

# SCREENWRITING MADE EASY

THE COMPLETE SYSTEM TO PUT YOUR VISION ON PAPER

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*Disclaimer- This book describes the techniques I used to get my screenplay finished and eventually go on to win a top award in a International Film Festival. I cannot guarantee that it will do the same for everyone because there are too many factors involved, but ultimately good writing and a well constructed script will be recognized.*

Introduction:

Welcome fellow writers,

First off, I want to congratulate you for one, taking it upon yourself to set out on such a large task and two, moving towards the appropriate steps of acquiring the knowledge needed to achieve that goal.

Here in this system I have put together you will easily learn the step by step process that I took to bring my story to life and eventually go on to win a top award in the first international film festival I entered.

My name is Daniel and I come to you from rainy and dreary old Portland, Oregon.



Just kidding, I love the eight months of rain and the four months of sun in my city and all the wonderful creative weirdness that comes with it. So now with that said and carrying on, I have three beautiful daughters and also a kind, loving and supportive wife.

I have always enjoyed writing and reading as a child but when I left high school so did those creative aspirations. Fast forward into my early twenties and that is when my nephew was born. This was my introduction into the world of children's books.

What I saw when I first started flipping through most of them was that it appeared that they could be made very simply and I knew I could put one together and personalize it for my nephew in no time. Then take into the account that the children's book realm is a multimillion dollar industry and I began to start writing.

If you don't think you can create one yourself, just take a look at any of them on the shelves in the libraries or bookstores around your town and you will see for yourself. It's even easier now with the digital age but that subject is for another day.

So when I began writing over ten years ago now, it was just for a hobby and all I had managed to get out in those early days were some simple children's book manuscripts that I took upon put together for my nephew and my now younger niece to enjoy.

As I started working with an illustrator, I was researching around my town looking at printing presses when I came across a short article in the news about a certain part of town that peeked my interest.

From that day on, I couldn't shake that story and the wheels in my head just kept churning about and all its possibilities. You know that feeling, when you're interested in creating that one awesome story instead of being some boring old news blogger or something. It was almost like an obsession. It's writing fiction!

During that time I mainly worked in a warehouse and during our winter months the production level dropped substantially. I took that opportunity of having a little extra time during the day to really get focused on my goal and I began to jot down ideas while simultaneously research my chosen subject.

Now, you should understand and know that I have no formal training or schooling when it comes to writing. In most cases that would be a huge hindrance when trying to accomplish such a large goal as writing a screenplay but the fact is, that is not the case in this day and information age.

There are so many resources out there, that you can basically pick any subject of interest and develop the skills needed to

literally become an expert within a surprisingly short period of time.

When I started out, I had no idea of where to begin and all I had after a few months was a vague picture of some kind of story that soon turned into a rough mess of ideas scribbled in different colored ink and all scrambled together in what I thought was a good script.

That was a big mistake on my part and only the beginning. From then on it was a long and hard road of learning and reading and proofreading and writing. It took me at least a year to get my story done but for someone who has never known anything about writing and to get one at least readable, well that was a satisfying accomplishment right there.

So, I know you've probably heard enough about me now it's time for us concentrate on you and your goal. I have taken everything that I have learned over those long years of hard work and concentrated the most important aspects into this simple system to help you accomplish your goal.

With that said you can start by taking out your first worksheet and start in on filling in those sections to get your ideas pinpointed and focused. See ya in section 1!



# TOPIC/GENRE/THEME/PLOT

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**Topic**-Alright let's get to it. When it comes to the subject of writing movies I would suggest that you start off by taking a look at whatever topics that hold a great interest in your mind. I say this because you are going to want to do as much research as possible around it.

Or if it is a strictly fictional film based in an imaginary world or something you must enjoy the work you are doing so it doesn't seem like some tedious task that you are pursuing and you won't quit.

You can also start out by writing a short film which consists of around forty to fifty minutes long. This would be a good way to get your feet wet, so to speak, and begin to learn about how the screenplay should be structured while working on developing your skills.

This will also give you the opportunity to work on a less favorable topic before getting into your original inspiration for writing your film. This was something I wish I would have done in the beginning of my screenwriting. Although you want to get out that great and awesome story, you must remember that you will be submitting and entering into the highly competitive

territory of screenwriting and film. So it is in your best interest to practice, practice and practice.

If you are planning on writing a film and going the independent production route then the topic would not matter that much, but for the project to have good commercial ability it should be something that is of interests to others.

