

Part 1.

Man: Oh, hello. Is this the right number to call for the short film competition?

Woman: Yes. How can I help?

Man: I know the competition's been running for ten years, but I've never taken part before. I want to be clear on the rules. Is twenty minutes the maximum length of the film?

Woman: That's correct. So, shall I run through some of the other rules for entry?

Man: That'd be great. I'll make some notes.

Woman: All right. So, the deadline for getting the whole film made and sending it in to us is on Wednesday, May the 15th.

Man: Oh, really? I thought the submission date was sometime at the end of June, the 30th.

Woman: That's when the judges announce the winners.

Man: Right. I guess I don't have as much time to make this film as I thought.

Woman: Now, just so it's clear, one of the rules is about the team of people you have working with you. Will you be doing most of the filming yourself?

Man: Probably, yes.

Woman: Okay, but perhaps you'll be needing some technical support with editing and the audio?

Man: I imagine so.

Woman: That's fine, but you can't employ any professional actors, I'm afraid. They all need to be new to acting, having a go for the first time.

Man: I see. Not a problem. Now, I know that one of the rules is about the things you need to include in your film.

Woman: That's right. Last year, all films had to include a scene with a broken pair of glasses.

Man: What about this year?

Woman: Well, it's been decided that one of your main characters has to be a child. Or if you prefer, it could be an animal instead. But we have to see them in a number of scenes, okay?

Man: All right. I'll have a think about that. I'm not sure which one would be easier to work with.

Woman: It can certainly be a challenge, but that's what the competition is all about. Now, it's not just our rules you need to think about. You might also need to get permission, say for example, if you decided you wanted to add some music to the film.

Man: That sounds complicated. I suppose I could use a local band, people I know, that would help out. I wouldn't need permission in that case.

Woman: Good idea. Then you don't need to worry about the legal side of things.

Man: All right. That's clearer. Actually, is that right that the film doesn't need to be in English?

Woman: Yes, because if a film wins the competition in this country, it could end up being part of an international competition. But if you're going to use another language, you've got to provide subtitles, and those do have to be in English and 100% accurate. If they're not, your film won't be accepted in the competition.

Man: Seems fair.

Man: I don't suppose you could give me any advice about making the film, I mean?

Woman: Of course. Um, in my opinion, it's the script that you should concentrate on. That comes first. Work out what everyone's going to say and go from there.

Man: Okay, thanks for that. And I read somewhere that you shouldn't have too many characters or locations.

Woman: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

Man: I also read that with short films, the judges have their preferences. I mean, they seem to like films with a serious message, like a documentary. I guess I shouldn't do a comedy, because not everyone laughs at the same thing.

Woman: Yes, stay away from that kind of film. A story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, that's what the judges look for.

Man: I was thinking I could look at some of the films from last year's competition. You know, to give me a better idea of what to do.

Woman: Yes, you could certainly do that. If you go to our website, have a look at last year's winner. His name was Greg Hyslop.

Man: How do you spell that last name?

Woman: Sure. It's H-Y-S-L-O-P. His film was actually one of the shorter ones, but the judges really liked it.

Man: Actually, I'm wondering if I've seen that one already. Isn't it about an artist, someone who no one appreciates, but then she ends up selling lots of her paintings?

Woman: That's right. If you want to have another look, the film is called *Imagine*. It really holds your attention.

Man: Thanks. I'll have another look after this call.

Woman: So, do you know what the prizes are? It's \$500 for third place, up to \$2,000 for the overall winner. And of course, the winning films are shown in a theater so the public can see them too.

Man: That would be an amazing thing to happen. So that would be the Bridge Theater, would it, in the city center?

Woman: Yes, that's my favorite theater, actually. Lovely view of the river. So, do you have any more questions that you want to run by...

Part 3.

Interviewer: Today we're talking to Andrew Smith, who's a tree surgeon. Andrew works on trees to make sure they're in good condition and not likely to damage people or property. How did you become a tree surgeon, Andrew?

Andrew Smith: My dad's a tree surgeon, and as a child, I sometimes watched him working. I also learned a lot about trees, and the birds and other creatures that live in them, from him. After college, I joined an IT company, but it quickly became clear to me I couldn't stand being inside for hours on end every day, so I asked my dad if I could work with him. He had his own tree care firm. He'd always avoided putting pressure on me to follow him into the business, but he was happy to take me on.

Interviewer: Can you remember the first tree you cut down?

Andrew Smith: Yes, it was eight years ago. An oak tree had died and needed removing. The whole job took two days. Dad said I did well, which was nice, though by the end I was so exhausted, I couldn't really appreciate what I'd done. Tree care is obviously very physical work, but the way you climb—with ropes, rather than grabbing branches and pulling yourself up—requires techniques that can take ages to get right. I hadn't realized that, even though I'd watched tree surgeons working.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy working with your father?

Andrew Smith: Yes, we're not that different in some ways. He's very thorough, he tries not to leave anything to chance, but if problems occur—which happens when you work with trees—he doesn't panic. And I think he's passed all that on to me. What I'm not always so good at, and I admire this about him, is thinking in broader terms, and judging what the best way ahead will be. Hopefully, I'll learn.

Interviewer: Tell me about a job you've done for a client recently.

Andrew Smith: Okay. A client was worried that two trees in her garden might fall onto her neighbor's roof. One was an old pear tree, which could easily have come down in a strong wind. I showed the lady evidence that it was rotten, and suggested removing it. The other tree was an ash. I explained that it had some diseased branches which needed cutting. The next morning, I went back with a couple of guys, and by lunchtime, we'd done everything. The lady said she was delighted; she'd assumed we'd be there for a few days.

Interviewer: What do you like most about your job?

Andrew Smith: You can't do this work on your own; you need workmates, and this way of working definitely suits the way I am. There's also a sense of progression; you can never know everything there is to know about trees, for example, and I regularly do courses and read research. What appeals to me more than anything, though, is that we help to make public places—parks, squares, and streets—safe, but also beautiful.

Interviewer: And what's the worst part?

Andrew Smith: I can't say I always enjoy the last stage of a job: clearing away the dust, leaves, broken branches, and cut-up logs. I'd rather do that than fill in the risk assessment forms, safety checklists, and so on that come with every job, though. That stuff has to be done, but it's definitely not my thing. Tree surgeons often complain it's too hot to work, or too cold, and you can't climb trees and use powerful electrical tools if it's snowing, or even raining hard. A varied climate has its plus points, though.

Interviewer: How do you see your future as a tree surgeon?

Andrew Smith: Well, the work's so tough physically, it becomes too difficult after a certain age, and I have to plan for that. Eventually, maybe in my forties, I'll do more of what my dad does now: the business side of things, giving advice. With climate change, there's a fast-growing awareness of how important trees are for the world, and tree surgeons are experts. Hopefully, the value of what we know will be increasingly recognized—and we'll get better paid, too. Tree surgeons generally don't earn what they deserve.