made a handsome living speaking in a monotone as a spokesman for Visine and as a teacher in *Ferris Buhler’s Day Off*, his success is the exception and an integral part of his comedic style. Polished anchors and reporters speak clearly, slowly and with significant inflection in their voice.

Importance and Variety of Topics (25 points)

Reporters should move beyond simple, superficial topics and questions and delve into issues of importance within the school, community, nation and world. Likewise, a variety of reporting topics is more likely to hold viewers’ attention.

Category 8: Documentary

Videos entered in this category may explore important social issues within the Polk County Schools, the communities served by our schools, or our state, nation or world. Documentaries may also profile influential people or showcase the success of individuals or groups. They may follow traditional documentary style, which focuses on in-depth reporting, or the dramatic re-enactment style, which uses a short film to make a point about an important subject. Documentaries are limited to 15 minutes. Judging criteria are as follows:

Importance of Topic (25 points)

Although Polk Video Awards rules allow for a wide range of possible documentary topics, the eighteenth-year history of our competition has seen those projects which focus on influential people or serious issues enjoy the most success. A well-told story about someone who has made a significant difference in the lives of others clearly appeals to many hearts, while our diverse judges are more likely to be impressed by an issue-oriented documentary which focuses on a topic of concern to many people.

Clarity and Organization (25 points)

Fifteen minutes is a long time in video and the longer the project, the greater the chance that it will ramble or lose focus. Clarity is often achieved by keeping a topic simple. For example, the FBI would be far too broad a topic, while the hiring practices for special agents of that organization would be much more manageable. Documentary filmmakers also usually following a specific organizational method like chronological, categorical, spatial, cause and effect, etc. Using graphics and appropriate transitions can also signal viewers that your documentary is well organized.

Comprehensiveness (25 points)

Although our competition limits documentaries to 15 minutes, subjects should be treated thoroughly, which reiterates the necessity for narrowing a broad topic down to a manageable focused one. In-depth research is required to achieve comprehensiveness, although much of what is filmed may actually be left on the cutting room floor. Accomplished documentary editors have honed their powers of selectivity and know that all interviews, quotes, and b-roll clips are not equal, nor required to be included in the final edited version.

Technical Merit (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and volume
- B. Tripod-steady but often creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient leadroom, noseroom, and headroom
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes
- D. Editing smoothness
- E. Graphics

Category 9: School Promotional Video

Videos entered in this category should cover every aspect of a school with the aim of promoting the school's climate, successes, programs, clubs, students, and staff. The video could also include school activities, proud graduates and alumni, or whatever makes the school unique. The maximum runtime is 8 minutes. Judging criteria are as follows:

Creativity (25 points)

The school promotional video should be creative in its approach. Much like the documentary category, simply stating facts and using boring graphics will only hold a viewer's attention for so long. Videos should feature unique ways of presenting the information through a combination of storytelling, creative camera composition, and music.

Comprehensiveness (25 points)

Comprehensiveness includes those elements of the video that take it beyond the realm of two people sitting in front of a camera reading facts, an undesirable technique referred to in the broadcast industry as the *talking head syndrome*. Such elements include graphics, video clips, interviews, and reports. Comprehensiveness involves covering as many aspects of your school as you can in the given 8-minute time limit but avoid long uninteresting lists of courses, clubs, sports, etc. ITV advises you to get many people on camera talking about your school in their own words rather than just using a voice over. Ask these spokespeople to talk in complete sentences so that you can use what they have to say without constantly using the phrase "we talked to..." You can identify them by using a lower third graphic (name bar).

Enthusiasm (25 points)

There is no question that we like to look at and listen to announcers who have charisma and personality rather than lifeless robots. For many years, news anchors and reporters were judged solely by their grandfatherly and staid on-camera presence (think Walter Cronkite or Edward R. Murrow). Modern audiences, especially younger ones, wish to be entertained at the same time they are informed and therefore put more weight on the charisma of on-air personalities, which is not to say they cannot be professional at the same time. Choose your anchors or reporters for this project very carefully and use your best talent.

Technical Merit (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and consistent volume (avoid using the mic on the camera except to capture desired ambient (background) noise)
- B. Tripod-steady but creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient leadroom, noseroom, and headroom
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes. Avoid filming subjects in front of doors, windows and bright skies, but also avoid the brick wall prison-look.

- D. Editing smoothness (avoid jump cuts)
- E. Graphics (watch both size and legibility)

Category 10: Short Film

Videos entered in this category showcase a short film of no longer than 30 minutes' duration. Such films may be totally original or may be spoofs or satires of known television shows or movies, what the film industry calls homage. Judging criteria are as follows:

Script & Continuity (25 points)

Film making is story telling and a well-written script is invaluable in telling your story. Even though visuals will tell the story more powerfully than words ever will, most of the time those visuals, as well as the acting taking place within them, are based on the script. Filmgoers who want to know what happens next or care about any of the film's characters are drawn into movies by the script, which needs to have plausible story lines, solid continuity, and realistic dialogue.

Acting (25 points)

Hollywood has known for years about the drawing attraction of its stars. Filmgoers like a good story for sure, but people will turn out by the millions to see a picture that stars Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts even if they don't know what the picture is about. Schools should choose the actors in their short films carefully because not everyone can perform naturally and believably in front of a camera. When we see good acting, we think for those two hours in the theater that Jamie Fox doesn't act like Ray Charles but actually is Ray Charles.

Entertainment Value (25 points)

There is no universal agreement on just what entertains people because we all bring different tastes and experiences to the theater. Nevertheless, your movie will not be successful if it does not entertain a majority of the people who see it because entertainment is the name of the game, at least in this category and in this contest. Movies entertain in a myriad of ways, sometimes with great story lines, sometimes with passionate romances, sometimes with edge-of-your-seat suspense, sometimes with fantastical imaginary worlds, sometimes with dazzling special effects, and sometimes with some combination of the above or some other hook. The bottom line, however, is that a good movie should entertain more than just the friends and family members of those who made it.

Technical Merit (25 points)

Judges will award up to five points apiece for each of the following technical elements:

- A. Sound clarity and volume,
- B. Tripod-steady but often creative camera work, including proper framing and sufficient lead room, nose room, and headroom
- C. Appropriate lighting, including the avoidance of silhouettes
- D. Editing smoothness
- E. Special effects