

Screenwriting:

What kind of story do you want to tell? Writing a script is a craft, just like writing a novel.

1. Characters

A) Who are your characters?

1) People/Animals

- a) Where do they come from? Ethnicity? Accent? Dress?
- b) What is their goal? How do they fit into your story?
- c) What makes them unique? Physical Appearance? Quirks?
- d) How do your characters enhance the plot? Is your character necessary? Why? Background or Foreground?

2) Locations

- a) A town, or special place (Amityville Horror, Peyton Place, Bay Watch)

3) Object

- a) Car, ring, painting, vase, etc. (It Takes A Thief, Goldfinger)
- b) What makes this object interesting?

4) An ideal

- a) Justice? Revenge? Good vs Evil (Erin Brockovich, Hidden Figures, Superheroes)

2. Plot

A) Screenplay - Act 1, 2, 3 Novel - Beginning - Middle – End

- a) What makes your story unique? Interesting?
- b) Conflict
- c) Resolution

B) How does your story flow?

- a) Does your story have a beat? Like music?
- b) How does the plot support the characters and vice versa? (Delicate Balance)

3. Engaging Dialogue

- A) Does the dialogue advance the story?
- B) Is the dialogue believable? Natural?

C) Does the dialogue support the character? (When to show/when to tell)

The rules that apply for novel writing also apply to scriptwriting:

- 1) Write what you know
- 2) Read scripts that mirror what you want to write
- 3) Watch movies – pay attention to beats
- 4) Watch more movies – pay attention to the story behind the story – what grabs/keeps your attention? What do you like about the characters? The plot?

Networking:

Share your work, get constructive criticism. Work on your pitch - Attend pitch sessions.

Resources:

- ["Story Structure"](#) by Robert McKee is the bible of story structure and the basics of the principles of screenwriting. A must read.
- ["Screenplay"](#) by Syd Field is another must read by the one author that most Hollywood writers would agree is the master of the screenplay.
- ["Screenwriters Problem Solver"](#), also by Syd Field, is a follow-up to "Screenplay," and Field takes readers through common problems many screenwriters confront and exercises to help fix them.
- ["Save the Cat"](#) – Blake Schneider

Access Sacramento Script Writing Contest – March 2019 - Accesssacramento.org (for details)

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