

TV TAPE-LIVE FORMAT

"Episode Title"

Written by

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Every script should have a title page with one contact address only in the bottom left hand corner. Always include a phone number and an e-mail address if you have one.

If you have an agent the address and number can go here. A draft number or date is not required on a spec script.

SERIES TITLE

"Episode Title"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCATION - DAY

(BEGIN YOUR SCRIPT WITH A TEASER OR COLD OPENING. ALL TEASERS AND ACTS MUST BEGIN WITH FADE IN: FOLLOWED BY A SET HEADING)

(SET HEADINGS ARE CAPITALISED AND UNDERLINED AND TAKE THE FORM OF EXT. OR INT. LOCATION - DAY OR NIGHT)

CHARACTER #1

Character names appear capitalised. A character is designated by either their first or last name, but a role designation may be used instead with personal titles abbreviated. The designated character name should remain consistent throughout the entire script.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

Scene 1

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCATION - NIGHT

(SCENE ACTION IS CAPITALISED WITH EACH PARAGRAPH ENCLOSED WITHIN ROUND BRACKETS. SCENE ACTION SHOULD ONLY DEAL WITH WHAT IS ON THE SCREEN AND NEVER STRAY INTO SUPERFLUOUS NOVELISTIC TEXT)

CHARACTER #2

Dialogue appears double-spaced under the character name in normal upper and lower case.

CHARACTER #1

(SMILES)

Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the body of the dialogue.

(PAUSE)

It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

(MORE)

CHARACTER #1 (CONT'D)

Split dialogue between pages
only if at least two lines
appear on the first page, and
only after a sentence.

(IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO BREAK A
CHARACTER'S SPEECH WITH
PARAGRAPHS OF SCENE ACTION)

CHARACTER #1

But remember to repeat the
character name. Paragraphs
of dialogue must always be
preceded by a character name
and never appear on their
own.

(SCENES CAN CONTINUE ACROSS
PAGES WITHOUT THE NEED TO
RETYPE THE SET HEADING. ONLY
USE SET HEADINGS AT THE START
OF A NEW SCENE)

(IT IS CUSTOMARY IN A TV SCRIPT
TO SPECIFY A TRANSITION AT THE
END OF EVERY SCENE)

CUT TO:

ACT ONEScene 2INT. LOCATION #2 - DAY

(BEGIN EACH NEW SCENE ON A NEW PAGE, HOWEVER SHORT IT IS, AND ALWAYS FOLLOW A SET HEADING WITH A LINE OF SCENE ACTION)

(IF YOU HAVE A PARTICULARLY VISUAL SCENE WITHOUT MUCH DIALOGUE, THEN SPLIT UP YOUR SCENE ACTION INTO PARAGRAPHS)

(IT MAKES IT MUCH EASIER TO READ THIS WAY AS HEAVY TEXT ON A PAGE IS OFF-PUTTING)

CUT TO:

ACT ONEScene 3INT. LOCATION #3 - NIGHT

(SOMETIMES IT MAY BE NECESSARY
TO HEAR CHARACTERS WHEN WE
CAN'T ACTUALLY SEE THEM)

CHARACTER #1 (O.C.)

Off-camera means the
character is present within
the scene, but can only be
heard, e.g. they are speaking
from an adjoining room.

CHARACTER #2 (V.O.)

Voiceover is used when the
character is not present
within the scene, but can be
heard via a mechanical device
such as a telephone or radio.
It is also used when a
character narrates parts of
your story.

CHARACTER #2

If you need to differentiate
between a character's
narration and their on-screen
dialogue, just begin a new
speech, omitting (V.O.).

CHARACTER #2 (V.O.)

Reverse this process to
return to narration. As
(O.C.) and (V.O.) are
technical instructions, they
appear next to the character
name.

(USE V.O. WHEN YOU WANT TO SHOW
ONE CHARACTER SPEAKING ON THE
PHONE BUT ONLY HEAR ANOTHER)

CHARACTER #1

(INTO PHONE)

This is the character we see
on the phone.

CHARACTER #2 (V.O.)

Whilst we hear the second
character speaking at the
other end.

CHARACTER #1

But the first character
remains in vision throughout
the scene.

(END EACH ACT IN THE FOLLOWING
WAY)

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOScene 4

FADE IN:

INT. LOCATION #1 / LOCATION
#2 - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

(IF YOU NEED TO CUT BACK AND
FORTH BETWEEN SIMULTANEOUS
ACTION, LIKE THE PHONE
CONVERSATION, THEN HANDLE YOUR
SCENE LIKE THIS)

CHARACTER #1

(INTO PHONE)

You can type your dialogue as
normal.

CHARACTER #2

(INTO PHONE)

Whilst indicating that both
characters are on the phone.

CHARACTER #1

Although you don't need to do
that for every speech.

CHARACTER #2

Just make sure you indicate
when the character hangs up.

(MORE)

CHARACTER #2 (CONT'D)

(HANGS UP)

Especially if you are going
to continue the dialogue and
scene beyond the phone
conversation.

(THIS COUNTS AS ONE SCENE SO
THERE'S NO NEED TO BEGIN A NEW
PAGE EACH TIME A CHARACTER
SPEAKS)

(IF YOU NEED TO SPECIFY EFFECTS
CUES THEN DO IT LIKE THIS)

SPFX: SPECIAL EFFECTS CUES
APPEAR SEPARATED FROM
THE SCENE ACTION

SFX: AS DO SOUND EFFECTS
CUES

MUSIC: AND MUSIC CUES

(ALL APPEAR CAPITALISED AND
UNDERLINED)

CUT TO:

ACT TWOScene 5

EXT. LOCATION #1 - NIGHT -
1956 (FLASHBACK)

(IF YOU WANT FLASHBACKS IN YOUR
SCRIPT THEN TREAT THEM AS
SEPARATE SCENES AND INDICATE
THEM IN THE SET HEADING)

YOUNG CHARACTER #1

If it's important, you can
include the specific year or
time period.

YOUNG CHARACTER #2

If your flashback takes place
across a number of
consecutive scenes, then
specify it as a flashback
sequence in the heading.

(INDICATE WHEN THE FLASHBACK OR
FLASHBACK SEQUENCE FINISHES AND
BEGIN A NEW SCENE)

(END FLASHBACK)

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

CREDIT WINDOW

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCATION #1 - DAY

(END YOUR SCRIPT WITH A CREDIT WINDOW OR TAG SCENE. ALL PAGES SHOULD BE NUMBERED. PAGE ONE BEGINS WITH THE TEASER, NOT THE TITLE PAGE)

(THIS EXAMPLE OF TAPE-LIVE FORMAT INCLUDES NUMBERED SCENES WITHIN EACH ACT -- EACH NEW SCENE BEGINS WITH THE ACT NUMBER AND SCENE NUMBER)

(AN ALTERNATIVE WAY IS TO USE THE UN-NUMBERED SYSTEM. ONLY NEW ACT NUMBERS ARE SPECIFIED, WITH EACH NEW SCENE INDICATED BY A SET HEADING ON A NEW PAGE)

(IT IS CUSTOMARY TO SIGN-OFF A TV SCRIPT IN THE FOLLOWING WAY. FADE OUT. ONLY EVER APPEARS AT THE END OF AN ACT AND THE ENTIRE SCRIPT. IF YOU WANT TO INDICATE A FADE OUT. AND A FADE IN: BETWEEN TWO SCENES WITHIN AN ACT, THEN THE CORRECT TRANSITIONAL TERM IS FADE TO:)

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW