

FILM SCRIPT

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

This is an example of a film script. What you are reading now is known as "action description" which describes what is going on in the scene visually.

This stretches across the width of the page, unlike dialogue. Action description should be broken into small bits, 3-5 lines in length.

Keep things like "close-up" and "long shot" out of the script. The script is about the story and the story alone! The director and his crew will decide how the story will be told in the most visually effective manner.

CHARACTER

My name is Character, and I am speaking dialogue!

NEW CHARACTER

(angry)

I'm speaking dialogue, too, and I'm angry! Directions like the one above should be kept to a minimum. These parentheticals can be used to signify emotion (angry), for clarification (to Jennifer), or to describe short actions that would not necessitate an entire action description (fidgeting).

Here's some more action! The Inciting Incident (a.k.a. the "Major Dramatic Question") should be established early.

The Inciting Incident is why you're writing the script; it's what the film is trying to resolve ("Will Dorothy get home?" in The Wizard of Oz, for example).

For a feature length script (around 90-120 pages), the Inciting Incident will appear somewhere around page 15-17. In a short film script (around 20-30 pages), it will appear around pages 1-3.

The length of the script determines where the Inciting Incident will be. So, the shorter the script, the earlier the Inciting Incident!

CHARACTER

Characters all have an objective/goal, and there will be

CHARACTER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 other characters that stand in
 their way of reaching that
 objective/goal. Conflict between
 the protagonist and antagonist(s) is
 the core of all scripts! More
 often than not, the protagonist's
 super objective (main goal) will be
 related to the Inciting Incident.

NEW CHARACTER
 Don't forget that this character
 has an objective, too. All
 characters, no matter how small,
 should have an objective and
 purpose in the story. If they
 don't, get rid of them!

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Keep in mind that it doesn't matter how the Inciting Incident
 is resolved; it can be happy, sad, or even weird. The main
 thing is that it is resolved somehow!

CHARACTER
 Since we're on the second page,
 notice the "(CONTINUED)" on the
 last page and the page number on
 this one.

NEW CHARACTER
 Everything a character says should
 help the character reach his or her
 goal -- even if it's subtle.
 Remember, though, that a character
 can get sidetracked by numerous
 things during a script, which lead
 to smaller goals outside of a
 character's super objective.

You now know the basics of writing a film script! The end of
 the story is the only time -- other than the very beginning
 of the script -- when a technical direction is always
 appropriate!

FADE OUT

(Please visit www.filmscriptwriting.com/samplescripts.html
 for some examples of actual film scripts.)