This work is intended as a critical review of theory in the field of feature film screenwriting. It is not intended for sale. Wherever possible, please buy and read all the texts referenced within.
INTRODUCTION

So, Feature Screenwriting: big field. Twenty years ago, there were two books on the subject. Now there are hundreds. Where to start? Right here is a good beginning…

First of all, I should say that this workbook is just an Overview of the field. It is intended more as an introduction, than a set of ‘free tools’ for feature film writers… it is certainly not meant to replace the original texts themselves.

- It contains various facts and figures about the Australian and world film industries (all current at the time of writing, Jan 2003), and various `story templates’, but most usefully
- it contains summaries of the most important texts on Writing Feature Scripts.

This booklet also contains an ‘Overview’ of all the basic career info you need as a feature screenwriter, ranging from: contact info for the Writer’s Guild, to getting an Agent, and the Funding Bodies URL’s - right through to formatting and binding your feature script. Perhaps most usefully, it also has tables and worksheets, where you can fill out your own film’s plot beats and `character info’… in preparation for writing your masterpiece.

But, for the actual nuts-and-bolts of all these writing theories (and let’s face it, that’s all they are - there are no magic formulae, or else all writers would always write perfect scripts. But if there is one formula, it’s this: Learn all the rules, the forget ‘em and write from the heart.) - I implore you, please buy and read the actual original texts themselves.
- I don’t wish to deny the likes of Linda Aronsen, Syd Field, Linda Seger, Viki King, John Truby, or Robert McKee their dues. - Lord knows, they all sweated blood for them. (And this also goes for John Lonie, Ron Blair and Helen Carmichael too, from my days at AFTRS. Thank you to a wonderful, hugely-talented, amazingly generous bunch of born teachers.)

So. Hopefully this Workbook will be useful for you, whether you’re a new, or an experienced screenwriter.

- We need great scripts, and more of them; they make great films, which the world needs most right now… Our film stories are our myths. Our myths are what we live by.

And just remember, screenplays are never finished - they are only ever abandoned!

But hey, you can sure have a blast in the meantime…

;^)

cheerz,

j.t. velikovsky
screenwriter

www.joeteeevee.com
ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN WRITERS GUILD

What is the AWG? The AWG is the professional association for all performance writers - that is, writers for film, television, radio, theatre, video and new media.

The AWG was established in 1962, and is recognised throughout the industry in Australia as being the voice of performance writers. And AWGIE awards are coveted, nation-wide.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Full Membership

Your membership fee is based on your Gross Income as per the following tables:

<table>
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<th>Gross Income</th>
<th>Annual Membership</th>
<th>Half-Yearly Membership</th>
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Associate Membership

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<tr>
<td>Half Year</td>
<td>82.50</td>
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Script Registration

You've soaked each page of your script with effort and inspiration. Don't let your hard work fall prey to opportunism. AWG registration of a work costs $27.50 and is valid for 10 years.

With nearly 10 000 scripts given additional protection, it's no surprise script registration is one of the most popular services we offer to writers at all career stages. Each script is assigned a unique number in our electronic registration tracking system, then archived in a document storage vault for ten years. By printing this registration number on the front page of your script, you'll make it clear you've taken all the right steps to make sure your work remains protected. Script registration through the AWG is only open to financial Guild members.

AWG – in South Australia
Branch Manager: Gabrielle Aujard
187 Rundle Street Adelaide SA 5000
Postal Address: PO Box 43 Rundle Mall SA 5000
Tel 08 8232 6852 Hours 1pm – 5pm (Tuesday And Thursday)
email: sa@awg.com.au

Source: http://www.awg.com.au
AUSTRALIAN BOX OFFICE HITS

Top ten highest-grossing films of all time in Australia in 2001 *(adjusted for inflation)*:

1. The Sound of Music
2. Gone With The Wind
3. Crocodile Dundee
4. E.T.
5. Star Wars
6. Titanic
7. Jaws
8. The Sting
9. Dr Zhivago
10. Grease

TOP TEN AUSTRALIAN FILMS OF ALL TIME IN AUSTRALIA

1. Crocodile Dundee
2. Babe
3. The Man From Snowy River
4. Crocodile Dundee 2
5. Gallipoli
6. Alvin Purple
7. Mad Max 2
8. Strictly Ballroom
9. Picnic At Hanging Rock
10. They’re A Weird Mob


THE TOP TEN HIGHEST-GROSSING FILMS OF ALL TIME IN AUSTRALIA: (BOX OFFICE GROSS)

1. Titanic
2. Crocodile Dundee
3. Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring
4. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone
5. Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace
6. Babe
7. Jurassic Park
8. Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones
9. E.T.
10. Shrek

# TOP 50 FILMS in AUSTRALIA

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Distributor</th>
<th>Release date</th>
<th>Box office ($)</th>
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<td>30 Apr 1986</td>
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<td>26 Dec 2001</td>
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<td>Warner Bros</td>
<td>29 Nov 2001</td>
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<td>Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>3 Jun 1999</td>
<td>38,828,310</td>
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<td>Babe</td>
<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>14 Dec 1995</td>
<td>36,776,544</td>
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<td>Jurassic Park</td>
<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>2 Sep 1993</td>
<td>33,002,776</td>
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<td>Fox</td>
<td>16 May 2002</td>
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<td>E.T.</td>
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<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>21 Jun 2001</td>
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<td>Gladiator</td>
<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>4 May 2000</td>
<td>31,092,305</td>
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<td>Forrest Gump</td>
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<td>30 May 1994</td>
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<td>Star Wars (incl. special edit)</td>
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<td>Independence Day</td>
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<td>7 Oct 1999</td>
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<td>Moulin Rouge</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>24 May 2001</td>
<td>27,675,530</td>
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<td>The Lion King</td>
<td>BVI/Disney</td>
<td>25 Aug 1994</td>
<td>27,082,555</td>
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<td>Spiderman</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>6 Jun 2002</td>
<td>26,470,402</td>
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<td>Mrs Doubtfire</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>16 Dec 1993</td>
<td>26,241,675</td>
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<td>Pretty Woman</td>
<td>BVI/Touchstone</td>
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<td>Monsters Inc.</td>
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<td>Crocodile Dundee II</td>
<td>Hoyts</td>
<td>26 May 1988</td>
<td>24,916,805</td>
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<td>Saving Private Ryan</td>
<td>UIP/Paramount</td>
<td>19 Nov 1998</td>
<td>24,172,708</td>
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<td>Twister</td>
<td>UIP</td>
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<td>The Full Monty</td>
<td>Fox</td>
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<td>Men in Black</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>11 Sep 1997</td>
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<td>What Women Want</td>
<td>Roadshow</td>
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<td>Mission Impossible 2</td>
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<td>1 Jun 2000</td>
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<td>Bridget Jones’s Diary</td>
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<td>26 Jul 2001</td>
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<td>Roadshow</td>
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<td>Ocean’s Eleven</td>
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<td>Strictly Ballroom</td>
<td>Ronin</td>
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<td>Four Weddings and a Funeral</td>
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<td>Ghost</td>
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<td>Notting Hill</td>
<td>Polygram/Universal</td>
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<td>BVI/Touchstone</td>
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<td>Stuart Little</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>Ice Age</td>
<td>Fox</td>
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<td>Cast Away</td>
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<td>BVI</td>
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<td>Miss Congeniality</td>
<td>Roadshow</td>
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<td>A Bug’s Life</td>
<td>BVI</td>
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<td>There’s Something about Mary</td>
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<td>Hoyts</td>
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<td>A Beautiful Mind</td>
<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>7 Mar 2002</td>
<td>19,706,136</td>
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U.S. BOX OFFICE MEGAHITS

This is a list of the 22 Hollywood movies that have box-office grosses of over $250 million in the U.S., reported on the www site of the Box Office Guru, as at 2002.

1. TITANIC ($600 million)
2. STAR WARS ($461 million)
3. E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL ($434 million)
4. THE PHANTOM MENACE ($431 million)
5. SPIDER-MAN ($404 million)
6. JURASSIC PARK ($357 million)
7. FORREST GUMP ($329 million)
8. HARRY POTTER ($317 million)
9. LORD OF THE RINGS ($313 million)
10. LION KING ($312 million)
11. RETURN OF JEDI ($309 million)
12. INDEPENDENCE DAY ($306 million)
13. ATTACK OF THE CLONES ($300 million)
14. THE SIXTH SENSE ($293 million)
15. EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ($290 million)
16. HOME ALONE ($285 million)
17. SHREK ($265 million)
18. THE GRINCH ($260 million)
19. JAWS ($260 million)
20. MONSTERS INC ($255 million)
21. BATMAN ($251 million)
22. MEN IN BLACK ($250 million)

Source: www.boxofficeguru.com/blockbusters.htm
U.S. BOX OFFICE HITS (INFLATION-ADJUSTED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>$ million</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Studio</th>
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<td>208.1</td>
<td>Gone With the Wind</td>
<td>(1939)</td>
<td>(MGM)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>198.6</td>
<td>Star Wars</td>
<td>(1977)</td>
<td>(Fox)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>170.6</td>
<td>The Sound of Music</td>
<td>(1965)</td>
<td>(Fox)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>E.T.</td>
<td>(1982)</td>
<td>(Univ)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>132.8</td>
<td>The Ten Commandments</td>
<td>(1956)</td>
<td>(Para)</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>The Jungle Book</td>
<td>(1967)</td>
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<td>Titanic</td>
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<td>(Para)</td>
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<td>123.3</td>
<td>Jaws</td>
<td>(1975)</td>
<td>(Univ)</td>
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<td>122.7</td>
<td>Doctor Zhivago</td>
<td>(1965)</td>
<td>(MGM)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>119.6</td>
<td>101 Dalmatians</td>
<td>(1961)</td>
<td>(Disney)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>118.5</td>
<td>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</td>
<td>(1937)</td>
<td>(Disney)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>Ben-Hur</td>
<td>(1959)</td>
<td>(MGM)</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>(1983)</td>
<td>(Fox)</td>
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<td>The Empire Strikes Back</td>
<td>(1980)</td>
<td>(Fox)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>The Exorcist</td>
<td>(1973)</td>
<td>(WB)</td>
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<td>Raiders of the Lost Ark</td>
<td>(1981)</td>
<td>(Para)</td>
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<td>90.2</td>
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<td>(1973)</td>
<td>(Univ)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>The Phantom Menace</td>
<td>(1999)</td>
<td>(Fox)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>The Lion King</td>
<td>(1994)</td>
<td>(Disney)</td>
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<td>Fantasia</td>
<td>(1940)</td>
<td>(RKO/BV)</td>
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Source: [http://home.earthlink.net/~mrob/pub/movies/topadj.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~mrob/pub/movies/topadj.html)
The no. 1 Australian film at the Australian box office is *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), with earnings of $47,707,045. *Crocodile Dundee* is also no. 2 on the list of top films from any country, not just Australian films.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Distributor</th>
<th>Release date</th>
<th>Box office ($)</th>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>36,776,544</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Moulin Rouge</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>27,675,530</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Crocodile Dundee II</td>
<td>Hoyts</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>24,916,805</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Strictly Ballroom</td>
<td>Ronin</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>21,760,400</td>
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<td>Hoyts</td>
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<td>Warner Bros</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Lantana</td>
<td>Palace</td>
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<td>Gallipoli</td>
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<td>The Wog Boy</td>
<td>Fox</td>
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<td>Miramax</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11,240,484</td>
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<td>Mad Max II</td>
<td>Warner Bros</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td>Green Card (Australia/France)</td>
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<td>1991</td>
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<td>The Castle</td>
<td>Roadshow</td>
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<td>Ronin</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>Phar Lap</td>
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<td>The Man Who Sued God</td>
<td>BVI</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Looking for Alibrandi</td>
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<td>Babe: Pig in the City</td>
<td>UIP/Universal</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Hoyts</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Rabbit Proof Fence</td>
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<td>7,279,054</td>
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<td>The Hard Word²</td>
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<td>Fox</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>Sunday Too Far Away</td>
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**Source:** [www.afc.gov.au/](http://www.afc.gov.au/)
AFI WINNERS for BEST SCREENPLAY

BEST SCREENPLAY (ORIGINAL OR ADAPTED)

1976 The Devil’s Playground
1977 Don’s Party
1980 Breaker Morant
1981 Gallipoli
1982 Goodbye Paradise
1983-89 – NOT A CATEGORY
1990 The Big Steal
1991 Proof
1992 Strictly Ballroom
1993-96 NOT A CATEGORY

<table>
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<th>BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY</th>
<th>BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY</th>
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<td>1978 Newsfront</td>
<td>1978 The Getting of Wisdom</td>
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<td>1979 In Search of Anna</td>
<td>1979 My Brilliant Career</td>
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<td>1983 Buddies</td>
<td>1983 Careful, He Might Hear You</td>
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<td>1984 My First Wife</td>
<td>1984 Annie’s Coming Out</td>
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<td>1985 Fran</td>
<td>1985 Bliss</td>
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<td>1986 Malcolm</td>
<td>1986 The Fringe Dwellers</td>
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<td>1987 The Year My Voice Broke</td>
<td>1987 Travelling North</td>
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<td>1988 NO NOMINATIONS or AWARDS</td>
<td>1988 NO NOMINATIONS or AWARDS</td>
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<td>1989 Sweetie</td>
<td>1989 Evil Angels</td>
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<td>1990-92 NOT A CATEGORY</td>
<td>1990-92 NOT A CATEGORY</td>
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<td>1993 The Piano</td>
<td>1993 Blackfellas</td>
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<td>1994 Bad Boy Bubby</td>
<td>1994 The Sum of Us</td>
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<td>1995 Angel Baby</td>
<td>1995 Hotel Sorrento</td>
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<td>1996 Shine</td>
<td>1996 Cosi</td>
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<td>1997 The Castle</td>
<td>1997 The Well</td>
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<td>1998 The Interview</td>
<td>1998 The Boys</td>
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<td>1999 Two Hands</td>
<td>1999 Praise</td>
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<td>2000 Russian Doll</td>
<td>2000 Looking for Alibrandi</td>
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<td>2001 The Bank</td>
<td>2001 Lantana</td>
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</table>

OSCAR® -WINNING SCREENPLAYS

Here are the ‘Best Screenplay’ Academy Award-winners, since their inception in 1927.

