

Stick to the Script!

Screenwriting and other careers in the film industry

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade
Subject	Performing Arts
Course	American Literature, Drama

Essential Question

How can a screenwriter correctly write a screenplay that can be read by actors, directors, and producers? Why is it important to align your screenplay to the elements of story structure?

Summary

In this lesson, students will learn the basic formatting guidelines needed to follow for writing a script. They will also listen to a film professor talk about careers in television and movies. This is also adaptable for ELA using books that are commonly assigned.

Snapshot

Engage

Student will compare and contrast a movie scene with the script and discuss with peers.

Explore

Students will explore the guidelines for writing a script and take turns performing and observing a script reading.

Explain

Students will watch an ICAP video from a film professor about careers in the film industry.

Extend

Students will work in groups to write a script and receive feedback.

Evaluate

Students will adjust their script based off feedback, perform the final product, and share what they have learned about the script writing process.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Fine Arts: Drama/Theatre (High School: Advanced (II)))

DT.CR.2 : Organize, develop, and rehearse artistic ideas and work.
II.CR.2.2 : Demonstrate collaborative and interdisciplinary skills by cooperating as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 11)

3.W: Writing: Students will write for varied purposes and audiences in all modes, using fully developed ideas, strong organization, well-chosen words, fluent sentences, and appropriate voice.
11.3.W.1: Narrative: Students will write narratives embedded in other modes as appropriate.
4: Vocabulary - Students will expand their working vocabularies to effectively communicate and understand texts.
4.W: Writing: Students will apply knowledge of vocabularies to communicate by using descriptive, academic, and domain-appropriate abstract and concrete words in their writing.
11.4.W.2: Students will select appropriate language to create a specific effect according to purpose in writing.

Attachments

- Lesson Slides — Stick to the Script!.pptx
- Mad Libs — Stick to the Script!.docx
- Mad Libs — Stick to the Script!.pdf
- Mad Libs—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.docx
- Mad Libs—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.pdf
- Script Formatting Guidelines — Stick to the Script!.docx
- Script Formatting Guidelines — Stick to the Script!.pdf
- Script Formatting Guidelines—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.docx
- Script Formatting Guidelines—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.pdf
- Script Versus Screen Venn Diagram—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.docx
- Script Versus Screen Venn Diagram—Stick to the Script! - Spanish.pdf
- Script Versus Screen Venn Diagram—Stick to the Script!.docx
- Script Versus Screen Venn Diagram—Stick to the Script!.pdf
- Script—Stick to the Script - Spanish.docx
- Script—Stick to the Script - Spanish.pdf
- Script—Stick to the Script.docx
- Script—Stick to the Script.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Script Versus Scene Venn Diagram (attached; one per student)
- Script Formatting Guidelines (attached; one per student)
- Mad Libs (attached; one card per student)
- Script (fishbowl) (attached; one per student)
- Red pens (optional)
- Sticky Notes (one per student)
- Notebook paper (one per student)

Engage

Introduce the lesson by displaying the title **slide 2** from the attached **Lesson Slides**.

Display **slides 3-4** and share the essential questions and learning objectives for the lesson to the extent you feel necessary.

Move to **slide 5**, distribute the handout **Script Versus Screen Venn Diagram** and share the instructional strategy Venn Diagram with your students. Explain to them that as they watch the video, they should use their Venn diagram to find moments that are unique to both the script and what they are seeing on the screen, as well as moments that captured the written word perfectly. You can use **slide 6** to provide clarity for them. Display **slide 7** and share the video From Script to Screen - Inception - Paradoxical Architecture Scene. Show the video a second time. This will provide students the opportunity to find information for their Venn diagram that they might have missed during the first viewing.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=Gi8eTnk844E

Once the video is complete, display **slide 8** and provide your students with a few additional minutes to finalize their Venn diagram on their own.

