

Vegan Education in Schools

Vegan Clubs

Years 7 to 12

Documentary film-making projects

Overview

Documentary film-making projects give students an opportunity to creatively explore animal rights issues while developing valuable skills in storytelling, research and multimedia production. By creating short films on topics such as animal farming, wildlife conservation or sanctuary rescues, students can engage with these issues in a hands-on and impactful way. This activity not only fosters empathy but also equips students with the tools to raise awareness and inspire change. Including vegan popcorn and discussions adds a celebratory and reflective element to the screening of their work.

How to organise documentary film-making projects

1. Introduce the project with an inspiring overview of documentary filmmaking.

- Begin by showing examples of impactful documentaries or student-made short films to inspire creativity:
 - a) Clips from *“Blackfish,” “Dominion,”* or *“The Cove”*.
 - b) Examples of videos made by sanctuaries like Edgar’s Mission or WIRES.
 - Discuss the power of documentaries in raising awareness and inspiring action for animal rights.
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2. Help students choose a compelling topic for their documentary.

- Provide a list of possible topics:
 - a) **Animal Farming:** Expose the conditions faced by animals in industrial agriculture.
 - b) **Wildlife Conservation:** Highlight efforts to protect native species like koalas or platypuses.

- c) **Marine Life:** Focus on the impact of plastic pollution or overfishing on marine animals.
 - d) **Sanctuary Rescues:** Document the recovery journey of animals saved from abuse or neglect.
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3. Encourage students to plan their documentary with a clear structure.

- Provide guidance on creating a story outline, including:
 - a) **Introduction:** Present the issue or topic and why it matters.
 - b) **Main Content:** Include facts, interviews and footage to build the narrative.
 - c) **Conclusion:** Offer solutions or a call to action for the audience.
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4. Teach basic film-making techniques to empower students.

- Offer a workshop or share resources on:
 - a) Using cameras or smartphones for filming.
 - b) Framing and lighting shots effectively.
 - c) Editing software options, such as iMovie or CapCut or DaVinci Resolve, for creating polished films.
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5. Collaborate with local sanctuaries or experts for interviews and content.

- Arrange for students to interview sanctuary staff, wildlife carers or animal rights advocates to add authenticity and depth to their films.
 - Example: "Visit a local sanctuary to document the lives of rescued farmed animals and the people who care for them."
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6. Provide support for students to gather and use multimedia elements.

- Encourage students to:
 - a) Use royalty-free music and sound effects to enhance their films.
 - b) Incorporate existing footage or images with proper attribution.
 - c) Include infographics or statistics to reinforce their message visually.

7. Organise a film screening event to showcase the documentaries.

- Host a celebratory screening where students present their films to peers, teachers and the community.
 - Set up a comfortable viewing area with a large screen and seating.
 - Serve vegan popcorn and other vegan snacks to align with the theme of vegan living.
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8. Facilitate a post-screening discussion to reflect on the films.

- Lead a group discussion to encourage feedback and deeper engagement:
 - a) "What stood out to you most in the documentaries?"
 - b) "How did the films change your perspective on animal rights issues?"
 - c) "What actions can we take to support the causes highlighted in these films?"
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9. Offer recognition for participants to celebrate their achievements.

- Present certificates of participation or small prizes for creativity, storytelling or technical skills.
 - Highlight standout films on the school's website or social media platforms to reach a wider audience.
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10. Encourage further action and advocacy inspired by the project.

- Use the documentaries as a launchpad for student-led campaigns or initiatives:
 - a) Share the films during school assemblies or community events.
 - b) Submit the documentaries to local or national film competitions.
 - c) Collaborate with animal rights organisations to promote the films online.

Outcomes

- **Skill development:** Students learn valuable skills in research, storytelling and multimedia production.
- **Empathy and awareness:** Engaging deeply with animal rights topics fosters empathy and a better understanding of the issues.
- **Inspiration to act:** Creating documentaries motivates students to advocate for animals and explore ways to make a difference.
- **Collaboration and teamwork:** Working on a shared project encourages teamwork, problem-solving and creative thinking.
- **Community engagement:** Sharing their films inspires broader audiences to consider animal rights and protection.