The first title is for **Winner, Screenplay written directly for the screen**, and the second title is for **Winner, Screenplay based on material previously produced or published**.

2001--Gosford Park, A Beautiful Mind
2000--Almost Famous, Traffic
1998--Shakespeare In Love, Gods and Monsters
1997--Good Will Hunting, LA Confidential
1996--Fargo, Sling Blade
1995--The Usual Suspects, Sense and Sensibility
1994--Pulp Fiction, Forrest Gump
1993--The Piano, Schindler's List
1992--The Crying Game, Howard’s End
1991--Thelma & Louise, The Silence of the Lambs
1990--Ghost, Dances With Wolves
1989--Dead Poets Society, Driving Miss Daisy
1988--Rain Man, Dangerous Liaisons
1987--Moonstruck, The Last Emperor
1986--Hannah and Her Sisters, A Room With a View
1985--Witness, Out of Africa
1984--Places in the Heart, Amadeus
1983--Tender Mercies, Terms of Endearment
1982--Gandhi, Missing
1981--Chariots of Fire, On Golden Pond
1980--Melvin and Howard, Ordinary People
1979--Breaking Away, Kramer Vs. Kramer
1978--Coming Home, Midnight Express
1977--Annie Hall, Julia
1976--Network, All the President's Men
1975--Dog Day Afternoon, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
1974--Chinatown, The Godfather Part II
1973--The Sting, The Exorcist
1972--The Candidate, The Godfather
1971--The Hospital, The French Connection
1970--Patton, M*A*S*H
1969--Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Midnight Cowboy

Source: http://www.oscars.org/
**A FEW OTHER FILM CLASSICS...**

Some other classic films worth studying for their scripts, including international films:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Film</th>
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<tr>
<td>Battleship Potemkin</td>
<td>The Bicycle Thieves</td>
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<td>The Seventh Seal</td>
<td>The Rules Of The Game</td>
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<td>Vertigo</td>
<td>The Searchers</td>
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<td>The Red Shoes</td>
<td>Annie Hall</td>
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<td>Ben-Hur</td>
<td>Blue Velvet</td>
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<td>Bonnie and Clyde</td>
<td>The Passion of Joan Of Arc</td>
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<td>Tokyo Story</td>
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<td>The Hidden Fortress</td>
<td>My Life As A Dog</td>
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<td>The Killer</td>
<td>Solaris (dir: Tarkovsky)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Wings Of Desire</td>
<td>Casablanca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dances With Wolves</td>
<td>La Dolce Vita</td>
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<td>The Exorcist</td>
<td>Fanny and Alexander</td>
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<td>The Godfather</td>
<td>The Graduate</td>
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<td>La Grande Illusion</td>
<td>It’s A Wonderful Life</td>
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<td>Jules et Jim</td>
<td>King Kong</td>
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<td>Lawrence of Arabia</td>
<td>The Sound of Music</td>
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<td>A Night At The Opera</td>
<td>City Lights</td>
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<td>Peeping Tom</td>
<td>Pickpocket</td>
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<td>Raging Bull</td>
<td>Rio Bravo</td>
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<td>Shadows</td>
<td>2001: A Space Odyssey</td>
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<td>Twelve Angry Men</td>
<td>Wild Strawberries</td>
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ONLINE SOURCES FOR FILM SCREENPLAYS

These script databases offer free downloads of produced screenplays for educational purposes.

*NB - Note the difference between scripts (original drafts) and transcripts (documents transcribed from the completed film).*

Drew's Script-o-rama (http://script-o-rama.com)
The first - and still one of the most comprehensive - film script databases.

Script Crawler (http://scriptcrawler.net)
The largest online database of scripts from produced movies. Many have several versions of the scripts.

Simply Scripts (http://simplyscripts.com)
This great site offers scripts in several formats: movie, television, anime, radio and even some unproduced scripts.

Internet Script Database (http://iscriptdb.com)
Another great script resource. Most of these sites interconnect to other databases to increase their inventory.

Screenplay 451 (http://pumpkinsoft.de/screenplay451)
This Danish site provides frequent updates of recent releases.

About.com’s Script Repository
(http://screenwriting.about.com/library/bl_scripts.htm?PM=ss11_screenwriting)

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST:

The `Movie Monologue’ page. - Excellent for being inspired to write great dialog.
(http://www.whysanity.net/monos/)

Scenes & Monologue Resources for Actors (classical & modern, stage & screenplay)
(http://www.caryn.com/acting/caryn-acting-scenes.html)

A `MASTER LINKS’ LIST OF ALL SCRIPT SITES:
http://www.geocities.com/moviescriptsandscreenplays/
WHAT IS A SCREENPLAY?

CONTENT: Various industry professionals have offered opinions on what a feature screenplay is:

Alan Armer: “A blueprint for a movie.”

Syd Field: “A story told with pictures.”

Paul Schrader: “An invitation to collaborate on a work of art. They contain 3 things - theme, character, structure. That’s all.”

Louis Nowra: “Screenplays are simply a blueprint for a director. It’s not an art - It’s a collaborative process.”

Bob Towne: “A movie is just four or five moments between two people. The rest of it exists to give those moments their impact and resonance.”

William Goldman: “Screenplays are structure.”

Viki King: “A feature screenplay is a document you can create in 21 days.”

Linda Seger: “Five things: the story lines, the characters, the underlying idea, the images and the dialog.”

Linda Aronsen: “A screenplay is - a technical instruction manual for everyone involved in the process of creating the film.”

FORM: Either way, the form is universally agreed upon:

SCREENPLAY FORM: 105 to 120 A4 pages, in standard Screenplay format, in Courier 12-point font, 1-inch margins all round, and with black card front & back, 3-hole drilled, and bound with 2 `brads` in the top & bottom holes.
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS:

From Premise to Screenplay

The usual steps (and documents) involved in writing a feature screenplay:

The Premise (1-3 sentences) The Premise (sometimes called the Concept) is a simple statement of the main character/s, and their dilemma.

The Synopsis (3 paragraphs) The synopsis is about 3 paragraphs long, and reflects the beginning, middle and end of the story.

The Outline (1-3 pages) One or Three pages, describing the setup, development and resolution, and sketching the details of the characters.

Character Notes (1-3 pages for each major character) Outlines the different characters, and their Backstories.

`Pitch’ Document (10 pages) Contains all of the above documents.

Scene Breakdown (2-3 pages) A `beat sheet’ or list of points, outlining the key event/s of each scene. Can also be done on approx 60 index cards (one for each scene).

The Treatment (20-40 pages) Twenty to forty pages, a short story virtually, which is simply an expanded version of the Outline, but with more character detail, and various dramatic ‘moments’ and key scenes fleshed out in more detail. Usually each scene is a paragraph. Contains no direct dialog, and is written in the third-person present tense.

Sample dialog (1 page for each major character) `Test scenes’ or monologues, so that each of your characters speaks in their own distinctive voice.

The Screenplay (120 pages) 105-120 A4 pages, in standard Screenplay format, in Courier 12-point font, and with black card front & back, 3 hole drilled & 2 brads in the top & bottom holes. Has scene headings, stage directions and dialog.
WHERE TO START?

Screenwriters can start anywhere, including:

- an idea, featuring a central character and a situation (a news story, song, dream, etc)

- a preferred genre – romantic comedy, action-adventure, sci-fi, crime thriller

- an image (the main character, or the antagonist, or the film’s climax)

- a theme (Mateship, There’s No Place Like Home, Family, Honour Among Thieves, Revenge)

- adaptation (novel, short story, biography, real-life event)
THEME

Theme revolves around ‘having something to say.’

Screenwriter Paul Schrader (author of *Taxi Driver*) says:

“As a novelist, you have to be sure at least 100,000 people will respond to your work. But for a screenwriter, you have to ask yourself: Will at least 3 million people react to this? Otherwise you should write poetry.”

Themes which are too explicit in a script, or ‘preached’ at an audience in dialog are referred to as ‘on the nose’ (i.e. they ‘stink’).

Infamous studio boss, producer Sam Goldwyn is famed for saying ‘If you have a message, send it Western Union’. He clearly believed movies were for entertainment only. However most enduring and popular films do have a clear theme.

The Theme is the MESSAGE of the film. In good scripts, it pervades most scenes.

Some example film themes:

- The futility of war
  - Gallipoli, Full Metal Jacket,
  - Apocalypse Now
- ‘There’s no place like home’
  - The Castle, Wizard of Oz
- Great love defies even death
  - Moulin Rouge!, Titanic, Romeo & Juliet
- Tell the truth
  - Breaker Morant, Tootsie, Witness
- Nothing is what it seems
  - American Beauty, The Matrix, The Usual Suspects
- Loneliness
  - Proof, Storm Boy, Taxi Driver
- Honour among thieves
  - Chopper, Reservoir Dogs
- Ruthless ambition leads to its own destruction
  - The Bank, MacBeth
- Courage to overcome self-doubt leads to self-esteem
  - Strictly Ballroom, Rocky
- Revenge
  - Mad Max, Gladiator, Hamlet
- Make Things Happen
  - Muriel’s Wedding, The Dish, Lorenzo’s Oil
- “You have to be rich to get away with murder”
  - Chinatown

*Note - Lahos Egri’s book The Principles of Dramatic Writing outlines such themes in regard to plays, although Egri refers to them as the play’s ‘premise’. Hollywood terminology differs in that the premise is more the ‘dramatic situation’ posed by the film’s set-up.*
**THE CREATIVE PROCESS**

In his 1926 book *The Art of Thought*, psychologist Graham Wallis identified **four stages of the creative process** which are common to most creative enterprises (including screen, prose, poetry, song writing and painting).

They are:

1) **PREPARATION** - gaining the necessary knowledge (i.e. craft skills and adequate research on the story subject)

2) **INCUBATION** - letting the idea(s) simmer in the subconscious mind...

3) **ILLUMINATION** - the actual inspiration and `putting forth’ of the masterpiece into an available physical reality (i.e. a manuscript)

4) **VERIFICATION** - editing the raw work into a polished, presentable form

These four steps are useful tools for a writer. If the screenplay isn’t happening, or you’re experiencing writer’s block, you may want to check if you’re missing one of these steps


**THE GREEK LEGACY: 3-ACT STORY STRUCTURE**

We have inherited the 3-act structural paradigm of drama from the Greeks.

In 321 B.C., Aristotle laid down the principles of dramatic structure which we still adhere to, in his book *Poetics*.

French New Wave filmmaker Godard said “All stories have a beginning, middle and end, but not necessarily in that order”

As an interesting side note, Shakespeare often used 5 acts in his plays.

Robert McKee in his book `Story’ talks about using 5 story beats, within 3 acts, in modern film stories.

William Goldman often uses 5 acts (Butch Cassidy & The Sundance Kid, All The President’ Men, Misery, The Right Stuff)
THE PREMISE

Premise in feature films generally follows this structure:

A certain type of person has a certain goal, and encounters obstacles that have changed him/her when finally they do (or do not) achieve that goal.

Namely, the structure is composed of:

1) The Exposition (or SETUP)

2) The Confrontation (or DEVELOPMENT)

and

3) The Resolution (or DENOUEMENT)

of the dramatic problem posed by the story...

Or more simply: in Act One you get a person up a tree, in Act Two you throw rocks at them, and in Act Three you get them down again.

The key philosophy behind a film Premise is:

Someone wants something very badly, and is having a lot of trouble getting it.

Write your film’s Premise here:
CREATE A GREAT CHARACTER

Some memorable Australian film characters include:

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS:

Michael J “Crocodile” Dundee in Crocodile Dundee
Muriel Heslop in Muriel’s Wedding
Leon Zat in Lantana
Babe – the sheep-pig in Babe
Archie Hamilton & Frank Dunn in Gallipoli
“Mad” Max Rockatansky in Mad Max
Scott & Fran in Strictly Ballroom
Jake and Beth in Once Were Warriors
Satine in Moulin Rouge!
Darryl Kerrigan in The Castle

TRUE STORIES:

David Helfgott in Shine
Mark “Chopper” Reid in Chopper
Harry Harbord “The Breaker” Morant in Breaker Morant
Sybylla Melvin in My Brilliant Career
SCREENPLAY CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

MY BRILLIANT CAREER by Eleanor Whitcombe

Beyond the open door and windows, SYBYLLA, a skinny girl of sixteen-seventeen years old, with a vital if not pretty face, paces backwards and forwards, holding a stub of pencil and an old exercise book, deep in concentration, oblivious to her surroundings.

WITNESS by William Kelley & Earl W. Wallace

RACHEL LAPP. A young woman of perhaps twenty-seven. Her face is pale and drawn. In happier circumstances, although there haven’t been too many of late in Rachel’s life, we would see a robust, sensual woman of full figure, spirit and intelligence.

JOHN BOOK comes striding though the others. He is about 40, with a rangy, athletic body.

TAXI DRIVER by Paul Schrader

TRAVIS BICKLE, age 26, lean, hard, the consummate loner.

(NB - see also the First Page of the script, for a detailed character description of Travis.)

TITANIC by James Cameron

JACK DAWSON and FABRIZIO DE ROSSI, both about 20, exchange a glance as the other two players argue in Swedish.

JACK is American, a lanky drifter with his hair a little long for the standards of the times. He is also unshaven, and his clothes are rumpled from sleeping in them. He is an artist, and has adopted the bohemian style of art scene in Paris. He is also very self-possessed and sure-footed for 20, having lived on his own since 15.

The Renault stops and the LIVERIED DRIVER scurries to open the door for a YOUNG WOMAN dressed in a stunning white and purple outfit, with an enormous feathered hat. She is 17 years old and beautiful, regal of bearing, with piercing eyes. It is the girl in the drawing. ROSE. She looks up at the ship, taking it in with cool appraisal.
THELMA & LOUISE by Callie Khouri

LOUISE is a waitress in a coffee shop. She is in her early-thirties, but too old to be doing this. She is very pretty and meticulously groomed, even at the end of her shift.

LETHAL WEAPON by Shane Black

DETECTIVE ROGER MURTAUGH, seated in the bathtub. He groans, throws a towel over himself, and mutters in mock indignation. Roger is tough: An old-fashioned fighter, wears his past like a scar. Piercing eyes; cynical.

He is surrounded by his family; wife and three children, names and ages as follows: TRISH: Roughly thirty-eight. She used to be a stunner. NICK: Ten years old. Precocious. CARRIE: Age seven. Eyes like saucers. Adorable. RIANNE: Heartbreaker stuff, Seventeen. Takes your breath away folks.

THE SIXTH SENSE by M. Night Shyamalan

MALCOLM CROWE sits on the floor at the coffee table, his vest and tie on the sofa behind him. A jacket and an overcoat lay on a briefcase next to him. Malcolm is in his thirties with thick, wavy hair and striking, intelligent eyes that squint from years of intense study. His charming, easy-going smile spreads across his face.

SPIDER-MAN (unproduced – by James Cameron):

We see PETER PARKER, a pleasant faced senior who's among the top in his class. Sincere and serious, he has yet to develop a way with women.

SPIDER-MAN (produced – by David Koepp):

PETER PARKER, a 17 year old boy. High school must not be any fun for Peter, he’s one hundred per cent nerd: skinny, zitty, glasses.

A girl stands in the entrance to the alleyway. MARY-JANE WATSON, seventeen, painfully sexy already, with a knowledge and sadness that are way beyond her years.

COSI by Louis Nowra
LEWIS, 21, handsome and shy enough to be a patient, pauses before the sign – and after taking a deep breath enters the hospital grounds.
CHARACTER DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE:

The character description in a feature screenplay is usually composed of:

**NAME, age, physical, nationality, social, psychological.**

**Plus - any defining physical character traits, including props, for actors `business’.”

E.g.: **BIOSFEAR** by J.T. Velikovsky & Adrian Van de Velde

**DALE SCHRADER, late 20’s, close to being beautiful, brunette, American. Has an Oxford Ph.D in Psychobiology (animal behaviour). We’re looking at a warm, kind, loving woman, of earthy spirit and great intelligence. She fidgets with a hyena tooth that hangs on her gold necklace.**
EXAMPLE SYNOPSIS:

THE WIZARD OF OZ by L. Frank Baum (novel The Wonderful Wizard of Oz) screenplay by Noel Langley and Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allan Woolf.

SYNOPSIS:

Dorothy Gale, 16, an attractive, spirited and energetic girl with a great love for animals, who has a little dog Toto, wants to escape the boredom of her life at home on her farm in Kansas. However when a tornado sweeps her away into a strange land called Oz, she encounters strange beings and situations and makes new friends. Finally, both in spite of - and because of - her amazing journey, she realizes there is “no place like home”.

In other words, ideally, the STORY has an engaging central character, with an intriguing dilemma, and good conflict.

THIS FILM’S PREMISE:

______________________________________________________________________________, who
(name, age, physical, psychological).

______________________________________________________________________________
(definition characteristic)

wants __________________________________________________________________________.
(character’s goal in the story)

However __________________________________________________________________________
(the central conflict/obstacle and the turning point)

______________________________________________________________________________

Finally, _________________________________________________________________________.
(how has the character changed?)
THE HOOK – and THE VERBAL PITCH

The Pitch is the 25-words-or-less that `hooks’ the listener’s interest, and `sells’ the screenplay concept to a producer.

THE HOOK – The Opening Scenario of the film that “Hooks” the listener: It makes them say “Tell me more”. Or “And what happens then…?”

For example:

• A poet falls for a beautiful courtesan working at the Moulin Rouge whom a jealous duke covets – Moulin Rouge!

• An American reporter goes to the Australian outback to meet an eccentric crocodile poacher and invites him back to New York City. - Crocodile Dundee

• Two unemployed losers raised on TV decide to rob a bank – Idiot Box

• A man kept locked in his house for 30 years by his overly-possessive mother ventures out into the outside world. - Bad Boy Bubby

• A young girl bets her prized telescope she can prove to the young town bully that her new neighbour is not an alien. - Sally Marshall Is Not an Alien

YOUR FILM’S HOOK HERE:
ONE-PAGE `PITCH’ CASE STUDY: OMMADAWN
by J.T. Velikovsky and Adrian Van de Velde

OMMADAWN

OMMADAWN is a science-fiction action-thriller feature film, set in the US, in the present day.

Logline: When a UFO is detected approaching Earth, and NASA scientists commit mass suicide worldwide, maverick FBI cult investigator HAL GRADY must join forces with his mentor (and estranged former lover), cult expert SAMANTHA KOUSAL, to solve the mystery within seven days - before the spacecraft lands and the Ommadawn cult's extra-terrestrial messiah walks on Earth.…

OMMADAWN is The Sum Of All Fears meets Contact. Its themes are Fatherhood and Immortality.

Plot Synopsis: Ommadawn is the story of Hal Grady, a top-gun FBI cult investigator who moves from skepticism to faith - when a bizarre and dangerous pseudo-scientific cult believes their messiah is about to arrive on Earth.

Hal is recently widowed, and is failing as a father to his 6-year old son, DYLAN. Through the story, Hal learns to love again, and discovers the real meaning of Fatherhood.

But when the Ommadawn cult’s “Mind Of God” vessel lands, containing a cosmic message from the beginning of Time itself - Hal must confront the cult's evil, wizard-like leader DR DAVID LANG - and save no less than the future of the Universe…

OMMADAWN

FAITH IS A WEAPON…

Guide to Writing Feature Films
THE ONE-PAGE PITCH

Write your Pitch down on this page. *(NB- This can also be sent as a Query Letter.)*

• Title, Genre, Setting (place & time)

• Logline: the one-liner for the TV guide. Usually contains the Premise.

• “When two films collide” (Film A meets Film B). And the film’s Theme.

• Plot Synopsis

• Title and `Tagline’
CONFLICT IS DRAMA

Script analyst Linda Seger outlines 5 different TYPES OF CONFLICT (and the more you have in your screenplay, the better):

PERSONAL - uncertainty or self-doubt, a struggle with conscience

eg: Hamlet, 8 and ½, Crime & Punishment, Strictly Ballroom

RELATIONAL - with a love interest, family or friends, work colleagues

eg: Kramer vs Kramer, Ten Things I Hate About You, Chopper

SOCIETAL - within the character’s social environment

eg: The Castle, The Elephant Man, Philadelphia, Fight Club, Gattaca, Crocodile Dundee

SITUATIONAL - the physical environment

eg: Dead Calm, Twister, The Poseidon Adventure, Armageddon, Towering Inferno

COSMIC - versus God or Satan (or some other deity/ies)

eg: Bliss, Last Temptation of Christ, Evil Dead, The Exorcist, Ulysses

CHARACTER

People are what they do, not what they say, and therefore...

Character is ACTION!

The biggest criticism of film characters are that they are not 3-dimensional, or that they are ‘cardboard cut-outs’ or unbelievable. Some say there are 3 dimensions to character. They can include:

1) PHYSICAL - how they look

2) SOCIOLOGICAL - how they live

3) PSYCHOLOGICAL - how they behave

PHYSICAL - refers to aspects such as sex, height, weight, age, hair and eye color, voice, race, complexion, nationality, speech, health, any distinguishing features and manner of dress...

SOCIOLOGICAL - includes marital status, geographical origin, family background, education, occupation, interests, social contacts, religion, morality, sports, politics, intellectual capacities and ambitions...

and PSYCHOLOGICAL means their personality (extra- or introverted, a ‘thinking’ or a ‘feeling’ type), sexual preference, fantasy life, phobias, hang-ups, star sign, likes and dislikes...

NB - A great web site links page to articles on Character:

http://www.screenwritersforum.com/character.htm
ENNEAGRAMS
Enneagram personality typing dates back some 10,000 years. The oral tradition is woven into the Kabbalah, and also used by Sufi mystics. In the 70’s Western psychologists refined and developed it further. Source: http://www.9points.com/types.htm

Point One - The Perfectionist
Worldview: Life is about correcting error and striving for improvement.
Unconscious Drive: Internalized Anger - Resentment
Gift: Discernment

Point Two - The Helper
Worldview: (My) Love makes the world go round.
Unconscious Drive: Pride
Gift: Empathy

Point Three - The Performer
Worldview: Life is about presenting a successful image.
Unconscious Drive: Self-Deceit
Gift: Efficacy and Adaptability

Point Four - The Romantic
Worldview: Something essential is missing from life. I'll be complete if I can just find it.
Unconscious Drive: Envy
Gift: Uniqueness and Emotional Intensity.

Point Five - The Observer
Worldview: Knowledge will keep me safe.
Unconscious Drive: Avarice
Gift: Detachment

Point Six - The Loyal Skeptic
Worldview: The world is a dangerous place. Most people have hidden agendas.
Unconscious Drive: Fear/Doubt
Two flavors of six: Phobic and Counter-phobic
Gift: Loyal commitment and planning

Point Seven - The Epicure
Worldview: Life is an adventure with limitless possibilities.
Unconscious Habit: Gluttony
Gift: Optimism

Point Eight - The Boss
Worldview: Only the strong survive.
Unconscious Drive: Lust (Excess)
Gift: Strength

Point Nine - The Mediator
Worldview: Life is about harmony - going with the flow.
Unconscious Drive: Sloth (Self-forgetting)
Gift: Acceptance
THE 4 HIPPOCRATIC HUMOURS

Hippocrates postulated that an imbalance among the humors (blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile) resulted in pain and disease, and that good health was achieved through a balance of the four humors; he suggested that the glands had a controlling effect on this balance. For many centuries this idea was held as the basis of medicine. Galen introduced a new aspect, that of four basic temperaments reflecting the humors:

- the sanguine, cheerful, buoyant type; (associated with blood)
- the phlegmatic, apathetic, sluggish type; (associated with mucous)
- the choleric, angry, quick-tempered type; (associated with bile)
- and the melancholic, depressed, dejected type (associated with black bile).

In time any personality aberration or eccentricity was referred to as a humor. In literature, a `humor character’ was one in whom a single passion predominated; this interpretation was especially popular in Elizabethan and other Renaissance literature.

(NB - compare with psychology’s MAD, SAD, GLAD, SCARED)

http://www.bartleby.com/65/hu/humor.html

PHYSICALITY: SOMATYPES

An ectomorph (endurance athlete) possesses a low body fat percentage level, small bone size, a high metabolism, and a small amount of muscle mass and muscle size. Associated with the brain/thinking.