**Genre-** People love to categorize things. Just have a look around and listen to what is said and you will noticed that everything is categorized in one way or another. It is human nature for us to do this simply because it helps our brains and emotions relate to whatever is going on around us faster.

Knowing what genre your film belongs to will also help you in the aspect that you could look at all the other films and scripts that have been presented before your piece and find ways to make yours more interesting and unique when compared to all the others.

Also, when or if you have aspirations of submitting your script to an agent or into competitions you will need to know where yours belongs in order for the people who specialize in those fields to give you the most helpful and proper feedback.

The last thing you want is a comedy reader having your dramatic thriller in their hands. They will read it of course, but with the massive amounts of speculative scripts these people read, you will need any advantage you can get.

This has also been opened way up and now the practice of crossing genres has made its way into the mainstream.

i.e. {Cowboys & Aliens}. When I first heard that title passing through my living room, I will have to admit I took a step back and had a good laugh. But in all seriousness those brave souls got their film onto the big screen and into the public arena. So don't be shy about it and don't spend too much time on it either.

**Theme-** This is an essential part, in my mind for the writer to be constantly cognoscente about when he or she is doing their writing. It is the underlying motivational factor that pushes the story and the main character forward. Every action and piece of dialogue should be written with that end result in mind.

Examples of this could be, teaching the audiences a lesson at the end or that good will always triumph over evil, or you know something along those lines. Knowing what your overall theme is will also help in your writing by not getting off topic and

placing too much mundane actions and dialogue which can muddle up what you are trying to accomplish.

Following along with that last sentence, I would like to stress that staying focused and keeping everything flowing in a congruent manner is also crucial for keeping the readers and audiences emotionally involved with your story. When you can do that well, that there will put your script above the rest.

**Plot-** One final note that I believe will help you with your structure, would be to try and hone in on the films plot. When I begin on a new task, I like to sit down and go through the story in my head with just a pad of regular style legal paper and a pen. I then write out a five to ten bullet points to help in the manner of your script not becoming scrambled or veering off course which will undoubtedly end in confusion for the reader and/or audience.

For example, you have your beginning and then start adding the catalysts or motivation points that will keep your story flowing forward in a progressive and comprehensive manner. This process of writing down your plot points is very simple, yet very easily tells you what direction you are headed in. Knowing the end result will help immensely in your act of steady achievement.

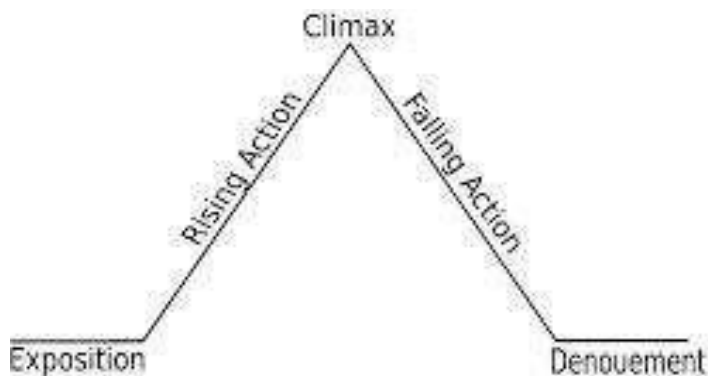
So if your topic is about “A lost dog, looking to find his way home” then the plot would describe how the animal would go

about doing this. Not a great example but I'm sure you get the point.

# UNDERSTANDING SCENE STRUCTURE

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As I'm sure you know, or if not that's fine, the average Hollywood story consists of the three act structure. Here is picture to give you some visual perspective. A scene in itself should move along these same guidelines. Scenes in my opinion must start out with an action sequence to set it up before any dialogue is to be conveyed.



So the main purpose of each scene can be thought of pieces of a bridge that move the story along in again, a forward method. You do not want to veer off your streamlined story for that is where confusion and disinterest in the audience or the reader will set in.

A little exercise I like to do is I will always ask myself "Will this help or hurt the message I am trying to get across?" Another

thing you can do when you have a little free time is to pop in a DVD of a film that you know back to front and have a look at the deleted scenes. {My favorite would be from “Up in Smoke – the roach clips but never mind that.”}

Take a look at those deleted scenes and try and figure out why they were cut. Many times you will notice that they simply were an extension of the previous scene and did not move the story along fast enough. This should not be confused with moving along the **Sub-plot** but we will get into that a little later on.

