

SCREENWRITING MADE EASY:

PRE-WRITING WORKBOOK

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Planning Out Your Screenplay:

When beginning to gather your information together you are going to want to pick a title that will –

A: Grab the audience's or reader's attention.

B: Intrigue or peak the targeted audience's or reader's curiosity.

C: Be different than what has been presented in the past.

What is your Title? _____

Now list at least 5 other alternatives.

Now with those alternative titles, can you picture different outcomes or stories? If so have another look at your choices. You don't need to

spend too much time working on this but this little exercise will help you focus in on the perfect title.

Think of it as a simple advertisement for what your film is going to be about. Or your one chance to make that good first impression.

So now that you have your title or titles at least I hope, then you are going to want to start making a list of essential plot points for your film but first take the time to figure out your beginning and end.

How will your film start out?

How will your film end?

Always knowing where you want to go will help move that process along.

Now make a list of what you believe to be are your main catalyst points that will carry the story along in a cohesive manner. Examples of this might be the purpose of the story, the motivation and the turning point.

You can now take those small bullet points and begin working towards the first one. Keep these bullet points handy to make sure you don't sway off course. So once you have those pretty well mapped out, you can begin planning out and creating your characters

Getting to know your characters:

Having great characters is a key component to keeping the targeted audiences attention on your script. Here is a great way to come up with wonderful and memorable ones and that would be with a short biography.

Hero/Protagonist

Where are they from?

How did they get to this point?

What is something that nobody else would know about them?

What is the motivation behind them?

Villain/Antagonist

What makes them different than from the Hero/Protagonist?

What are their flaws or weaknesses?

What is their main driving force?

If animal or human, how was their upbringing?

What is their overall attitude about life like?

I like to also use these types of questions for getting a better understanding of how my supporting roles will be interacting with each other as well.

Other questions to consider would be age, religion, diet, job type, education and so on. Just let your imagination run wild and in no time your characters will go from simple, flat and bland to vivid and engaging.

Focusing your action sequences:

As you begin to gather more preliminary information and a better understanding of how your script will play out, you will want to start to play around with what will undoubtedly be the bulk of your film.

Action! Yes, that is what moves the film along in a streamlined manner. You should keep in mind that people of all interests and educational backgrounds will be reading your material so do not try to “wow” them

with large or extravagant words. Truthfully it will take away from building any emotional connect with the reader if they do not understand something and simply render them uninterested. Just to be safe, high school level competence is what I recommend.

Practice here, starting out with your opening scene as a case study of sorts. Don't worry about the heading or slugline. Just start writing what you want the audience to know without using any types of speaking words or dialogue.

Now from that, is there another way you can get your vision across without having to use as many lines.

The action sequences are preferred by most readers to carry the story along in a very streamlined fashion. And in all actuality, once the piece is picked up it will most definitely be chopped to pieces so don't be too

strict on this. I know it's a hard thing to swallow for a writer but if you absolutely want to only have your lines read, go with playwriting. Also use a thesaurus now and then but remember you only have around 120pgs to work with.

Creating awesome dialogue:

Another essential part to conveying the message or story you hold in your mind is by knowing how to write coherent dialogue. Now when most writers start out they write down their dialogue in the manner that it comes across in their brain. This is perfectly normal as it is the simplest way for us to proceed forward with the script.

What tends to come out however is that the dialogue is boring. This we do not want. So with the suggested exercise done about writing out your characters small biography you should be able to get a feel on how they would convey their speech.

Whether it be stuttered, with an accent, uneducated or whatever. Just try and hold true to the characters perceived personality. Do any and all research around where and when your characters would come from and take the time to investigate those speech patterns and local slangs.

Remember that dialogue sequences should be kept as short as possible for the simple reason that actors will have to memorize them. Take some time and just grab a scene that you have in your head or out of an existing piece of work and speak the dialogue out loud just as you would like to hear it on screen.

If it doesn't quite seem right, take the time here or on the dialogue worksheets to work with it.

Dialogue Exercise

Is there another way the message can be said using all different words?

This exercise is only meant to get you really into the mindset of your character. It is

also important to remember that if your story is going well you should not need to add exclamation points. Question marks are ok but the reader should be able to feel the emotion coming out of your action.

Combine this with what you read in the eBook and that should be enough to get you started. Always remember to continue writing and learning and you will have an exceptional piece great enough to share with the world.

Take care,

D.Spyker