A mesomorph (power athlete) possesses a low to medium body fat percentage level, medium to large bone size, a medium to high metabolism, and a large amount of muscle mass and muscle size. Associated with the muscles/intuition.

An endomorph (non-athlete) possesses a high body fat percentage level, large bone size, a slow metabolism, and a small amount of muscle mass and muscle size. Associated with the gut/spirituality.
### JUNG’S PERSONALITY TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraverts</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extraverted Sensation</strong></td>
<td>Realistic; making few factual errors, good assimilation of details; experiencing each moment fully, enjoying the good things of life such as food, music, sports, the beauty of nature and art etc.; easygoing, tolerant, patient; often good with mechanical equipment as in carpentry, decorating, graphic art, fashion, cooking or any work demanding attention to detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extraverted Intuitive</strong></td>
<td>Spontaneous, innovative, initiating, non-conforming and versatile; identifies the practical possibilities in a situation; quick, focus on entire situation, flexible; enjoys complexity; adaptable and easy acquisition of new skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extraverted Feeling</strong></td>
<td>Warm, friendly, sensitive; value friendships; tactful, trying to meet others needs; adhering to societal values and appropriate behaviour; valuing others opinions; wanting approval; full of zest and enthusiasm; able to express feelings freely; strong awareness of likes and dislikes; harmonious, empathic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extraverted Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Organising and labelling facts into logical units; supporting laws, objectives, policies and rules; governed by reason and not emotion; striving for perfection based on universal idea or law; judge behaviour on the ideal model; treat others fairly but impersonally; wanting to find meaning in life and the world; wanting to get things done with the least cost in time and energy and plan ahead.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introverts</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introverted Sensation</strong></td>
<td>Awareness of bodily sensations, both physical and emotional; good with routine, non-distractible, persevering; good memory and recall; adhering to own inner sense of reality which may be at odds with others; strong aesthetic appreciation often for abstract forms of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introverted Intuitive</strong></td>
<td>Guided by own inner images, seldom limited for long to a single perspective; inner fantasy life; may have difficulty communicating insights to others; good insight into complex situations; uses metaphors to explore possibilities; creative, quick insight into relationships with others; often has innovative ideas with creative meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introverted Feeling</strong></td>
<td>Using own internal standard to judge people and things, not submitting to peer pressure or current trends, loyal, devoted, knowing own likes and dislikes, often idealistic, working for a cause or purpose; may not be overtly affectionate, holding tenderness and passionate conviction in reserve; often believe they understand others but experience themselves as misunderstood; strong sense of values and ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introverted Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Analysing the world based on own inner convictions and abstract categories, not easily swayed by others; enjoying intellectual activities, abstract ideas, subjects like philosophy, maths, crossword puzzles; decisive with ideas; working from principles; unconcerned with practical applications of their work; often work independently and may be shy with people.</td>
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**Source:** [http://indigo.ie/~autoweb/team/jung1.html](http://indigo.ie/~autoweb/team/jung1.html)
ASTROLOGICAL STAR SIGNS

Aries (March 21-April 19) Symbol: the ram Element: fire Ruler: Mars

Taurus (April 20-May 20) Symbol: the bull Element: earth Ruler: Venus

Gemini (May 21-June 20) Symbol: the twins Element: air Ruler: Mercury

Cancer (June 21-July 22) Symbol: the crab Element: water Ruler: Moon

Leo (July 23-August 22) Symbol: the lion Element: fire Ruler: Sun
Characteristics: dramatic, dignified, idealistic, ambitious, proud, generous, romantic, overbearing Leo celebrities: Lucille Ball, Napoleon Bonaparte, Fidel Castro, Bill Clinton, Cecil B. de Mille, Henry Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, Mick Jagger, Carl Jung, Madonna, Herman Melville, Mussolini, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Robert Redford, Arnold Schwarzenegger

Virgo (August 23-September 22) Symbol: the virgin Element: earth Ruler: Mercury
Characteristics: gentle, industrious, dependable, methodical, soft-spoken, humane, sincere, easily worried Virgo celebrities: Lauren Bacall, Johann Bach, Ingrid Bergman, Sean Connery, Jimmy Connors, Queen Elizabeth I, Gloria Estefan, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, D. H. Lawrence, Sophia Loren, Keanu Reeves, Leo Tolstoy, H. G. Wells

Libra (September 23-October 22) Symbol: the scales Element: air Ruler: Venus
Characteristics: cooperative, careful, artistic, persuasive, diplomatic, logical, indecisive, fickle Libra celebrities: Julie Andrews, Brigitte Bardot, Michael Douglas, Mahatma Gandhi, Charlton Heston, Jesse Jackson, John Lennon, Heather Locklear, Groucho Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Pele, Eleanor Roosevelt, Will Smith, Bruce Springsteen

Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Symbol: the scorpion Element: water Ruler: Pluto
Characteristics: passionate, penetrating, private, resourceful, loyal, determined, temperamental, intolerant Scorpio celebrities: Marie Antoinette, Prince Charles, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Marie Curie, Jodie Foster, Bill Gates, Katherine Hepburn, John Keats,
Robert F. Kennedy, Vivian Leigh, George Patton, Pablo Picasso, Julia Roberts, Theodore Roosevelt, Winona Ryder, Sam Shepard, Ted Turner


**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)** Symbol: the goat Element: earth Ruler: Saturn Characteristics: cautious, focused, responsible, serious, conventional, reliable, hardworking, unforgiving Capricorn celebrities: David Bowie, Paul Cezanne, Benjamin Franklin, Mel Gibson, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Alexander Hamilton, Joan of Arc, Martin Luther King, Jr., Henri Matisse, Richard Nixon, Edgar Allen Poe, Elvis Presley, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung


Source: http://www.infoplease.com/astrology/profiles.html

LIST YOUR CHARACTER’S STAR SIGN & PERSONALITY TRAITS:
HERO'S JOURNEY CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

The hero’s journey story template was discovered by anthropologist Joseph Campbell after studying thousands of the world’s myths. In his book “The Hero With A Thousand Faces” he revealed the basic ‘monomyth’ that united all cultures via narrative. Chris Vogler refined it in his book “The Writer’s Journey” which Hollywood embraced in the 1990’s.

*The Hero’s Journey:* the Hero starts in their ordinary world. The Herald appears, and announces the Call to Adventure. The Hero refuses it. A Mentor appears, and gives the Hero the ‘supernatural’ key, tool or aid they need to embark on the quest. The Hero then reluctantly accepts, and crosses the First Threshold (which is guarded by Threshold Guardians) and enter into the Other world, where they meet with Tests, Allies and Enemies on their way to confronting the Shadow (their nemesis). The Hero also can encounter a Trickster (who may become a sidekick character) along the way, and a Shapeshifter (who first appears as an ally but becomes an enemy - or vice-versa, or another character type altogether). If it is a male Hero, along the way they may meet the Heroine, who may also be the love interest, (or indeed the Jewel/Sword/Elixir)... They approach the Innermost Cave (often the Shadow’s headquarters), confront the Shadow, seize the “sword”( reward) and then escape, and the Road Back usually involves a chase. Finally they return to their tribe and restore the elixir, bringing a boon to the community.

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<tr>
<th>HERO</th>
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<td>HERALD</td>
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<td>MENTOR</td>
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<td>THE SHADOW</td>
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<td>SHAPE-SHIFTER</td>
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<td>ENEMIES</td>
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SYD FIELD'S CHARACTER TEMPLATE

According to screenwriting guru Syd Field, good film characters have:

1. A Dramatic need
2. Point of view
3. Change
4. Attitude

DRAMATIC NEED - What the character REALLY WANTS in the film:

Do they get it in the end? (Y or N): __

Also, viewed from another perspective:

What they THINK they want:

What they REALLY (ie without knowing it) NEED:

Do they get the 2 things below, by the end of the story?

1) What they think they need?
2) What they really need?

P.O.V. - the way they SEE the world
(eg Vegetarian, Devout Christian/Muslim/Buddhist/Scientologist, Conscientious Objector, Dreamer/ Idealist/Sociopath/Saint etc)

CHANGE - (eg over the course of the story of the film - To go from Loser to Winner (eg The Hustler, Rocky), from Not Trusting people to Trusting, Introvert to Extrovert, Intolerant to Tolerant, Shy to Confident, Emotionally Withdrawn to Loving, etc)

ATTITUDE - Positive or Negative/ Superior or Inferior, Cynical or Naive, Critical or Supportive, Pessimistic or Optimistic, Happy or Sad, Strong or Weak, Tough or Soft.

Source: Syd Field, Screenplay, 1979, Dell Publishing, New York
3-D CHARACTER PROFILE - STRIKING POINTS

What is your main character’s name? Nickname? How does it reflect/play against their character?

NAME ________________________________________________________

Reasoning behind the name/nickname: _______________________________________

Note down, in one or a few words, anything striking about the character, ie things that differentiate or separates them from other characters in the film... what makes them an INTERESTING CHARACTER?

PHYSICAL (eg has a limp, chain-smoker, tattoos, skinny, bodybuilder, hunchback?)

SOCIOLOGICAL (eg working class, uni Professor, a Mensa member, a Mason, or is homeless, etc).

PSYCHOLOGICAL (eg genius, autistic, schizophrenic, was raised by apes, incredibly bent sense of humour, claustrophobic, etc)

DIALOG CATCHPHRASE (Something they say a lot - eg ‘No worries’ 'Whoa.', 'Cool', 'Incontheivable!' 'Fugeddaboudit' etc)
CHARACTER ARCS

A character arc refers to the change or growth that a character goes through in the course of a screenplay: basically, their emotional development. *(Film is often about characters who change, TV is often about characters who do not - or cannot.)*

The obstacles they encounter in striving to achieve their goal are chosen by the writer to make the character grow. The leading character in the story usually is the person who has the furthest to go; who has to undergo the biggest change.

Most leading characters undergo a positive growth through the course of the story. Their character arc could be, for example, from fear to confidence, from cynical to trusting, from pessimist to optimist, etc.

**CENTRAL QUESTION:** WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?

INNER (STORY) GOAL: ______________________________________________________

OUTER (PLOT) GOAL: ______________________________________________________

**HOW DO THEY CHANGE IN THE STORY?** __________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

THE POINTS AT WHICH WE SEE THEM CHANGING: __________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

WHAT WILL THEY STAND TO GAIN OR LOSE? (ie What are the Stakes?)

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

(For distinctly Australian stories)
WHAT IS THEIR PYRRHIC VICTORY? ________________________________________
THE STAKES & MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who identified an 8-tiered system of human needs. Once the lowest level is satisfied or achieved, the human condition is such that it desires the next level, and so on up the hierarchy...

1. Self-realisation: creative & spiritual fulfillment
2. Order: a sense of place in society & the cosmos
3. Understanding
4. A Desire for Knowledge
5. A Sense of Recognition: self esteem
6. Acceptance: a sense of belonging & community
7. Security: employment
8. Survival: food, safety, shelter

Source: http://www.connect.net/georgen/maslow.htm

STAKES

These needs can be translated into the stakes for a character.

The Stakes are what the character stands to lose. Eg their house, job, car, husband/wife, their self-respect, life savings, life. Perhaps the ultimate stakes are the destruction of Earth and its inhabitants. Drama becomes more involving if these stakes are raised as the story progresses.

WHAT ARE THE STAKES IN YOUR FILM?

HOW ARE THEY RAISED as the story progresses?
THE HERO or PROTAGONIST

The hero is often the most likable and easily related-to character. He or she has `rooting interest’, namely is someone to cheer for, e.g. Crocodile Dundee, Babe, Muriel Heslop. Alternately they can be an anti-hero, like Chopper, Mickey & Mallory, or Travis Bickle.

The hero is the one who undergoes the greatest character growth or has the biggest transformational character arc, and in most Hollywood films, the hero rarely dies. In many Australian ones, he/she does: Breaker Morant, Phar Lap, Gallipoli, Picnic At Hanging Rock, etc.

To have rooting interest, a hero must have AUDIENCE EMPATHY. Ways to engender empathy from audience include creating a Hero who has such qualities as:

VULNERABILITY
Underdog status
Loyalty
Morals
Ethics
Altruism
Death of a loved one
- but mostly, COURAGE.

THE ANTAGONIST (or Shadow, or Villain, or `Bad Guy’)

The antagonist is, rather obviously, the character who opposes the Hero.

“The devil gets all the best lines…”

Memorable bad guys:

Australian films: Chopper (Chopper), The Humungus (Mad Max 2), Ned Kelly (Story of the Kelly Gang), Brett Sprague (The Boys), Simon O’Reilly (The Bank), Eddie Fleming (The Interview), Hughie Warriner (Dead Calm).

But Australian films are also renowned for having a group or `entity’ antagonist (such as authority) rather than a sole main nemesis character.

Memorable Australian antagonist `entities’: the British (Gallipoli, Breaker Morant), society (Priscilla, The Sum of Us, Sally Marshall Is Not An Alien), the airport (The Castle), the authorities (Rabbit Proof Fence, Sunday Too Far Away), the environment (Burke & Wills, Picnic At Hanging Rock, Crocodile Dundee).