Just keep in mind that we as human beings are pulled in so many directions that if we get the opportunity, we will cut off the emotional tie with your film and shift our focus onto what we want to have for dinner that night.



If the words in the above picture feel a little foreign to you, it can also be phrased as **The Setup, The Complication and The Resolution**. Now this is not, the end all or be all example for how your story should flow, but it is a good reference point to keep in mind. All of these different sections can be manipulated and modified in length to accommodate your vision.

Now, if you are new to writing screenplays you can always go online and find some great examples of how they are formatted. There are many helpful sites that I will list in the reference section of this ebook that offer excellent services and


templates for a small fee or even free ones that will help get you along your way.

Script elements can be broken up into different groups and must be written in a specific format for what is being written. Here down below I list some keywords in a screenshot of one of my scripts with them pointed out to give you an idea.






TURQUOISE ANN (cont'd)  
own words and thoughts. Just as a  
little reminder of her life and  
such.



The women share another warm embrace before Turquoise Ann walks back inside with a sincere smile on her face. As Amelia takes her seat again she looks the book over rubbing her hand across the fine leather casing and opening it to the first blank page. She starts out at the top by writing the date at which she arrived to her new home. It reads February 23, 1889. Amelia continues to write happily while rocking in her chair.



EXT. OUTSIDE TURQUOISE ANN'S HOUSE




EARLY EVENING

Amelia sits silent on Turquoise Ann's porch rocking with her attention fully on her journal writing when Turquoise Ann peeks her head out once again.

TURQUOISE ANN  
You smell that?

Amelia stops sniffing the air for any strange smells.

AMELIA  
No? Smell what?



TURQUOISE ANN  
It smells like it's gonna rain  
tonight.

Amelia closes her journal sniffing the air once more. Not noticing anything different than the normal scents, she looks up towards Turquoise Ann in a confused manner.

AMELIA  
You can smell the rain?

Turquoise Ann looks off into the clouds searching for the rain.

TURQUOISE ANN  
Sure, when there's time. Most times  
it comes so fast you get caught  
right in it.

Amelia raises her eyebrows questioning in her head if Turquoise Ann is correct. Turquoise Ann claps her hands suddenly changing the mood.

**Purple Arrow → Turquoise Ann = Character Name**

**Red Arrow** → **(cont'd)** = **Parenthetical** is intended to let the reader know that the dialogue is continued from the previous page. Along those lines you can add **(V.O.)** which stands for **Voice Over** or the audience hearing someone speaking with a narrative tone. **(O.S.)** This stands for **Off Screen**, which means it is a voice coming from someone within the scene but cannot be seen by the audience.

**Green Arrow** → **The women share...** = **The beginning of the page's first action sequence.**

**Yellow Arrow** → **Ext.** = **External Shot/Scene takes place Outside**

**Yellow Arrow** → **Int.** = **Internal Shot/Scene takes place Inside**

These should be used in every beginning text in the Scene Heading or Transition to let the reader know about the intended environment.

**Yellow Arrow** → **Ext. Outside Turquoise Ann's House = Scene Heading**

**Blue Arrow** → **Early Evening = Optional** but always helps to create the environment.

**Orange Arrow** → **It smells like it's gonna rain tonight. = Dialogue**

Here are some more basic examples, just to hammer it home.

INT. CASINO – NIGHT

EXT. CARNIVAL – DAY

INT. BASEMENT - DAWN

EXT. AIRFIELD - DUSK

Notice, there are no camera directions or anything of that sort. My advice would be, that unless you are a director and this is your shooting script, leave these out for now. What I like to do however, is to try and push myself mentally and artistically and see if there are other ways in the action sequences that I could get my desired vantage across to the reader.

But for those of you who would like to know more about camera angles, I will list some examples and brief definitions here for you.

**PAN-** A wide and vast horizontal sweeping view of a scene such as an ocean or a battlefield.

**AERIAL & CRANE SHOT-** Think of this as being used as a smaller scale of the Pan shot.

**P.O.V-** Put simply it is from a characters Point of View.

**ECU & CU-** Stands for Extreme Close Up and Close Up.

**ANGLE ON-** This is used to draw attention to a particular item within the scene. It could be a note or a letter left on a table or something of that nature. This should only be used if it is essential to moving the story along.

So there are a few of the different camera angles that can be applied and once again I will list the main words and phrases that you must become accustomed to when you begin writing screenplays.

