

Envision Film Festival
High School Screenplay Competition
Rules & Guidelines
Submission **Deadline** – Jan 31st, 2026

Mission Statement

The high school competition is part of Taylor's Envision Film Festival and as such honors aspiring filmmakers whose visual storytelling explores the range of human experience with hopeful vision, artistry, truthfulness and integrity.

Competition Goals

- To solicit entries from talented high school filmmakers and encourage their development as artists.
- To highlight the significance of film as a medium that can express beauty, truth and goodness, prompting meaningful dialogue, engaging culture and ultimately giving glory to God.
- To provide scholarship dollars for winning, incoming Taylor freshmen.

High School Eligibility

- Any full-time high school junior or senior is eligible to enter.
- Screenplay must have been completed within two years prior to the festival date.
- No industry professionals or teachers can be co-writers, although they can have an advisory role. The screenplay must be considered student written.
- A single student may contribute a **maximum of one screenplay**.
- Projects co-written by two or three students are welcome. The entry form will allow for up to three team members, their addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- A single screenplay may be submitted only once. No repeat entries in subsequent years are allowed.

Scholarship eligibility

- If a co-written screenplay wins a scholarship, and both writers plan to attend Taylor, the scholarship will be split between its co-writers.
- Only one scholarship can be given per student.
- Screenplay winners may not also win scholarship money for film entries.

Screenplay Content, Length, & Format

- The competition encourages creativity and originality, and the judges encourage filmmakers to explore the human experience in all its dimensions. However, judges will likely exclude films that do not uphold the values generally shared by a broad Taylor University community audience. For instance, the judges will likely exclude films with gratuitous swearing, gratuitous violence, or whose

subjects are macabre, in poor taste or risqué. Content matters, as do audience considerations. The story does not need to be overtly Christian in nature.

- Screenplays are presumed to be narrative/fiction in nature (not documentary).
- Screenplays must be original. They may not use AI *at all*.
- Submissions may be no more than **15 pages** in length, but you should know that the judges believe that *shorter (10 pages or less) is usually better*.
- Screenplays must abide by the Writer's Guild of America (WGA) formatting guidelines. Reference this link for formatting specifics:
<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/brilliant-script-screenplay-format/>
- This is a speculative script, not a shooting script. Therefore, the screenplay should not include camera angles, camera movements, or screen direction. The focus is story and dialogue.
- Students may use any screenwriting software of their choosing. You can obtain free access online versions of Highland, Studio Binder or WriterDuet. Screenwriting software will help ensure you meet WGA guidelines.

Entry Form

Fill out the entry form here: <https://tinyurl.com/2026hsscreenplay>

Judges & Judging Criteria

All screenplays will be judged by a panel of judges including:

- Taylor faculty/students who understand filmmaking. The judges will evaluate the screenplays on the merits of:
 - story (originality/creativity/emotional drama)
 - character development
 - plot development
 - capacity of the film to meet the festival goals – “exploring the range of human experience with hopeful vision, artistry, truthfulness and integrity”
 - screenplay formatting and attention to the page limit
- Judges may decline to give an award in a particular category if no entry meets the festival's standards of quality.
- All films accepted by the judges for screening either as a winning screenplay will be notified approximately two weeks prior to the festival.

Award Categories

All screenplays in the high school category are eligible for awards. The top three films will qualify for one-time scholarship dollars from Taylor if they enroll and spend their freshman year at Taylor as film majors in either fall 2026 or 2027.

1st place - \$1000

2nd place - \$600

3rd place - \$400

Winners will be notified by the end of February.

Submission guidelines

Entries without accompanying online entry forms can be disqualified.

Rights

- By entering your screenplay, you acknowledge that you are its author and that this material is not plagiarized or copied from an existing screenplay.
- By entering the work, you acknowledge that the screenplay did not use artificial intelligence at all.
- By entering the work, you give Taylor University permission to use small portions of your screenplay in promotional materials for the festival (unlikely but we mention it just in case!)

If you have questions about these guidelines, feel free to e-mail Lincoln Reed (lincoln_reed@taylor.edu)

Entry forms must be submitted and projects uploaded by January 31st at midnight. If you require a 24 hour extension, please notify Lincoln Reed, lincoln_reed@taylor.edu.