Note - In most Hollywood action films, the story `protagonist’ is actually the villain; he drives the action, and during the story it is the reluctant hero who REACTS to the villain.
CHARACTER PROFILE WORKSHEETS

CHARACTER NAME: ......................................................

**PHYSIOLOGICAL**

HEIGHT: WEIGHT: AGE:

COMPLEXION: NATIONALITY/RACE/ETHNICITY:

CASTING TYPE:

SPEECH: MANNERISMS:

HEALTH:

ADDICTIONS:

HANDICAPS OR IMPAIRMENTS:

DIST. FEATURES, MARKS OR SCARS:

MANNER OF DRESS:

**SOCIIOLOGICAL**

MARITAL STATUS: GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN:

FAMILY BACKGROUND:

EDUCATION:

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND STATUS:

OCCUPATION:

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

PAST OCCUPATIONS:

INTERESTS:

SOCIAL CONTACTS:

PETS:

CAR:

SPORTS/HOBBIES:
PSYCHOLOGICAL

CHARACTER ‘HOLE’:

SPECIAL GIFTS/TALENTS:

RELIGION:

STAR SIGN:

ARCHETYPE:

ENNEAGRAM TYPE:

HIPPOCRATIC HUMOUR:

MORALITY:

PHOBIA/FEARS:

SECRET:

FANTASY LIFE:

HANGUPS OR PROBLEMS:

VALUES:

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

LIKES OR DISLIKES:

PARADOXES:

OTHER NOTES OF INTEREST:
CHARACTER INTERVIEW

CHARACTER NAME.................................................................

Describe yourself, in 25 words or less.

Who are the most important (or prominent) people in your life - and how do they see you? And how do they treat you?

What single incident(s) in your childhood has most affected you Positively?

And how about - Negatively?

How do you feel about/relate to - your parents?

What's your attitude towards sex? Are you abstinent/healthy/promiscuous, etc?

Thoughts on religion? Is there a God? Are you religious?

State your 'Philosophy of Life', or the "code' you live by, if any.

How would you spend a million dollars today?
Describe your favourite hobby/s.

Describe what you hate the most.

What do you fear the most?

What do you love the most, in Life?

How do other people react to you on meeting you?

List your proudest achievement in Life. - And Why?

What are you most ashamed of, and have never/rarely told?

Describe your favourite fantasy.

Describe what you try hardest to avoid.

Who has had the greatest influence on you? (e.g. real person/ parent/ teacher/ fictional character/novelist, entrepreneur, singer/pop star/actor/artist,etc)

What are your chief taboos? (things you never do, for moral reasons)

What kind of person would you ultimately like to be remembered as?

How far away from this ideal are you?
What, if anything, is worth dying for?

What makes life truly worthwhile?

What's your attitude towards:

Money?

Drugs?

Politics?

The Government?

Homosexuality/bisexuality/transexuality?

Dogs, and cats?


Euthanasia?

Abortion?

Computers & technology (including the WWW)?
Anything else you feel strongly about/want to bring up here?

How do you foresee your future?

Are you popular? Are you self-centred?

What is your favourite movie/s - and why? (minimum of 1, maximum of 3 please)

Your favourite songs, and albums, performers - and why? (max of 3)

Your favourite book and why? (max of 3)

What's your job/occupation - and how do you feel about it? And - How and why did you get into it? Plan to stay in it? Ideally, what's the future hold careerwise?

What do you do in your spare time?

Who is your perfect love/romance partner/s? And why?

Describe in about 25 words, your best friend, (eg What do they do for a living, hobbies, talents) what kind of person are they, and why do you like them?

What's your own best talent, do you think?

And what do others around you see as your "best point"? Do you agree?
And finally - "What do you think Humanity's Purpose on Earth is'? (ie Personal view of
The Meaning of Life)

Last question. While you've got the microphone, is there anything else you want
to say, off the top of your head?

CREATE 5 MEMORABLE SCENES

As a Writer, you now know intimately your main character’s likes and dislikes, loves,
hopes and fears.

In creating your story’s plot, think of 5 circumstances that would elicit a very strong
reaction from your character. (love, hate, fear, anger, amusement)

Thus, create 5 memorable scenes, in line with your story’s THEME.

Answer in 2 parts:
A) What event/circumstance/situation occurs? And B) How do they react?

1. A)____________________________________________________________
   B)____________________________________________________________

2. A)____________________________________________________________
   B)____________________________________________________________

3. A)____________________________________________________________
   B)____________________________________________________________

4. A)____________________________________________________________
   B)____________________________________________________________

5. A)____________________________________________________________
   B)____________________________________________________________
A CHARACTER’S BACKSTORY

A character’s BACKSTORY is their past life experience. Everything that has happened to them, up till the point that the film story starts. Before writers start their screenplay, they usually construct a few pages of BACKSTORY for their characters, so that these characters are believable and real. This is simply the character’s life story, in prose form.

AN EXAMPLE BACKSTORY: “Milestones in a Life” by Richard Kostelanetz

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teeth</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Games</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Swim</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Hobbies</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Books</td>
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<td>Baseball</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Football</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>College</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Fraternising</td>
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<td>Copulation</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Study</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>New Job</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Indolence</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Remarriage</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Extravagance</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.richardkostelanetz.com/inven3.html
JOHN CARROLL’S “9 CORE THEMES”

Australian sociologist John Caroll has identified nine archetypal stories in Western literature - which are crucial to our culture and our search for meaning in our lives:

1. the virtuous whore
2. the troubled hero
3. salvation by a god
4. soulmate love
5. the mother
6. the value of work
7. fate
8. the origin of evil
9. and self-sacrifice.

TOBIAS’ 20 PLOTS

In his book “20 Plots” Ronald Tobias proposes twenty basic plots:

1. Quest
2. Adventure
3. Pursuit
4. Rescue
5. Escape
6. Revenge
7. The Riddle
8. Rivalry
9. Underdog
10. Temptation
11. Metamorphosis
12. Transformation
13. Maturation
14. Love
15. Forbidden Love
16. Sacrifice
17. Discovery
18. Wretched Excess
19. Ascension
20. Descension.

POLTI'S `THE 36 DRAMATIC SITUATIONS'

Georges Polti’s 1868 book *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations* outlines just over thirty-five different dramatic situations, and even goes so far as to say this is the definitive list of all the types of dramatic situation that exist. They are:

1. SUPPLICATION *(in which the Supplicant must beg something from Power in authority)* Elements: "A persecutor, a suppliant and a power in authority" e.g. fugitives imploring the powerful for help against their enemies.
2. DELIVERANCE - "an unfortunate, a threatener, a rescuer" e.g. the appearance of a rescuer to the condemned.
3. CRIME Pursued by Vengeance. "an avenger and a criminal" e.g. the avenging of a slain parent or ancestor.
4. VENGEANCE Taken For Kindred Upon Kindred
5. PURSUIT
6. DISASTER
7. FALLING PREY To Cruelty Or Misfortune
8. REVOLT
9. DARING Enterprise
10. ABDUCTION
11. THE ENIGMA
12. OBTAINING
13. ENMITY Of Kinsmen
14. RIVALRY Of Kinsmen
15. MURDEROUS Adultery
16. MADNESS
17. FATAL Imprudence
18. INVolUNTARY Crimes Of Love
19. SLAYING of a Kinsman Unrecognized
20. SELF-Sacrificing For An Ideal
21. SELF-Sacrifice For Kindred
22. ALL Sacrificed For A Passion
23. NECESSITY Of Sacrificing Love Ones
24. RIVALRY Of Superior And Inferior
25. ADULTERY
26. CRIMES Of Love
27. DISCOVERY Of The Dishonor Of A Loved One
28. OBSTACLES To Love
29. AN ENEMY Loved
30. AMBITION
31. CONFLICT With A God
32. MISTAKEN Jealousy
33. ERRONEOUS Judgment
34. REMORSE
35. RECOVERY Of A Lost One
36. LOSS Of Loved Ones

Source: http://bricolage.bel-epa.com/etc/drawer/polti.html
JOHNSTON/BLAKE’S 9 PLOTS

Irish playwright Denis Johnston said all great theatre could be reduced to eight plots, found in fairytales and ancient myths.

The American writer Robert Blake added a ninth.

1. Unrecognised virtue at last recognised.
2. The fatal flaw.
3. The debt that must be paid.
4. The love triangle.
5. The spider and the fly.
7. The treasure taken away (loss, sometimes followed by search).
8. The irrepressible winner.
9. The homeless loner.

Source: http://www.adelphiassophism.com/goddess/plot/001.html
GENRE IN FILMS

The golden rule of genre in feature films:

“Deliver the genre” at least once every reel
(i.e. approx every ten minutes.)

Genres are how studios market their films, and how audiences know what type of emotional experience to expect in the cinema. E.g.

- Action-adventure – Crocodile Dundee, Raiders of The Lost Ark
- Romantic Comedy – Strictly Ballroom, Mrs Doubtfire
- Horror – Razorback, Halloween H20
- Film Noir – The Interview, Seven
- Science Fiction – Incident at Raven’s Gate, Contact
- Fantasy - Dark City, Star Wars
- Children’s – Sally Marshall Is Not An Alien, Babe, The Lion King

- and there are many other genres, including of course the Western which seems to have died out in recent years.

Some theorists believe the popularity of genres runs in 20-year cycles. Witness the `disaster’ movies of the 70’s and 90’s, and the horror films of the 60’s and 80’s.

Each genre has its own inherent set of meanings:

- Detective films often assert that Crime Doesn’t Pay.
- Romantic Comedies usually imply that Love Conquers All.
- Horror tells us that ‘Breaking taboos brings dire consequences’.
- Sci-Fi often posits “technology as humanity’s savior”.
- Westerns often employ the Old Testament morality of “Revenge”.

- Writers choose their genre to help convey their themes.
- Studios choose genres to market their films.
- Audiences choose genres to gain an emotional experience.
FILMS PRODUCED (BY GENRE) IN AUSTRALIA since 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th># OF TITLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriller</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Realism</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horror</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erotic</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road Movie</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melodrama</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangster</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 739 films in 13 years - or an average of 56 features a year.

AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM GENRES

1990 to 2003

Comedy = 24%
Romance = 10%
Thriller = 10%
Drama = 9%
(etc)

STRUCTURE

- STRUCTURE GIVES YOU THE FREEDOM TO BE CREATIVE -

It frees you as the writer so you don’t have to make decisions about the form of the work, thereby allowing you to concentrate on style and content.

Story structure analysts and their `Story Tools’ include:

- Campbell/Vogler - The Hero’s Journey
- Truby - Story
- McKee - Story
- Vorhaus – Story Maps
- Eco - the James Bond stories
- David Siegel – The 9-Act Structure
- Richard Stefanik – the Megahit Movies
- Barry Pearson’s - Story Structure

Of course, the more all these `story maps’ are used, the more they become cliched... leading audiences to complain that writers are creating predictable, formulaic pictures.

However, as a screenwriter be aware of these tools, either as a reference point, diagnostic aids, or even as `negative role models’ for creating your own emotionally, intellectually and spiritually satisfying narratives. They are often most useful when editing stories that aren’t fully `working’.

Other story myths screenwriters use as `templates’ include

- Grimm’s Fairy tales,
- Greek, Roman & Norse mythology,
- and of course The Bible.
Anthropologist Joseph Campbell studied thousands of world myths and narrowed them down into one nigh-on all-pervading myth, called "the monomyth" or "The Hero’s Journey", in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Story analyst Chris Vogler has further transposed this mythical framework into a story template, in his book *The Writer’s Journey*. The Hero’s Journey features a number of archetypal characters, as mentioned before including the Hero, the Shadow, the Mentor, etc. The Hero’s Journey story template has 12 steps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Ordinary World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Call To Adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Refusal of the Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Meeting With the Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Crossing the First Threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Tests, Allies, Enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Approach to the Inmost Cave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The Supreme Ordeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The Road Back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The Resurrection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Return with the Elixir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possibly the most famous films to use the Hero’s Journey story template is the *Star Wars* series, but it can also be identified in such films as the *Harry Potter movies*, *Lord of the Rings* series, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Thelma and Louise* and even *Pulp Fiction*. 
STORY WARS: HARRY POTTER vs STAR WARS Ep IV

Source: http://www.theforce.net/rouser/essays/harry-potter.shtml

Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone.
Star Wars: A New Hope; synopsis

Harry Potter
Luke Skywalker is an orphan living with his uncle and aunt on the remote wilderness of Tatooine.

Harry
muggles
suburbia

He is rescued from aliens by wise, bearded Ben Kenobi, who turns out to be a Jedi-Knight.

Harry
Harry
Ben reveals to Luke that Luke’s father was also a Jedi-Knight, and was the best pilot he had ever seen.

Harry
Quidditch player
a magic wand

Luke is also instructed in how to use the Jedi-light sabre as he too trains to become a Jedi.