**Scene Heading / Slug Line, Action, Character, Parenthetical, Dialogue & Transition.**

Here are some antiquated but more core elements that you have to adopt when working on your final draft format. (Many of today's writing software's will take care of this for you.)

Font: 12 point Courier (Preferred standard)

Spacing between dialogue and action (two lines)

Left margin 1.5"

Right margin 1.5"

Tab for left dialogue margin 2.5"

Tab for right dialogue margin 2.5"

## **CAPITALIZE THESE ELEMENTS:**

All sounds, including music.

All character names when they first they appear in a description and or action lines.

Every word in the Scene Heading or Slug Line. And finally the speaker or characters name above each line of dialogue.

# MEANINGFUL ACTION SEQUENCES

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Here we are, the meat and potatoes of screenwriting in my opinion. When it comes to the action in your first speculative script don't get caught up in all the details of what you want to see happen. What I mean is, no one wants to read about someone entering a room, turning on a light switch then walking up to a table and picking up a cup of water then taking a drink... You see how boring that was? The words I like to live by are simply "keep it lean and keep it mean!"

Ok, enough of that already. For that example we have just above, you can say however "Eric eagerly whisked into the room, swiping at the light switch before clutching the solemn cup and gulping down his much needed and thoroughly satisfying drink."

That is not the best example of course, but hopefully you can see the difference that occurs by adding simple verbiage to your sentences and making them become more colorful and vivid. You want to have a happy medium with this so don't go overboard and save all the mundane and wonderfulness for your bestselling novel adaptation.

So, I'll reiterate that the purposes of action scenes, which are to move the story along in an enticing and informative manner. Action must elicit a reaction. Whether it be on the screen or in the comfortable red cushion seats of your local theater, just make sure whatever is in the action sequences absolutely has to be.

Many in our field would suggest that the wording be constructed in plain and simple high school education level language so that anyone of any background can easily grasp the message. This I agree with. This also relates back to one of the key elements in your screenplay which is flow or continuity. Want my advice? Of course you do or at least I hope you do.

Don't bog or slow down the natural curve of your script with too large or rarely used words. Picture the action sequences in the beginning as just a simple vehicle to get you from point A to point B. The optimum Hollywood standard is from two to three sentences for a given action sequence. This, in my opinion is really very limiting but on the flip side it also is very attractive for actors and directors.

For them it becomes more appealing in the sense that it allows them more freedom to express your message in a manner that suits them.

If you have however, been working on a great scene that you absolutely believe needs to be longer, well then I suggest by all means go with it in the beginning, then maybe later during a few more reads you can whittle it down.

Here, is another excerpt from my chosen script which in fact has longer action lines.

## As the Young Girls= Action Sequence

FLASHBACK TO,

EXT. TURQUOISE ANN'S VILLAGB                      1859                      DUSK

A YOUNG TURQUOISE ANN retrieves water for her father while a gorgeous orange sun is going down past the horizon. Her GRANDFATHER steps out from his home gathering up the Young Turquoise Ann and her OTHER along with other YOUNG GIRLS to walk out to the grasslands with him.

GRANDFATHER

Come with *me* young one. We will prepare some food for our white friends. They come tonight to share a fire.

As the Young Girls and the Young Turquoise Ann playfully chase each other around to the outskirts of the village her Grandfather and Mother begin to light separate fires. With her Mother the girls are settled to start grinding corn and preparing meat. Her Grandfather has begun his ritual for welcoming the guests soon the heavy steps of many horses approaching can be heard thundering out of the approaching darkness. The Grandfather steps out and away from his grand fire to greet them with open arms when a group of ten soldiers ride up as the closest one raises his rifle and fires two bullets into her Grandfather spinning him around clutching his chest in agony.

MOTHER

You girls run! Hide!

The Young Turquoise Ann is the farthest away from everyone and escapes into the darkness only looking back once hearing the deathly screams and yells followed by sporadic and sparking gunshots. Reaching the village her Father with his rifle in hand grabs her by the arm and settles her down into a thicket while speaking to her sternly.

FATHER

You stay here...till I come for you. We must save are brothers and sisters I will come back for you.



Remember these two important factors. One, is what are you telling your protagonist and two is what are you telling your audience. When the audience knows what is about to happen and can see the solution to the conflict in front of them, they will surely and most definitely lose interest. On the other hand you use this to your advantage and set the audience up and let them think they know what is going to happen and then do the total opposite, effectively making them more interested.

