

Screenwriting
Media 22/Media 123

Select Slides

Screenplay Formatting

Elements of a Screenplay





Scene Heading — INT. OFFICE - DAY

Action — RUFUS sits at a desk, fingers furiously tap dancing on a keyboard. He pauses for briefing and looks at the clock on the wall. The digital display reads "5:34"

A TIRE SCREECH

Character Name — Rufus looks out the office window to see JOHN storming into the office complex.

RUFUS (V.O.)
(sarcastically)
Here comes the sexiest man in the universe.

John bursts in through the front door.

Parenthetical — JOHN
(breathing heavily)
Hell's Bells Rufus, the traffic is insane. Is it ready?

Dialogue — RUFUS
Is what ready?

JOHN
(repeating himself)
Is it ready?

RUFUS
You said you wanted uncompressed video. It's going to take an hour to transfer... at least.

Transition — FADE OUT

INT. OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Rufus is again typing away at his desk when John burst in.

JOHN
Is it ready?

RUFUS
No... these files are huge...

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Scene Heading: Where and When

Int. = Interior

Ext. = Exterior

Int. Office – Day

Ext. Store – Day

Int. Bedroom – Night

Ext. House -- Night



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Action Line: What is happening

- Describe the action happening in the scene
- No internal monologues
- Very little exposition
- No back story
- Present tense

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Character Name

- Select names with different first letters
- Capitalize on first use

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Parentheticals

- For emotion
- Use sparingly!

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- Keep it short. Remove unnecessary words.
- Refrain from regional and cultural accents.

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Transitions

- Use sparingly
- To indicate end of a sequence
- Jarring cut in time or place

CUT TO:
FADE IN:
FADE OUT:

Story

Act I Act II Act III

Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene
Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene
Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene

ALWAYS ASK: Does this scene....

1. Advance the plot?
2. Revolve around a want or need?
3. Contain: conflict, negotiation or seduction?
4. Offer a revelation?
5. End with a twist or a turn of fortune?
6. Show character development?