Harry
Hogwarts

Luke has many adventures in the galaxy and makes new friends such as Han Solo and Princess Leia.

Ron
Hermione

In the course of these adventures he distinguishes himself as a top X-wing pilot in the battle of the Death Star, making the direct hit that secures the Rebels victory against the forces of evil.

Harry
Slytherin

Luke also sees off the threat of Darth Vader, who we know murdered his uncle and aunt.

In the finale, Luke and his new friends receive medals of valour.

Harry
win the House Cup

All of this will be set to an orchestral score composed by John Williams.
TRUBY’S STORY STRUCTURE

Screenwriting analyst John Truby has developed a ‘Classic Story Structure’ template which runs somewhat contrary to the Syd Field 3-act structural paradigm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Problem/Need</strong></th>
<th>the situation affecting the hero - and what’s missing within the hero</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire</strong></td>
<td>or what the hero <em>wants</em> in the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opponent</strong></td>
<td>the character competing for the same goal as the hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan</strong></td>
<td>how the hero will overcome the opponent and succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Battle</strong></td>
<td>the final conflict that decides who gets the goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Revelation</strong></td>
<td>the fundamental understanding the hero gains about him or herself which fulfills the need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Equilibrium</strong></td>
<td>the world back to normal with the hero at a higher or lower point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Truby’s system, these 7 points actually expand out to a total of 22 points, for plotting scenes, and sequences of scenes. Also, by way of comparison, Truby’s system has about 6 to 10 ‘plot turning points’ rather than Syd Field’s two.

Source: [http://screenwritersguild.org/storystructure.htm](http://screenwritersguild.org/storystructure.htm)
ROBERT McKEE’S SCREENWRITING METHOD

Screenwriting lecturer Robert McKee teaches a combination of the 3-act Aristotelian model, and ‘classical’ five-part narrative structure. This involves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inciting incident</th>
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<tr>
<td>progressive complications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.mckeestory.com/outline.html

THE STORY MAP

Another story tool is the following template, as promoted by screenwriting instructor John Vorhaus in his book The Comic Toolbox:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the hero?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does the hero want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The door opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero takes control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spanner is thrown in the works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things fall apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero hits rock bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero risks all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero wins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://members.aol.com/act4screenplays/tips14.html
BARRY PEARSON’S STRUCTURE

Yet another structural guide, this time from screen structure teacher Barry Pearson.

This paradigm applies to a 100-page screenplay.

THE SETUP: The first 10 pages – sets up the Hero or Bonding character (villain, or monster, or potential love-interest).

THE BONDING EVENT: between pages 9 and 18 - an event occurs which brings the Hero into contact and interaction with the Bonding Character.

NB - THE OPPOSING/ATTACKING FORCE – note that the Bonding Event is typically the culmination of a sequence of Backstory events set in motion and propelled by the evil or negative force in the story (the Opposing/Attacking Force).

THE LOCKING EVENT: occurs between pages 20 to 35. Introduces a turn of circumstances that alters the relationship between the two major characters, so that they cannot easily disengage from each other.

ESCALATING EVENT: occurs somewhere between pages 40 to 55. There is a development that raises the stakes for the Hero and Bonding Character, the ESCALATING EVENT. This event often raises matters to a life-and-death issue.

SENDING YOUR HERO TO HELL: from pages 60 to 75 - a sequence of developments wherein the Hero tries to accommodate, adjust to, and escape from - the situation of jeopardy in which he or she finds himself or herself.

THE PLAN THAT FAILS - pages 75 to 85 - the Hero plans to defeat the forces opposing him. The Hero puts a plan into motion - and locks horns with the opposing force or forces, in an effort to defeat them.

THE HIDDEN WEAKNESS - the Hero's plan has failed and he or she looks to be utterly, finally defeated. Now there is a sequence in which he or she discovers what appears to be a hidden weakness in the opposing force or forces.

THE PLAN THAT SUCCEEDS - occupies pages 85 to 95 - the Hero having discovered the hidden weakness of the opposing forces, initiates the "plan-that-succeeds" and the Hero battles and defeats the opposition.

THE WIN AND THE PRIZE - pages 95-100 - Following the Hero’s victory, there is a final sequence in which the writer dramatizes the Hero's new status and situation, and allows the audience to vicariously savor the Hero's victory, even if it is bittersweet - which it often is.

Source: http://www.createyourscreenplay.com/structure.htm
ECO & THE JAMES BOND PLOTS

In his book The Role of the Reader Umberto Eco has analysed Ian Fleming’s `Bond’ novels for a basic narrative template:

1) M moves, and gives a task to Bond.
2) The villain moves, and appears to Bond.
3) Bond moves, and gives a `first check’ to the villain - or the villain gives `first check’ to Bond.
4) Woman moves, and shows herself to Bond.
5) Bond consumes the woman: possesses her, or begins her seduction.
6) The villain captures Bond.
7) The villain tortures Bond.
8) Bond conquers the villain.
9) Bond convalescing enjoys the woman, whom he then loses.

This structure obviously also applies to many of the films in the Bond franchise.

Source: http://www.mind.to/plot/bond.htm

DAVID SIEGEL’S NINE-ACT STRUCTURE

David Seigel, WWW design legend and author of Designing Killer Web Sites has invented his own structural film story paradigm. His `Nine-Act Structure’ runs thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act 0: Someone Toils Late into the Night.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act 1: Start with an image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2: Something bad happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3: Meet the Hero (and the Opposition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 4: Commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 5: Go for the wrong goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 6: The reversal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 7: Go for the new goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 8: Wrap it up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.dsiegel.com/film/Film_home.html
RICHARD MICHAELS – MEGAHIT STRUCTURE

In a 120-page script:

Prelude = 10 pages
Act 1 = 30 pages
Act 2 = 45 pages
Act 3 = 30 pages
Resolution = 5 pages

In the Prelude, the first ten pages of the screenplay, the writer must "hook" the audience by creating empathy for the protagonist, hatred for the antagonist, and establish the primary objective of the story. This is the most important section of the screenplay.

In Act One the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist is further developed up to the first plot twist.

In Act Two the conflict is further "complicated" up through the second major plot twist. By this time about 85 minutes of screen time will have passed.

In Act Three the climatic battle between the protagonist and antagonist will occur. The action will be extremely intense and very fast, ending with the victory of the hero over the villain.

The Resolution scene of the story will be the shortest, showing that the protagonist has achieved his primary objective and showing his victory being celebrated by the community.

Source: http://www.megahitmovies.com/

ON THEMATIC VISUAL METAPHORS

To give your film resonance, in your screenplay, try and open with an image that is a visual metaphor for the whole story – e.g. the lantana bush in Lantana (a bush that looks pretty but whose beauty conceals nasty hidden thorns).

Otherwise, include thematic visual metaphors when you can - eg the spiral staircase in Gattaca, the picket fence in Jaws, the shadows of Indy in Raiders, the taxi in Taxi Driver.
Viki King's INNER MOVIE METHOD

Viki King’s *The Inner Movie Method: How To Write a Screenplay In 21 Days* builds on the ‘screenplay paradigm’ work of story analysts Syd Field and Linda Seger.

1) FIRST MINUTE: (FIRST PAGE!)

In the first minute, you will know everything you need to know about a movie: you will see a place, a time, and a mood. Is it a big picture? With a musical overture and large vistas? The size and scope of the story are revealed right away. In the first minute, we also see the POINT OF VIEW. E.g. in the Dirty Harry movies; "This is a dirty world and someone’s gotta clean it up" - If possible, start with a *visual metaphor* for your whole story. Also, put a `page-turner’ at the bottom of the page to get the reader hooked.

We have to know who it's about, too. Start with your main character if you can.

2) Page 3 - Find a line of dialog that expresses the central theme (eg Jake Gittes in Chinatown "You have to be rich to get away with murder.")

3) Pages 3 to 10 - What's it about? Whose story is it? What does he/she want? What's stopping him from getting it? Do we like him/her? Or care what happens to him? Why? (show vulnerability, engender audience empathy) Do we care if he/she gets what he wants? Are we wondering what happens next? Make sure all the main characters are introduced in the first 10 pages.

* Page 15 – The ‘Inciting Incident’ – the event that triggers the story, and propels the hero into action.

4) Page 25 or 30 – The First Turning Point. The story takes a sharp left turn. First Act ends. The Second Act begins…

5) Page 45 - The `Act 2 metaphor’ (a symbolic scene or action that gives a clue to the story’s resolution.

6) Page 60 – The `Point of no return’ – our Hero commits totally to his/her goal After this, a lighter moment; breathing space. Show the hero changing.

7) Page 75 - a New Development – the hero's just about to give up...

8) Page 90 – The Second Turning Point, end of Act 2 - an event that "educates" the hero about how to achieve their goal. They have an epiphany. Act 3 begins…

9) The Climax – 95-110. The hero can see their goal, but faces the final obstacle – the final moment of truth – all or nothing. They find their inner strength, and devotion to something bigger than themself.

10) The End – i.e. last 3-5 pages – The Resolution. Remember - the goal is to touch the audience deeply, and affect them profoundly.

**Source:** [http://www.vikiking.com/](http://www.vikiking.com/)
**THE SCREENPLAY `BEAT SHEET’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Story Beat</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Place, Time, Mood.</td>
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<td>The Visual Metaphor.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thematic Dialog Line</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>What’s it about?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>All characters intro’d?</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>P.15 – Inciting Incident</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1st Turning Pt – Act 2</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Act 2 Metaphor</td>
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<td>Midpoint</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>75 - New Dev’t</td>
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<td>43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLOTS and SUBPLOTS - or A, B and C stories

Typically, the A story is the `main' plot, e.g. a murder-mystery detective story (and occupies about 70% of the film’s screen time)

Your film’s A PLOT

The B story is the `love interest’ subplot (about 20% of the total).

Your film’s B PLOT

And the C story often involves light comic relief for contrast (about 10% of screen time).

Your film’s C PLOT

Of course, the PLOT of the STORY comes out of CHARACTER.
QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOU WRITE:

1. What’s the name of your story’s central character/s?

2. Why do you care about them? (ie and Why will we, your audience care about them, their situation, and their story?)

3. Exactly how (and when) in your story do we become emotionially involved with them?

4. What is the world - and the backstory - of your story? The genre? The tone (eg warm and nostalgic, or gritty and confronting)? The style (realism, expressionism)?

5. What does your Protagonist want in the beginning? But what does he/she need? And what does he/she get in the end?

6. Six months into the Backstory (before the first page of your script), what was the Protagonist's goal? Is it different to the goal at the start of your script? (ie Are you starting the story too early, or late?)

7. Who or what is stopping the Protagonist from accomplishing their goal in the film?

8. What is the Opening Situation for the Protagonist?

9. By the first 10-15 pages, what is the ‘Inciting Incident’ or ‘kicker’? What kicks the story into gear?

10. By page 25, what is your first plot point?

11. What is the ‘midpoint’ of the story? Is the hero at rock bottom here?

12. What will the emotional climax of your story be?

13. Who is your Antagonist? Why will we hate them? When do we hate them? Is your Antagonist the ‘mirror opposite’ or shadow of the Protagonist?

14. How is it shown that the Antagonist - and other characters - come from a different world than the Protagonist (i.e. Differentiate the characters, especially their dialogue.)

15. What is the most interesting thing about this story subject to you? And Why will it interest 3 million other people?

16. What emotions will the audience feel at the start, middle, and end of your story? Explain the emotional journey you have planned for them.
THE `15 COMMANDMENTS’

OF FEATURE FILM SCREENWRITING

* THEME IS PARAMOUNT!
* DRAMA IS CONFLICT!
* STRUCTURE IS EVERYTHING!
* A SCREENPLAY: A STORY TOLD WITH PICTURES
* SHOW, DON’T TELL!
* RAISE THE STAKES!
* MAKE THE CHARACTERS 3-DIMENSIONAL
* ACTION IS CHARACTER!
* FORESHADOW & PAYOFF!
* SUSPENSE, SURPRISE, REVERSALS, TWISTS
* SCENES: COME IN LATE, LEAVE EARLY
* ACTION LINES: SHORT, CONTROLLED BURSTS
* USE DIALOGUE ONLY AS A LAST RESORT
* DON’T WRITE SUBTEXT!
* WRITING IS REWRITING

* PS - NOBODY KNOWS WHAT WORKS! (i.e. Trust your instincts)
SCENE LENGTH
or, How Long Is a Piece of 2-inch String?

George Lucas once said:

"Sixty great two-minute scenes make a successful movie”.

As a guide, you should have about 15 scenes in your first act, 30 in the second, and 15 in the third - namely: a total of sixty scenes, with an average scene length of two pages (i.e. and average of two minutes per scene).

Each of these scenes usually contains a plot `beat’.

There is no lower limit to scene length (a short scene’s often a good scene), but as for an upper limit, four pages is a pretty long scene.

The golden rule with writing each scene is:

COME IN LATE,
and LEAVE EARLY.