Get used to using techniques like **Foreshadowing** or **Pre-framing**. What this means is that early on in the script and in the action sequence of course, you may introduce a character, an ominous subject or maybe even some words that can pull the reader or audience in and get them to start asking questions.

This is a natural human trait and by doing this it helps build the level of anticipation up while keeping them more emotionally hooked into your film. When there is a brief gap between the predicament or problem that the characters find themselves in and a probable solution will lead them to safety can be presented, only then will the reader stay interested. As you can see there is a lot that can go into writing these scenes but the easiest way that I figured out how to put it, is just look at what you are trying to get across from an outside point of view and think what would keep you personally involved in the story.

**Action sequences must have all capital letters when first introducing a character to the audience.** This makes it easier for the actor or director when it is time to find when the character is first mentioned.

**Pink Arrow** → Character Introduction

wall in extreme fright while Turquoise Ann looks towards her swiftly tapping Amelia on the leg grabbing her attention. She puts a hand over her own mouth to signal for Amelia to remain silent. Amelia nods in obedience as Turquoise Ann resumes pointing her rifle directly at her door nervously bracing her self for whatever may come through. More bullets ring out louder and closer ripping through the house and windows missing the woman but showering them with glass and splinters of wood from behind. Amelia muffles her screams with her hands over her mouth as her eye's become huge darting around in every direction.

SCRUFFY MAN(O.S.)

Their gonna kill me! Ann! Aaaagh!

The sounds of the Scruffy Man being beat on can be heard. Boots scrape along the porch followed by a final push against the door. Amelia glances back towards Turquoise Ann shaking trying to remain silent.

EXT. OUTSIDE TURQUOISE ANN'S HOUSE NIGHT

A SINISTER MAN approaches the porch slowly revealing his severely scarred face while putting his open hand in the air as if to calm the situation down. The Scruffy Man struggles to move but is pressed up tightly by two burly men against the door.

SCRUFFY MAN

No,hold on, wait! Wait! Tell Bunko I'll pay! I'll pay! Whatever he want's!

The Sinister Man listens at the Scruffy Man's pleads for mercy as he responds calmly.

SINISTER MAN

Oh don't worry about Bunko. He said not to worry about the money. Instead he sent me here to give you a gift.

# VIVID & MEMORABLE CHARACTERS

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Let us carry on now to the subject of characters. Vivacious and animated characters make your story come alive. They act as the catalysts, that stick in the audiences mind and gives them someone to root for while allowing you the freedom to express whatever message you want to get across.

One very helpful, simple and well practiced exercise that many use including myself, is to write a short one page biography for each main character. It doesn't have to be anything great for others to see but it should bring out some definite characteristics.

I know what you're thinking, or at least I think I do. You're probably thinking, "Oh great, now he wants me to do extra writing?" Well, yes! Like I stated earlier with main aspects of your story it doesn't have to be the characters full life down to every detail, it just has to use some clear cut bullet points of experiences that give the character the personality depth like how you may have pictured them in your mind.

Great examples of some good questions you can ask would be like, are they religious? What is the manner in the way they walk? Whether he or she hangs their head down or has and arrogant bounce in their step. What part of the world they

come from, what experiences have they had with the opposite sex, what if any mannerisms or physical ticks and scars they might have. What is their mindset like? Just let your imagination go and get inside their mind and have them fill out your questionnaire of sorts.

Soon you will be able to find out their weaknesses/strengths and exploit their vulnerabilities to your benefit. These possibilities are endless. Right now many of you could be thinking, that maybe this sounds a little crazy and these are just made up characters anyways and why do I have to waste my time trying to bring them to life. Well the answer I believe is probably the same reason why you picked up this book?

You want to enjoy your experience and by doing this exercise you are expanding your mind and easily tapping into your creative sub-conscious. And who knows, maybe even a more unimaginable story will spawn from this. Just as the writers of today's super hero movies have all begun to write full films based on many of the supporting characters, you too can keep the ideas flowing.

So, what I believe will soon become apparent with this done is that when and each time it is appropriate to write, the characters will more easily begin to interact and flow together in your mind almost like magic!

The **Hero or Protagonists** needs to be introduced very early and **the audience absolutely must become emotionally involved with them.** This is done to keep the viewers interested enough to stay and watch what will happen next. An example of this would be to start out with an exciting or tragic event unfolding with them.

