

# Screenplay Markdown: Quick Guide

How to write scripts in Markdown and render to PDF

## Overview

This guide explains the Markdown conventions for writing a screenplay-like script and how to convert it into a formatted PDF using the provided Python tool.

## Conventions

- Scene heading (slugline): Start with "### " then the heading, e.g. ### INT. KITCHEN - DAY
- Action: Plain paragraphs of descriptive text.
- Character cue: Start a block with "@", e.g. @ALEX (all caps recommended).
- Parenthetical: A line in parentheses within dialogue, e.g. (whispering)
- Dialogue: Lines after a character cue (and optional parentheticals) until a blank line.
- Transition: Start with ">> ", e.g. >> CUT TO:
- Shot heading: Start with "!", e.g. ! CLOSE ON
- Forced page break: A line that contains only ---
- Comment line: Lines starting with // are ignored.

## Layout Targets

The generated PDF uses a 12-pt monospace font on US Letter pages.  
Approximate indents: scene headings & action  $\approx 1.5''$ , character  $\approx 3.5''$ , dialogue  $\approx 2.5''$ , parentheticals  $\approx 3.0''$ , transitions are flush-right near the right margin.

## Example Markdown

### INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The morning sun cuts through blinds, striping the small kitchen with light.

@ALEX

(whispering)

We can't keep pretending this is normal.

@JORDAN

We stopped being normal a long time ago.

! CLOSE ON

The kettle switch. It clicks off.

>> CUT TO:

### EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

A bustling street. Car horns. A bus groans to a stop.

@ALEX

I have a plan.

---

@JORDAN

(skeptical)

You always have a plan.

## Command-Line Usage

```
python screenmd2pdf.py input.md output.pdf
# Optional flags:
python screenmd2pdf.py input.md output.pdf --title "My Script"
--font "/path/to/DejaVuSansMono.ttf" --size 12
```

## Tips & Notes

- Put each logical block on its own paragraph (blank line between blocks).
- Keep character names in ALL CAPS for clarity.
- Use (parentheticals) sparingly and on their own line within dialogue blocks.
- Use --- on a line by itself to force a new page in the PDF.
- If wrapping looks odd, pass a known monospace TTF via --font (DejaVu Sans Mono, Liberation Mono, FreeMono, Courier New).