

### **The NWSG Script Review Committee's Goal:**

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

### **Required 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"

### **CHECKLIST:**

Our readers ask the following questions of every script. Before sending your script in, use this to see if your script would pass our guidelines.

### **Formatting:**

**(We will reject your script based on incorrect formatting alone.)**

- 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: Make sure you email someone in the desired format. Us. pdf, rtf, or fdr.

**The following terms should be used if necessary to tell your story, but used sparingly/tastefully:**

- V.O.
- FLASHBACK
- INSERT
- INTERCUT
- MONTAGE
- SERIES OF SHOTS

**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 (If you use any other font, your script will automatically be rejected by studio readers, production companies, and screenplay competitions)
- Bold or italic font styles
- Justified right margins
- Scene numbers
- CONTINUED at the top and bottom of each page
- 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.

**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? (This is a tough one. We all struggle with this)
- Are the action and events shown or only explained?
- Is the language told using an economy of words or in a novelistic (purple) manner?
- Are the description blocks four lines or less? (Use a two-finger width to eyeball length)
- 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.")