It could be after a car wreck, or watching a love interest walk away and therefore triggering some type of emotional response from the audience. This is powerful method to hit them early with a strong scene and then stop at the peak of the climactic point. This is also a common way to start out with a high energy scene or a “Flashback” to begin your story.

As for the **Villain or Antagonist**, well you can never go wrong with creating a good villain. I try to stay away from the normal cut and paste ones and with all the wild movies we are bombarded with nowadays take a little time to sculpt out your right one. With your hero’s opposite, I also like to add variable flaws to them and give them a sense of vulnerability and contrast while exuding such strong personalities.

Of course you should sprinkle in a love interest as well. This does not have to be a romantic partner; it can just be someone or something that can add to the drive of the main character throughout the film or a secondary subplot as well for extra

emotion. In addition it is a nice way to make your vision more enjoyable and play around with your supporting characters.

Having them interacting in a scene by themselves contributes another layer of depth and works unconsciously on the psychology of the audience which most likely will attract more interest.

In closing, just keep in mind that you want to transport the audience to the movies setting and let them live vicariously through your film.

# Dialogue

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For those of us writers who love to have everything just perfect and their way, the dialogue may be the area where we have to show the most restraint. For me, it definitely was like this at first but for the hardened screenwriter you will become, I can guarantee you that it will soon be very easy to let go and adopt this concept.

When I first started out I was not very efficient at this at all, but now years later I tend to keep my dialogue down to two or three sentences each time, hopefully. However, when I do start to run on a bit, I tell myself to remember that the actors will have to learn and repeat these lines so if they are too long it may well turn actors away.

I usually steer towards the formula of 70% action to 30% dialogue. You may want to try and play around with 80% action and 20% dialogue just to be safe in the beginning. A good way of cutting down your dialogue is to try and steer clear of using cluttering phrases such as umm, ahh, hmm.

In my opinion these phrases are just wasted space and you should trust that the actors will be able to pick up on this and

when to use these if you have written the action sequences well enough. A quick example for where you may need an “uhh” is when you write in the action sequence that your character is noticeably indecisive in answering or when posed with a question.

Now this next suggestion may seem like a no brainer but so many writers lose sight of this aspect and that is, whatever genre or part of the world or outer world for you sci-fi's, you are writing about you must remember to have the character take on their appropriate form of dialogue, whether it be slang, proper or broken English, a heavy accent, or a low to high pitched voice.

To go along with the previous statement about accents it is advised that you do not write out the words as they sound, but instead just place your desired intention in parenthesis like so. (In a heavy Spanish accent)

Next to the dialogue and that should be enough for the reader or actor to adapt to what you are trying to get across. All of these simple and easy depth adding qualities are very important for creating a superior character and speech.

Another terrific and very helpful exercise is to find a colleague, friend or relative who is willing to help and have them go over a few of your scenes with you. Explain to them what you are



trying to accomplish and keep it fun for the first couple of times to see if it will work in real life.

Then after you all have gotten most of the laughs out of the way tell them to really try and deliver the scene as good as they can. All the while observe the mannerisms, facial expressions, speech and pitch. Take all those different variables into account when you continue on writing or rewriting. This will help you get a visual picture in your mind about how the lines will be delivered thus helping you come up with the best possible text for that situation.

Now if you don't have anyone to practice lines with or don't want to go that far, I would suggest finding a cheap voice recorder or even microphone for you to recite the lines yourself and go from there. The same principles would apply here as well. Use different emotions and pitch of speech.

# WRAPPING IT ALL UP WITH SCENE TYPES AND TRANSITIONS

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There is an age old expression out there that you want people to associate with your script. You want or strive for them to label your works as “great page turners.” Place a great deal of effort on having intriguing twists and turns in your plot while continually putting the audiences and characters morals and actions into question.

Immerse them in heart wrenching situations, at crossroads, at points of picking the lesser of two evils and so on. If you have these few scene enhancing ideas in mind when you are writing I’m sure it will dramatically increase the quality of your original story. Once again the scene in itself needs to only belong to the script if it is absolutely essential to move the story along and build upon the last one.

Keep in mind that the script is only a template for how the story will be played out if picked up. All of the actors, directors and producers will each put their own little spin on things so you

don't have to worry about every little detail. Again, leave that to the novel or your short stories.

Here is an explanation of a few types of scenes that you will want to become familiar with.

**INTERCUT-** A Intercut is a series of scenes that bounce back and forth in very quick succession. An example of this is often used for a phone or text conversation.