This means you don’t have to show someone knocking on a door, waiting for it to be answered, have characters introduce themselves, and then begin a conversation…

Instead, have the `point of attack’ in each scene as late as possible – namely try to cut into the scene when they are in the middle of the conversation, and stay only long enough to get the crucial story information out, and then cut out of the scene. These days, audiences assume a great deal.

THE STRUCTURE OF EACH SCENE

Each scene should have a beginning, middle and end - and should do 4 things:

1) give new information (and/or reveal character)
2) involve bonding (the audience with the characters)
3) include conflict (or conflict resolution)
4) aid completion (i.e. move the story forward)

ON PACING YOUR SCENES

Juxtapose a long, slow scene (or sequence of scenes)- with a short, fast one. Pacing and rhythm is crucial to keep the viewer hooked.
**EXPOSITION**

Exposition (or the Set-Up) is that part of your script which *explains the dramatic situation*: anything relevant has gone before, and it also sets up (or identifies) the main characters and their relationships to each other.

Try to have your story’s exposition revealed through a scene with *underlying conflict* or *overt action* going on, rather than just two or more “talking heads”:

**e.g.**

The Fellowship of the Ring – Gandalf explains ‘the ring situation’ to Frodo while the black riders are outside, searching for it…

Raiders of the Lost Ark – the dissertation about the Lost Ark, and why it must be found before the Nazis get to it, is given to some ‘ignorant’ outsiders (army intelligence), so that Indy can become “Morrie the Explainer” in a lecture room.

Terminator – the “time travel and Terminator robot” scenario is explained to Sarah Connor during a car chase while actually escaping from it.

Titanic – the crew are shouting on a ship’s deck, during a submarine recovery operation.

**SUMMARIZE YOUR EXPOSITION SCENE:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
FEATURE FILM LAYOUT

Screenplays are designed to be read, so the layout and presentation of the script is therefore crucial.

The script must be typed either in Courier 12-point font. (Pica is also accepted in the USA.)

Layout for feature film scripts is as follows:

* A 1-inch margin, top and bottom, left and right.

* SCENE HEADINGS are always written thus:

INT. KANE’S OFFICE – DAY

where firstly the writer indicates either INT. (i.e. interior, or indoors) or EXT. (exterior, or outdoors), followed by the location (e.g. KANE’S OFFICE) and the time of day (i.e. DAY or NIGHT, or sometimes MORNING, AFTERNOON, DUSK or DAWN)

* STAGE DIRECTIONS are typed all the way across the page.

* CHARACTER NAMES are not actually centered, but placed 5 tab stops across the page, i.e. near the center, but left-justified

* PARENTHETICALS (actor instructions) are 4 tabs across, e.g.

KANE (furious)
Get out!

but the less they are used the better, as they can be seen to tell an actor or director how to do their job.

• CAMERA DIRECTIONS are in UPPER CASE, (e.g. CLOSE ON, WIDE ANGLE ON, CAMERA PUSHES IN ON) but also should only be used when absolutely necessary, otherwise again, you as the writer are “directing from the page”, telling the director how to do his job.

• The general rule of thumb for script timing in this format is ‘one page equals one minute’, so 120 pages roughly equals two hours.

BINDING

Scripts also need to be bound with black card front and back, 3-hole drilled, and held together with 2 brads only (top & bottom). No pictures, or quotations. (Just the facts!)
**SCREENPLAY TERMS - GLOSSARY**

ANGLE ON - Directs the camera to focus on a person or thing.

AD LIB - Instructs actors to make up and fill in dialogue in the scene.

BACK TO SCENE – usually follows a FLASHBACK or a CUTAWAY.

CONTINUED - Used at the beginning and end of a screenplay page. However fashion has changed - and it isn't used in screenplays anymore.

CRANE SHOT - The camera, fixed to a crane mechanism, is allowed to float through the air (Rather than use this in a screenplay suggest the same shot in another way)

BEAT - A pause written into a character's speech or action. Longer pauses can be written as "two beats", "three beats", etc. Equivalent to the beat of a waltz.

COVER PAGE - The first page of the screenplay. It contains the title, author names, and author address data.

CUT TO - To immediately go to another person or setting

DISSOLVE TO - A film editing technique where one scene "melts" or fades into another scene. Can be used in place of "cut to" to suggest a longer passage of time but not strictly necessary

ESTABLISHING SHOT - Used to give an overall perspective of a scene. This is rarely used now but would be done thus

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

EXT. - Used in the scene heading. Short for exterior.

FADE IN - This is the start of the screenplay. The screenplay always begins with this statement.

FADE OUT - Equivalent to THE END in a novel. The screenplay always ends with this statement.

FLASHBACK – an earlier scene. EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE – DAY (FLASHBACK)

INT. - Used in the Master Scene Heading. Short for interior.

INSERT - An item that is inserted into the camera view. Usually a note, or picture is inserted so the audience can either read what is on the note, or see the picture.

LOG LINE - A one or two sentence summary of your screenplay which is designed to intrigue someone enough to want to read it.
MASTER SCENE HEADING (SLUG LINE) - Begins each new scene. It consists of three parts: The LOCATION, PLACE, and TIME of the scene. E.g.
EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT or INT. BEDROOM - DAY

MONTAGE / SERIES OF SHOTS - A number of different scenes shown one after the other, in bullet points. Used to show a number of events passing in a short period of time.

[MORE] and (CONT) – a parenthetical, used when a dialog speech continues over the page.

O.S. / O.C. - OFF SCREEN or OFF CAMERA. A character talks, or something happens out of view of the camera.

PARENTHEticalS (WRYLIES) - Direction for the actor in a scene e.g. "(wryly)" or "(sadly)" Usually signals an emotional action. Only use when it isn't obvious.

PAN - A camera shot from side to side. (Rather than use this in a screenplay, suggest the same shot in another way)

PLOT POINT - A turning point, or transition in the screenplay that propels the screenplay forward.

POV - Point of View. The perspective view of one character as they look at another character, or thing in the scene.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: (self explanatory – the camera pulls back)

SPEC SCRIPT - A speculative screenplay, written while not under contract.

SPLIT SCREEN - The location of the scene is divided into two, or more, sections. (Rather than use this in a screenplay, consider how silly the technique usually looks and decide not to)

SUBLIM - A shot lasting less than a second. (A very brief flashback)

SUPER - A superimposition. One image merged into another image. Or a subtitle, superimposed over the images.

TILT DOWN (or UP) – a vertical camera movement.


V.O. - Voice Over. Usually used by a narrator of a scene. The character doing the VO is usually not in the same location as the scene.

ZOOM - A camera focus upon something in the scene. (Rather than use this in a screenplay, suggest the same shot in another way)

Source: http://www.robinkelly.btinternet.co.uk/atoz.htm
DIALOG

Dialog must be convincing and, in a feature film, the less there is, the better.

Remember Syd Field’s Screenwriting Rule #1:

**Show, Don't Tell.**

In other words **use dialog only as a last resort**, if the information cannot be shown visually, or conveyed in some other way, i.e. via sound, or a character’s body language, or actions.

TV is more ‘talky’ than film, usually because of lower budgets, and because as a medium, television is more explicit, whereas film is more implicit.

According to writer Alan Armer, dialog can simultaneously serve many functions:

1) advance the plot (moves the story forward)
2) communicate facts and information to the audience
3) reveal and deepen character
4) deliver exposition
5) establish relationships between characters
6) comment on the action
7) connect scenes

Armer summarizes it thus:

**Dialog should advance the plot while revealing character.**

Most lines of good dialog have 5 common elements:

1. Economy
2. Simplicity
3. Vernacular speech
4. Invisibility
5. Progression

Always keep the lines `in character`: i.e. Remember “A Martian wouldn’t say that.”

Source: http://industrycentral.net/writers/scriptips/6.htm
SOME OTHER DIALOG `RULES’:

- Ask yourself: Are the CHARACTER VOICES distinctive? (As a test, cover the character names and read the dialog aloud. Can you pick who is talking in each case?)

- Use contrasting characters, each with utterly clear individual motivations and speech patterns. Does the hero have a strong GOAL?

- Dialog should always come OUT OF THE CHARACTER. Never just write a line borne of another line.

- Weave the dialog – and don't exhaust your topic: eg ABCDEFG is bad, ADBEACFEG - is good

- Slang, jargon and idiom helps fix a character's age group and class, and nationality.

- Dominant characters speak in imperatives: eg "Do it now." "I insist."

- Use bad grammar to “keep it real” - half-phrased thoughts, sentences without verbs, and word-association.

- A character's obsessions are reflected subliminally in his most frequently-used words: eg "friend, success, love."

- Remember behaviour modification: (We speak differently in front of the boss!)

- Short anecdotes can work well in film. (See Quint’s `Indianapolis' story in “Jaws”, Harry Dean Stanton in Paris, Texas, Rose’s reminiscences in Titanic)

- Dialog should never be `literary’ - unless a literature professor is talking. It must always sound like real, live talk. (NB - Unless purposely stylized, like say in A Clockwork Orange)

- Use pauses and (beat) – as SILENCE has great dramatic effect in a cinema. Audiences can imply a lot into a character’s meaningful silence. (Cinema is implicit. TV is explicit.)

- Remember: Economy of dialog.
SUBTEXT

TEXT is what is said in dialog.

SUBTEXT is what is UNSAIID rather than SAID: ie what is really going on - what happens below the surface of a scene; thoughts, feelings, judgements.

Remember: SUBTEXT is when you're dating;

TEXT is when you're married…

As a writer, you want to seduce the audience.

"T.V. scriptwriting teaches you to write badly because you have to write about what you're seeing: you have to write about "The Problem". You have no chance to create any SUBTEXT of a scene." Bob Towne

* Avoid "on the nose" dialog. Dialog that is "on the nose", is when you write the SUBTEXT. In real life, people seldom say what they mean.
FAMOUS LINES from films of the 1990’s

“I’m the king of the world!” – Titanic

“I do wish we could chat longer, but I'm having an old friend for dinner.” Silence of the Lambs

“Yeah baby, yeah!” Austin Powers

“Mama always said life was like a box of chocolates” Forrest Gump

“I'll have what she's having” When Harry Met Sally

“You can't handle the truth!” A Few Good Men

“To infinity and beyond!” Toy Story

“What do you give a wife who has everything? An injection of insulin.” Reversal of Fortune

“Let's just keep going.” Thelma and Louise

MEMORABLE LINES FROM AUSTRALIAN FILMS

“That’s not a knife – THAT’s a knife.” Crocodile Dundee

“Shoot straight, you bastards!” Breaker Morant

“In this world only the strong survive. The weak get crushed like insects.” Shine

“You’re terrible, Muriel.” Muriel’s Wedding

“People don't believe in heroes anymore!” Mad Max

“The greatest thing you'll ever learn - is just to love and be loved in return.” Moulin Rouge

“Just what this country needs: a cock in a frock on a rock.” Priscilla, Queen of the Desert

“That'll do, pig. That'll do.” Babe

“It’s just the vibe of it.” The Castle
GREAT MOVIE LINES

"I'm sorry Dave, I'm afraid I can't do that."
HAL in 2001: A Space Odyssey

"Did America give up when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor?"
John Belushi as Bluto in Animal House

"Shut up and deal"
Shirley MacLaine as Fran Kubelik in The Apartment

"I love the smell of napalm in the morning."
Robert Duvall as Lt. Col. Kilgore in Apocalypse Now

"I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not gonna take this any more!"
Peter Finch as Howard Beal in Network

"Insanity runs in my family...It Practically Gallops!"
Cary Grant as Mortimer Brewster in Arsenic And Old Lace

"I'll alert the media."
John Gielgud as Hobson in Arthur

"A real woman could stop you from drinking."..."It'd have to be a real big woman."
Dudley Moore as Arthur Bach in Arthur

"Who are those guys?"
Paul Newman as Butch Cassidy in Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid

"Hoo-Haa!"
Al Pacino as Lt. Colonel Frank Slade in Scent Of A Woman

"Ahh, but the strawberries, that's, that's where I had them. They laughed at me and made jokes, but I proved beyond a shadow of a doubt and with geometric logic that a duplicate key to the wardroom icebox did exist... Naturally I, I can only cover these things from memory. If I've left anything out, why just ask me specific questions and I'll be glad to answer them one by one."
Humphrey Bogart as Captain Queeg in The Caine Mutiny

"Here's looking at you kid."
Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine in Casablanca

"Play it for me, Sam."
Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa Laszlo in Casablanca

"Round up the usual suspects."
Claude Raines as Capt. Louis Renault in Casablanca

"You know you don't have to act with me Steve. You don't have to say anything and you don't have to do anything. Not a thing.Oh, maybe just whistle. You know how to whistle
don't you Steve? You just put your lips together and blow."
Lauren Bacall as Marie Browning in *To Have And Have Not*

"Badges? we ain't got no badges. we don't need no badges. I don't have to show you any stinkin' badges!"
Alfonso Bedoya as Gold Hat in *The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre*

