We’re really excited to welcome you to the PESGB ‘What’s the point of school?’ film competition. This pack has a few pointers to get you started.

This pack includes:

- General ideas about your film
- Additional web resources (for children, young people and teachers)
- Practical information about the competition

What your film should be about

We’re sure you’ve thought a lot about whether it’s worth bothering to attend school. Now is your chance to express your views in a film. People connected to the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain grapple with difficult questions about education and schooling all the time. (There’s one already – what is the difference between education and schooling? Can you have education without school? Can you have school without education? Hmmm?) On the poster we asked you to think about these things:

- What education means to you
- Why education is (or isn’t) important
- What the point of education should be
- What you think education should be like

You can focus on any (or all) of these questions or you could take a different slant altogether as long as your film is relevant to the main theme.

If you would like to hear some philosophers talking about these issues, there are some short videos on the PESGB website about issues in education

https://www.philosophy-of-education.org/

These short videos capture some ideas in philosophy of education, but we’d love to see your more imaginative take on these and other ideas about the point of schools (if there is one), or what we should have instead ... if anything.
What your film should look like

Well, that’s completely up to you! You can use whatever format your imagination and your practical skills will allow. You could do something simple where one person speaks directly to the camera (like our videos) or you could interview several different people. Perhaps you’d prefer to make something more complicated that has different scenes edited together. You might like to create some animation or a film using only graphics. You might prefer to make a montage of still images and connect them together carefully.

Think about the feeling of your film; will it be simple and elegant, or frenetic and busy? Colourful and noisy? Plain and simple? The style you present your film in should help you get your message across to the audience.

Remember – anyone with a smartphone or camcorder can record something, but you need to do much more than this. A successful film will entertain and engage your audience. You need a clear vision of what your film is trying to say and you need to be sure that your message gets across well.
The elements of your film

Making a film about an issue can be tricky since there is no obvious storyline. It’s not like a fairytale or Hollywood action movie with a predictable direction; you need to find ways to keep the audience wanting to keep watching, even though there is no obvious climax to the film.

You could create a story to show your views about the point of school and that would provide you with a clear structure. This might not work for your argument, but you should have some kind of opening section, middle section and ending as this will help your audience understand your message.

**Structure:** Planning your film out is really necessary if it is going to make much sense – you can use a storyboard even if you don’t have a conventional ‘story’.

**Script:** It’s worth working out what everyone is going to say in advance. In making philosophical arguments, the words we use are really important and so you might do well to write everything out just to be sure you don’t have long pauses where no one says anything, or use the wrong word to make your point.

**Filming:** You can use a smartphone, or a digital or video camera for filming. Use best quality equipment you can get hold of – films being shown in the cinema need to be good quality. Try to hold the camera still and be sure that what you want to be seen is clear to the viewer. If you are moving the camera to show a whole scene (panning) do this slowly (unless you are trying deliberately to make your audience feel a bit dizzy!).

**Props and costumes:** You might need these to help create your story. Remember, for this film, the judges are not looking for professional costumes and props; they are more interested in your ideas. They would like the film to flow well and make sense.

**Locations:** You need to think about the lighting and background noise of the place you are filming. Make sure that your words can be heard clearly and that the important things can be seen clearly.

**Music and Sound:** Just try watching your favourite dramatic scene in a movie with the sound down to get a sense of how vital music can be to films. We need you to be sure you have copyright for any music you use and so it’s best if you create your own music or use music that is free to use (most pop songs are not free to use). Think about how the music might support your message (dynamics, tempo, timbre and use of instruments).

**Titles:** It is really helpful to the audience to see some opening and closing titles, but these shouldn’t go on for too long (they are included in the time limit for the whole film). If you do use words during the film, be extra careful that they are clear to read and that they stay on the screen long enough to be read, but not for too long.

**Editing:** Films need to be edited and there are some simple programmes to help you do this noted below.
Additional web resources (for children, young people and teachers)

Here is an annotated list of safe websites and those with no adverts or pop-ups.

Storyboard templates can be found at: http://www.printablepaper.net/category/storyboard

For a great animation on “dos and don’ts” of film-making, see the Jubilee Thank-You Awards film competition tips:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2DJqwvBr2k

(Their Number 5 is not relevant – substitute our theme for theirs - but the rest really is!)

The Film Street website has been updated too and added (as a channel) to a broader arts site, called Culture Street: http://www.culturestreet.org.uk/

There’s also an archive site with excellent ideas and activities as well as classroom workshops (pupils show you how they made their films, step-by-step). The site also features film reviews and interviews with people involved in the film industry. http://www.filmlstreet.co.uk/

http://www.minimoviemakers.com/ is a brilliant website with loads of great and simply explained practical tips on how to make movies including how to film safely, how to make excellent sound effects and visual tricks like making people disappear!

http://www.littledirector.com/category/home/ This is a commercial site, but has some good examples of simple drawings that have been animated and set to music. For templates you can buy, have a look at http://www.smudgethisis.com/portfolio/ and for a more complex animation site, try http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/teaching

This short YouTube video is aimed at young film-makers and offers ten pieces of advice for people starting out with movie-making: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol51d7JekJ4

BBC Video Nation has tips on making your own films from the BBC:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/contribute/tips/ and more complex and professional advice from the BBC can be found here at the BBC Film Network: http://www.bbc.co.uk/filmnetwork/filmmaking/guide/

There are also lots of ideas for setting up film clubs in schools, some of which encourage film-making as well as screenings. Remember that the more good films you watch, the more you pick up to improve your own movies! http://www.filmclub.org/

Here are three great sites for teachers working with children making films:

http://mediaed.org.uk/using_film_in_schools/teaching-filmmaking

http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/themes/lightscameraaction/index.htm?utm_source=newsletter

(This last one has loads of templates for activities)
‘Garage Band’ is brilliant for creating your own soundtracks:
https://www.apple.com/uk/mac/garageband/

Editing software can be complicated but these two are very usable and there are free versions that can be downloaded to PCs or Apple Macs, iPhones and tablets of different sorts:

http://windows.microsoft.com/is-is/windows-live/movie-maker#t1=overview

http://www.apple.com/uk/mac/imovie/
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I make the film with other people?

You can enter as an individual, in a small or large group, or even as a whole school. There’s no limit to how many young people from one organisation can enter.

Q. Do I have to enter as part of a school?

No you can do it as an individual or from another organisation.

Q. How long should the film be?

The total running time for the film must be between two and three minutes including opening and closing credits.

Q. What are the judges looking for?

The judges will work together to finalise the criteria, but there will be attention to the following: originality and creativity of the film; engaging and interesting presentation of ideas; technical competence; coherence of argument or story / logical structure that the audience can follow.

Q. How do I submit the film?

To enter a film, you need to put it on a DVD or USB memory stick and post it to:

PESGB Office
c/o SAS Event Management, The Old George Brewery, Rollestone Street, Salisbury SP1 1DX

You also need to send the completed Entry Form by email. You won’t need to send us the Release Form unless you are shortlisted and your film is being screened in a cinema.

Q. What happens next?

SAS will acknowledge receipt of your film by email. If you don’t hear from us within a week please get in touch in case your film has gone astray.

The entries will be judged by a panel in November 2015 and we’ll be in touch by the end of January 2016 to let you know if you have been shortlisted. Those shortlisted will be invited to a screening in late February / early March 2016. The best films in a variety of age categories will win a prize.

Q. What if I submit a film and then I decide I don’t want to enter it anymore?

If you have submitted a film and decide you no longer want to enter, please tell us before the closing date and we will ensure your film is withdrawn from the competition and sent back to you.