

Capitalisation

When characters are first introduced their names need to be capitalised. Thereafter, in descriptive passages, they appear in upper and lower case.

Cut To:

Some writers never use CUT TO: arguing that transition is implied by moving from one scene to another.

. 37

3"

COREY (cont'd)

one suitcase. That leaves you out of it. I'm going to shoot Blazers' mouth shut.

She fondles an ashtray

EXT. JERSEY STREET - DAWN

But BLAZER isn't available right now, because he's rollerblading towards the flapping door of a circus tent.

Scene Headings

Scene headings indicate whether the location is an interior (INT.) or exterior (EXT.), the location, and if it is day or night.

CUT TO: ←

INT. TENT - DAY ←

1½"

Blazer glides into the tent and comes to a perfect stop right under the nose of PHIL, the Balloon King. It's taken the FAT LADY about two seconds to realise where she's seen his face before.

1"

4"

PHIL

What do you want?

His voice breaks out in an audible sweat.

Scene Description

Always double-spaced down from the scene heading, the scene description indicates in the most economical terms what the setting is, who the characters are, and what action is taking place.

Character Cues

This is the name given to the character who speaks the line of dialogue that follows.

BLAZER

I'm looking for a couple of high wire boys - Elliot Groveski and Paul Berchardini.

The swinging overhead light shatters into a million pieces.

3½"

BLAZER

(continuing)

I want to show them new ways to fly.

Format

Screenplays must be submitted in the correct format, or the industry personnel you are pursuing will ignore them. If you do not follow the simple formatting rules, you will make your script look amateurish. The film industry has become institutionalised to the point where scripts follow one set of rules for screenplay, and another for television.

Twelve Point Courier Typeface

Screenplays and teleplays are written in twelve point Courier typeface which has evolved from the old manual typewriter's typeface.

Length

Each script page is generally considered to be a minute of screen time.

Dialogue

Unlike in plays and novels, dialogue in a script is as short and economical as possible. Many writers see dialogue as another form of action, putting characters at odds, driving the plotline.

Don't Use Camera Directions

This strategy also works to make the script more readable, since camera descriptions are often clumsy and break up the flow.

And Also

Don't number your scenes. Scripts are only given scene numbers when they are budgeted and scheduled to be shot. Spell out two digit numbers, personal titles and indications of time. Do not hyphenate long words from one line to the next and don't break a sentence from one page to the next. When a long passage of dialogue needs to be continued onto another page type (MORE) at the character cue tab and then (CONTINUED) after the character cue on the following page.

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