My name is Enda O’Connell, and I am a biomedical scientist in NUI Galway. It has been a challenging few weeks for everyone since the schools and universities closed, juggling working-from-home with home-schooling and other family commitments. Personally, with three children aged 9, 6 and 4, we have swung from periods of boredom and inertia to not having enough time in the day for all of the things we want to do!

Today, with support from NUI Galway and Science Foundation Ireland, we’re launching an online science video competition for schools and youth organisations called ‘[*ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME*](https://reellifescience.com/)’. The programme encourages young people to think about the science and technology in their everyday lives in a creative way, while learning some new communication and digital skills at the same time.

While practising social distancing at home, students can research a STEM topic such as ‘*Healing the Body*’, ‘*Climate Action*’, ‘*How Things Work*’, ‘*Science on the Farm*’ or ‘*Science and Me*’, and produce a one minute video to engage and educate the public. Videos can be in English or Irish and from just one student, or many, if video clips are edited together.

The best video will **win €1000 for the school or youth organisation** they are representing and will be screened for the public at the Galway Science and Technology Festival in November.

Since 2013, more than 13,000 young people have taken part in ReelLIFE SCIENCE in over 400 schools and groups around Ireland, and we have awarded over €25,000 directly to schools and youth organisations.

**Closing date for entries is Friday May 29th** and, on our ‘[How to Enter](https://reellifescience.com/how-to-enter/)’ page, you will find lots of information about taking part, including links to previous years’ winning videos and advice on producing and submitting a video to the competition. I’ve attached our 2020 Flyer, How to Enter guide and Brainstorming/Storyboarding sheets here, while you can view a one minute [‘*What is ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME*’ video on our YouTube channel](https://youtu.be/eph5lYAocGo) demonstrating the different styles and approaches taken by previous participants.

Because of the school shutdown, we are relying a lot on word-of-mouth and social media to spread the news about ‘*ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME*’. While we are reluctant to add to the workload of already under-pressure teachers and parents, if you think the project has merit, **we would greatly appreciate your help letting others know**, whether it’s via email, WhatsApp or social media. For primary schools applying for the SFI Discover Science and Maths Award this year, taking part in ‘*ReelLIFE SCIENCE @ HOME’* can be used as part of your application, which has been extended.

Please get in touch by reply if you need any further information – we would be delighted to hear from you!

I will leave you with feedback we have received from previous primary and secondary school participants:

* “*The children loved it, they were brainstorming ideas, making storyboards, directing, participating in the video. It allowed them take charge of their own learning. And it was great to see them working as a team.”* **Primary Teacher**
* “*It educates us in a fun and interesting way. It makes me a lot more interested in science. Maybe in the future I will become the world's greatest scientist, all due to this competition*.” **Sixth Class Student**
* "*Our school has participated in the ReelLIFE Science competition since 2014. The sense of fun preparing for the video, the curricular areas it touched upon (oral language skills, teamwork, art, history even!) made it the most valuable project we worked on in the senior class that year. We've entered the competition every year since and it's become one of the key things children look forward to most when moving into the senior room. Children are learning about scientific topics without even realising that there's teaching happening. As a teacher, the competition has been a gift and for the children it has been an aspiration.*” **Primary Teacher**
* “*Our TY students all made videos and we felt the project contributed to skill development and pupil enjoyment of science. The TY co-ordinator commented afterward on how proud the students themselves were of their videos - it was lovely to see. It was a great opportunity for students who can struggle with literacy in conventional projects to produce something they were proud to show to others*.” **TY Teacher**
* “*I got to use my talent/hobby. And, I learned a lot of Science stuff!!!”* **TY Student**
* “*It's by far the best Science competition for promoting Science subjects for Leaving Certificate to Transition Years.”* **TY Coordinator**

Best wishes

Enda