**FLASHBACK-** A Flashback is a scene within a scene, used to give the audience or reader desired information. This is written in the same as a scene heading but "Dissolve to or Fade-in" can be used in this situation.

**DAYDREAM-** A Daydream is written basically similar to the Flashback but can be used for future or present tense references and these "Dissolve or Fade-in" can be used as well.

On a side note, you will want to use the Dissolve and Fade transitions very sparingly.

**MONTAGES-** Montages work in the same way as the Intercut but without the dialogue mixed in between it. It is used to convey information very swiftly like working on a project, painting a house or going through the hours of the day. Recently they have been used in the opening credits to set the stage and mood of the film, but they can also be used in the end of a film to wrap everything up.

When it comes to the subject of length, the big studios prefer 100 to 120 minutes for a feature film. That is the desired time which allows them to hit the maximum amount of shows in a day.

You can judge the length of your script roughly by figuring 1 page = 1 min. A short film can average between 30 to 50 minutes. Now these are just averages and they can all be varied but this is a good way to measure your time length.

Like I stated in the beginning of this book, don't get it right just get your story written. Then you can go back through while continuing to learn and pick up different tricks and tips from all the vast sources that are available to you. Spontaneous writing is a great thing, but you must come back around to those parts and edit them.

I encourage you to get involved with your local film community and see if you can't get to know any of them. Before I was finished with my first speculative script I adopted the idea that I was a screenwriter and I began approaching the locals around my town and on facebook and any other social media resources as well as LinkedIn.

Many of them will be happy to give you advice and I also advise you to open yourself up to volunteering for any of the projects that they have in your area. The budding local film communities away from Hollywood and New York are always in need of free

help. You could start out by providing simply another body for the shot or grabbing some coffee.

Whatever the task is does not matter. What does matter begin to start telling everyone you are a screenwriter and get your name out there. The more people you meet the more doors will open up to you.

When you have your finished script and you want some amount of protection for it, go to the Writers Guild of America's page and pay to register it with them. But before you do, have someone read it who will give you their unbiased opinion. One way to do this is to enter your story into the many low cost screenplay competitions that are out there.

Do your research on them and make sure they are truly legitimate before sending any money. If you have a story that is set in a particular city look them up and see if they have a competition you can enter. The smaller competitions are more likely to give you real helpful advice as the volume of received screenplays is lower.

The next piece of advice I have for you is don't ever give up! The road will be long and bumpy but remember this, you have a better chance of hitting it big or getting struck by lightning then winning the lottery. So if people hit the lottery and get struck by lightning you and your script can hit it big!

No matter what happens when people read your works don't look at any of your efforts as failures. Simply look at them as results from a test, a test from which you will take away as a new knowledge on how you can perfect your work. Many great screenwriters have at least ten or so unpublished works but do not be dismayed or swayed by this fact. For it only takes one yes to make it all happen. Also if you're worried about not earning any money just know that 1 in 20 scripts are optioned and many writers make a good living by only optioning scripts!

In closing, the act of writing a screenplay should be pleasurable. Do your research about the subject and really think about the fact that going to see the movies costs so much nowadays. Put yourself in the audience's shoes and constantly ask yourself "Would I pay my hard earned money to see this?"

If you can do that and create memorable characters and situations, I'm sure you will have a great script! Till next time, this is your friend The Unrelenting Writer telling you to continue learning and always continue following your dreams!

# HELPFUL TIPS & RESOURCES

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Here are some great screenwriting web pages where you can find templates along with many other tools.

## **The Script Lab- Template page**

<http://thescriptlab.com/screenwriting/form/templates>

## **Celtx- Free Writing Software**

<https://www.celtx.com/index.html>

## **Final Draft- Writing Software**

<http://www.finaldraft.com/>

## **Internet Movie Database-IMDb**

<http://www.imdb.com/>

The Internet Movie Database will give you the most up to date information on film revenues and is also essential for keeping you plugged into the film industries current trends along with many other resources.

## **Writers Guild of Americas-West**

<http://www.wga.org/>

## **Writers Guild of Americas-East**

<https://www.wgaeast.org/>

These Writers Guild websites are awesome in regards to the huge amount of resources they possess. Underneath their writers tab on the home page they have lists of many agencies and agents from whom you can send your query letters to for representation.

The U.S. Copyright- Home Page <http://www.copyright.gov/>

Take care of your intellectual property here.