Teacher's Note - Wakelet

For ELA teachers who are using this lesson and want to tie them to books you might have read in class, we have created a Wakelet with scenes from relevant films and their respective screenplays: https://wakelet.com/wake/GfRc5gvSXDHYP8WGniw-t

Display **slide 9** and introduce the instructional strategy Mingle with your students. Play school appropriate music of your choosing as your students “mingle” with their peers. Once you stop the song, display **slide 10** and instruct your students to sort themselves into groups of four. Once in groups, have them compare the information they wrote down in their Venn diagram, adding details that other group members saw. After their lists are complete, instruct the students to share their findings with the class. Write moments of agreement on the whiteboard to highlight a group understanding.

Explore

Move to **slide 11**, pass out the attached **Script Formatting Guidelines**, and share the video How to Format a Screenplay: Screenplay Formatting 101. Provide your students with time to review the guidelines

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=_2uZ7IabVOM

Display **slide 12** and share the definition of a table read with your students. Move to **slide 13** and share the instructional strategy Fishbowl with your students. Pass out the **Script** and let them know that they are going to do a table read like actors would do when first receiving a script. Explain that each group will get **5-10** minutes to prepare for their table read, use **slide 14** or **15** depending on how much time you think your students need to prep.

Display **slide 16** and instruct that the first group is to sit around a table in a circle with the rest of the group standing around them, like a fishbowl. Instruct those around the fishbowl, the outer circle, to take notes on their script of how the inner circle interpreted what was written. Once the inner circle has finished their table read, provide the students in the outer circle time to ask clarifying questions about why they made certain decisions. Repeat this for each group of students having them take turns being the inner circle and the outer circle. Have students keep their notes to use later when writing their own script.

Explain

Show **slide 17** and play the video, K20 ICAP - Professor of Digital Cinema - Stick to the Script, with a film professor at OCCC talking about careers in the film industry. When it is completed, show **slide 18** and pass out a sticky note to each student. Have students record their Point of Most Significance from the video on a sticky note.

Teacher's Note - P.O.M.S.

While there are a variety of topics in the video students might highlight, some content specific ones might be: the role of the scriptwriter in television versus film, the impact of the editor on the final movie, and what students should do now if they want a career in film.

Extend

Display **slide 19**. Explain to students that they will be creating a script, with dialogue between three characters, in a group. Ask students to divide themselves into groups of three and decide on who will fill each of the following roles: Scene description, character description and post-production, and dialogue. Inform the students that they will be completing their section without talking to their team members. Just like a Mad Libs they will combine their information to create a full script. Have students create a three-to-four page script with the requirements found on the **Mad Libs** handout. Encourage students to use their notes from the *F*ishbowl activity and their Script Formatting Guidelines handout.

After each student has completed their individual ideas, have students synthesize them into one coherent script, typing their information from their drafts into a proper script format. They should use the script formatting guidelines provided to make sure their final script uses correct margins, fonts, etc. This might take the rest of the hour.

Display **slide 20**. Explain to students the career of "script reader." Instruct student groups to pass their script to the group on the right for reading.

Teacher's Note: Sharing Digitally

It might be fun to print the script and mark-up using red ink, but if there isn't time, students can always share a Google Doc link.

Allow the student groups to make suggestions on their peers' script using comments in the margins (or the comment feature in Google Docs). Remind them to be positive and encouraging in this process.

Tell the students that they will get to read the suggestions and revise their scripts in class on the next day.

Evaluate

At the start of the next day, allow students to rejoin their groups and have students write their revisions based upon the feedback they received from the other group. When all students have completed their revisions, allow them to practice performing their script. After a short practice time have each group performance of their script for the class.

After the performance, pass out a sheet of notebook paper to each student. Display **slide 21**. Allow each student to complete the activity "I Used to Think, But Now I Know," reflecting on what they thought scriptwriting would be like and how different the process was.

Teacher's Note: Script Reader

If students show interest in a career as a Script Reader provide them with some of the following information.

- Script Readers needs to know what to write or craft a story and script.
- Enjoy reading
- Patience is an important skill
- Salary ranges from $1,544 to $1,857 a week, typically an hourly rate (as of 2023)
- Internships and writers' groups are great places to start

Resources

- From Script to Screen. (2017a). *From Script to Screen - Inception - Paradoxical Architecture Scene*. *YouTube*. YouTube. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi8eTnk844E.
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