

The Script Review Committee's Goal

Our goal is to provide our members with constructive criticism, support, and encouragement to improve their craft. Our focus is to evaluate scripts based on objective criteria and focus on how well a screenplay meets industry standard formatting and structure. We are not overly concerned with the subjective areas of a story's believability or salability.

Recommended Reading:

- Dave Trottier - *The Screenwriters Bible*
- Syd Field - *Screenplay*
- Blake Snyder - *Save The Cat*
- Robert McKee - *Story*
- Chris Vogler - *The Writer's Journey*
- Stephanie Palmer - *Good In A Room*
- Kathie Fong Yoneda - *The Script-Selling Game*

NWSG Script Review Guidelines & Checklist:

Before sending your script, please review our guidelines. Scripts with typos, grammatical errors, or improper formatting will be returned.

Formatting:

Though we require electronic submissions, format guidelines for printed scripts apply.

- PAPER: Pages are 8 1/2 by 11 inches (in the US).
- PRINT: Print only on one side.
- FONT: Only use 12 point Courier / Courier Final Draft.
- PAGE NUMBERING: All pages, except page one and title page, are numbered in the upper right hand corner.
- PAGE LENGTH: 80 to 110, and no longer than 120. (TV Teleplays should be 30-60 pages long)
- FRONT & BACK COVERS: Use solid 65-110 lb. white index/cover stock. (Do not print anything on these.

- **TITLE PAGE:** Following the front cover, insert this page. It should contain the screenplay title and your name (centered), and contact information (right side).
- **BINDING:** Three-hole punched on the left side. Use two (ACCO-Brand), No. 5 round-headed solid brass fasteners/brads, which are 1 1/4 inches in length. Place brads in the first and third holes, leaving the center hole empty. This makes it easy to take apart for copying.
- **EMAILING:** Convert your script to a pdf document. PDF conversion programs are available on the web and are included in Final Draft and Movie Magic software.

In general it's desirable to avoid "directing" your story or the actors. The following terms should be avoided:

- Camera and editing directions
- Phrases like WE HEAR or WE SEE
- FIRST DRAFT or FINAL DRAFT or anything in between
- Camera Angles: CLOSE UP, ANGLE ON, POV
- Editing Directions: CUT TO, DISSOLVE TO
- Other technical intrusions: References to dollies, cranes, etc.

Please do not include or use the following items:

- Decorated covers, artwork, graphics, illustrations, or storyboards
- Any font other than 12 point Courier / Courier Final Draft
- Bold or italic font styles
- Justified right margins
- Scene numbers
- CONTINUED at the top and bottom of each page

NOTE: *Some programs will insert an automatic CONTINUED when a character's speech is broken into more than one block. This is not needed. Make sure you turn this feature off in your preferences. However, if a character's dialogue carries over to the next page, (CONT'D) is needed, plus a (MORE) on the following page.*

Spelling and Grammar:

- Are there any typos or misspellings?
- Are there any grammatical errors and/or incorrect word usage?

Structure:

- Does it follow a three-act structure?

Plot:

- Are there clear plot points? (Setup, Inciting Incident, End of Act I, Midpoint, End of Act II, Climax, Resolution)

Character:

- Is there a clear protagonist with a dilemma
- Is there a clear antagonist?
- Are the characters well developed or are they one-dimensional, stereotypical, and flat cardboard cutouts?

Dialogue:

- Is the dialogue sparse and utilizes subtext or is the dialogue "on-the-nose" (obvious, unfunny, expositional, etc.)?

Style:

- Is the story told visually? Does the writer show instead of tell?
- Is the story told using rich visual language instead of technical directions like camera shots and editing directions?
- Is the action described with active and accurate verbs, as opposed to adverbs?
- Are the action and events shown or only explained?
- Is the language told using an economy of words or in a novelistic manner?
- Are the description blocks four lines or less?
- Is the screenplay written in the present tense or does it use passive language? (Minimize use of verb + ing construction. For example, instead of writing "John is fixing the car," write "John fixes the car.")