"That's a pretty good catch, that catch 22."
Alan Arkin as Yossarian in *Catch-22*

"What we've got here is failure to communicate."
Strother Martin as Captain in *Cool Hand Luke*

"That's not a knife. this's a knife!"
Paul Hogan as Crocodile Dundee in *Crocodile Dundee*

"Garth, Klatu Barrada Nickto."
Patricia Neal as Helen Benson in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*

"This river don't go to Aintry. You done taken a wrong turn."
Bill Mckinney as the Mountain Man in *Deliverance*

"I know what you're thinkin': Did he fire 6 shots or only 5? Well to tell you the truth in all this excitement I've kinda lost track myself, but bein' this is a .44 magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world and would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well do ya, punk?"
Clint Eastwood as Harry Calahan in *Dirty Harry*

"Go ahead, make my day."
Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan in *Sudden Impact*

"Build it and they will come!"
Kevin Costner as Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams*

"You can't handle the truth!"
Jack Nicholson as the Marine officer in *A Few Good Men*

"and hold the chicken!"
Jack Nicholson as Robert Dupea in *Five Easy Pieces*

"Life is like a box of chocolates."
Tom Hanks as Forrest Gump in *Forrest Gump*

"Are we having fun yet?"
Carol Burnett as Kate Burroughs in *The Four Seasons*

"We came, we saw, we kicked ass!"
Bill Murray as Dr. Peter Venkman in *Ghostbusters*

"What did you do today?"..."Oh, same-o, same-o"
Bill Murray as Phil Conners in *Groundhog Day*
"I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse."
Marlon Brando as Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*

"Bond, James Bond"
Sean Connery as James Bond

"Smith, Nevada Smith"
Steve McQueen as Max Sand in *Nevada Smith*

"Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn!"
Clark Gable as Rhett Butler in *Gone With The Wind*

"I don't know nuthin' bout birthin' babies."
Butterfly McQueen as Prissy in *Gone With The Wind*

"Do you like to play pool for money, Eddie?"
Jackie Gleason as Minnesota Fats in *The Hustler*

"Good Morning Vietnam!"
Robin Williams as Adrian Cronhauer in *Good Morning Vietnam!*

"He Choose poorly."
Robert Eddison as The Knight in *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade*

"When the gods wish to punish us, they grant our wishes."
Meryl Street as Karen Bliksen in *Out of Africa*

"You're gonna need a bigger boat.."
Roy Scheider as Chief Martin Brody in *Jaws*

"Tell them to go out there... and win just one for the gipper."
Pat O'Brian as Knute Rockne in *Knute Rockne, All American*

"That's a real badge and I'm a real cop and this is a real gun!"
Mel Gibson as Martin Riggs in *Lethal Weapon*

"Love means never having to say you're sorry."
Ali MacGraw as Jenny Cavilleri in *Love Story*

"Allright. who did it? who did it?!"
James Cagney as The Captain in *Mister Roberts*

"Captain, it is I, Ensign Pulver, and I just threw your stinkin' palm tree overboard. Now what's all this crud about no movie tonight?"
Jack Lemmon as Ensign Frank Thurlow Pulver in *Mr. Roberts*

"I've got all your names and your addresses!"
Jack Lemmon as George Kellerman in *The Out-of-towners*

"Nobody throws me my own guns and says run. Nobody."
James Coburn as Britt in *The Magnificent Seven*
"By gad sir, you are a character!"
Sidney Greenstreet as Caspar Gutman in *The Maltese Falcon*

"Don't be silly. you're taking the fall."
Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*

"I don't know Ange, what do you feel like doin'?"
Ernest Borgnine as Marty in *Marty*

"Listen here pilgrim, you caused a lot of trouble this morning. Mighta gotten somebody killed, somebody oughta belt you in the mouth, but I won't, I won't. The Hell I won't!"
John Wayne as G.W. McLintock in *McLintock!*

"Yes my dear, but by noon I'll sober and you'll still be ugley!"
W. C. Fields as Harold Bissonette in *It's A Gift*

"The verdict was that he was the best shot in Texas."
W. C. Fields as Commodore Orlando Jackson in *Mississippi*

"You bet I'm shy. I'm a shyster lawyer!"
Groucho Marx in *Monkey Business*

"I shot an elephant in my pajamas, what he was doing in them, I will never know!"
Groucho Marx in *Animal Crackers*

"So brave nights, if you do doubt your courage or your strength, come no further, for death awaits you all with nasty pointy teeth!"
John Cleese as Tim The Enchanted in *Monty Python And The Holy Grail*

"You little creep."
James Stewart as Roger Hobbs in *Mr. Hobbs Takes A Vacation*

"I'll live to see you, all of you, hanging from the highest yardarm in the British fleet!"
Charles Laughton as Captain Bligh in *Mutiny On The Bounty*

"I'm not an actor, I'm a movie star!"
Peter O'toole as Alan Swann in *My Favorite Year*

" We're all gonna have so much fun we'll need plastic surgery to remove our smiles! You'll be whistling zip-a-dee-doo-dah out of your assholes!"
Chevy Chase as Clark Griswald in *National Lampoon's Vacation*

"Now it's garbage."
Walter Matthau as Oscar Madison in *The Odd Couple*

"I coulda' been a contender, I coulda' been somebody, instead of a bum. which is what I am."
Marlon Brando as Terry Malloy in *On The Waterfront*

"You won't have to tell your grandkids you shoveled shit in Louisiana!"
George C. Scott as General George S. Patton in *Patton*
"To Berlin! I'm gonna personally shoot that paper hangin' son of a bitch!"
George C. Scott as General George S. Patton in *Patton*

"Get your paws off me you damn dirty ape!"
Charleton Heston as George Taylor in *Planet Of The Apes*

"Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth!"
Gary Cooper as Lou Gherig in *The Pride Of The Yankees*

"What're we waitin for!"
Burgess Meredith as Mickey in *Rocky II*

"Did we win?"
Jackie Gleason as Sgt. Enos Slaughter in *Soldier in the Rain*

"Well, nobody's perfect."
Joe E. Brown as Osgood E. Fielding III in *Some Like It Hot*

"May the force be with you."
Alec Guinness as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*

"That's a fact, Jack!"
Bill Murray as John Winger in *Stripes*

"You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? Then who the hell else are you talkin' to? You talkin' to me? Well I'm the only one here."
Robert Deniro as Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver*

"Hasta la vista, baby"
Arnold Shwarzenegger as The Terminator in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*

"I'll be back."
Arnold Shwarzenegger as The Terminator in *The Terminator*

"You have no taste, a lousy sense of humor and you smell."
Cher as Alexandra Medford in *The Witches Of Eastwick*

"Did you call us beavers on your CB? I hate that. I hate when they call us beavers."
Geena Davis as Thelma Dickinson in *Thelma And Louise*

"If you don't work, you don't eat."
Michael Parks as Jim Bronson in *Then Came Bronson*

"Wanna see something really scary?"
Dan Akroyd in *Twilight Zone: The Movie*

"What's up doc?"
Barbar Streisand in *What's Up Doc*

"There's only two things I'm scared of...Women and the po-leece."
Burt Reynolds as Gator McLusky in *White Lightning*
"I'll get you my pretty, and your little dog too!"
Margaret Hamilton as The Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard Of Oz*

"Toto? I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."
Judy Garland as Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard Of Oz*

"Why don't you come up and see me sometime."
Mae West as Lady Lou in *She Done Him Wrong*

"I want to be alone."
Greta Garbo as Grusinskaya in *Grand Hotel*

"Well, there's another fine mess you've gotten us into."
Oliver Hardy

Source: [http://www.storydomain.com/movielin.htm](http://www.storydomain.com/movielin.htm)
SCRIPT EDITING QUESTIONS:

PREMISE

Is there a clear and strong premise, concept, or idea?

CHARACTER

Whose story is it? Who do we `root' for?
Do we care about the people in the story, and what happens to them?
Are the characters interesting and big enough? Do they have clear wants?
How does the lead character change through the script?
Are there roles in this script for which actors would kill to portray?

STORY

What is the story?
Is the story `big’ enough for cinema?
Are there enough visual elements?
Does the story contain a strong protagonist/antagonist conflict?
Are there enough twists, surprises, reversals?
What is at stake?

STRUCTURE

Where does the story start? Is it too long/late in starting?
Do the plot points work?
Are the scenes sequenced well?
Does each scene push the story forward?
Are any scenes too long?
Is all the `juice' wrung out from the scenes?
Is everything that is `set up' in the first act, later `paid off’ in the third?

DIALOG

Is there too much dialog, and not enough visual action?
Is it dialog- rather than character-driven?
Is the dialog well differentiated for each character?
Is the dialog too obvious?
Is the tone consistent with the genre? (drama, thriller, comedy)
Is the script layout okay?

THEME

What is this story `really’ about?
Are there thematic visual metaphors?
SCRIPT EDITING: THE SCENE-BY-SCENE ANALYSIS

1 - What is the mood of this scene, and how is it indicated? What role does the setting play in creating this mood or ambience? Or does it counterpoint it? Is it ironic?

2 - What in this scene, is revealed (if any) of the backstory?

3 - What is the subtext of the scene? How is it evidenced by dialog, action and/or mood? What are the characters really saying to each other? That is, what are the emotions and strategies underlying the dialog?

4 - What do the characters bring to the scene from the previous action in the story?

5 - Summarize the character relationship.

6 - Whose scene is it? Do any character changes take place? What is the logic of the scene? – Are the actions and events consistent and believable, composed of incidents that could reasonably happen?

7 - What does each character want - and why is it hard to get it – i.e. What is the nature of the conflict in the scene?

8 - What story point is made in the scene? What is the basic action?

9 - What is the scene's 'red dot'; (i.e. when the scene actually makes its story point.)

10 - Are there 'twists' in the scene? Twist is like a plot point, when the scene gets new energy, or bounces off in a new direction.

11 – Could this scene be cut?
SCRIPT ANALYSIS (by SCRIPT ASSESSORS or READERS)

When a screenplay is submitted to a studio, it is read by a Script Analyst, who does ‘coverage’ on it. COVERAGE is a 3-page document which includes a STORY SYNOPSIS (of 1 - 2 pages), and a page of one-paragraph COMMENTS on the following areas: PREMISE, STRUCTURE, PLOT, CHARACTER, DIALOG, THEME - as well as a paragraph on a few other issues, such as GENRE, COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL and BUDGET, TARGET AUDIENCE, POSSIBLE CAST and VISUAL STYLE. On coverages there is usually a grid such as the following:

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<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
<th>POOR</th>
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<td>PREMISE</td>
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Most script coverages have their X’s in the ‘POOR’ column of the grid, although many have an excellent premise. The main reason for this is that although most people have a great idea for a film, the execution of the idea as a screenplay falls down. The skills of excellent dialog, pacing, plot and structure are rare in a single individual, which explains why studios pay several writers to do additional drafts, and why certain writers who can do everything are paid that much.

The coverage done by the reader results in one of three outcomes: the reader grades the script with either

PASS - which tells a studio executive not to waste their precious time reading a poor script

CONSIDER - which means read or give the script to another reader for a second opinion... or

RECOMMEND - which means read the script ASAP, with an eye to purchasing it. This is the rating all writers hope for.

The main reason for coverage is a filtration process, so that busy executives don’t have to wade through reams of scripts in search of a gem. Most executives do not have time to read. The coverage done by a professional reader is attached to the script and is often the deciding factor in a script’s reputation; a highly critical or negative coverage is difficult to overcome. One of the best books on script coverage (though mainly for the US market) is Reading For a Living by T.L. Katahn.
USEFUL SCREENWRITING WEBSITES

GOVERNMENT FILM BODIES
Australian Broadcasting Corporation http://www.abc.net.au/
Australian Film, TV & Radio School http://www.aftrs.edu.au/
Film Australia http://www.filmaust.com.au/

NATIONAL FILM FUNDING BODIES
Australian Film Commission http://www.afc.gov.au
Australian Film Finance Corporation http://www.ffc.gov.au

STATE FUNDING BODIES
South Australian Film Corporation http://www.safilm.com.au
NSW Film & Television Office http://www.filmtv.com.au/NSWFTO
Pacific Film & TV Commission (Queensland) http://www.pftc.com.au
ScreenWest (Western Australia) http://www.screenwest.com.au/
Film New Zealand http://www.filmnz.org.nz/

OTHER SITES
Australian Film Institute http://www.cinemedia.net/afi
Film and Video Internet Gateway http://www.clangbuzzthump.com/fvig.htm
Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance http://www.alliance.aust.com/
Women in Film & Television (NSW) http://www.wift.org/
South Australian Writer’s Centre http://www.sawriters.on.net/

NEWS & REVIEWS

HOLLYWOOD FILM RUMOURS
Coming Attractions http://www.corona.bc.ca/films/

GENERAL FILM INFO
Internet Movie Database http://us.imdb.com
Filmsite http://www.filmsite.org/
BOOKS ABOUT SCRIPTWRITING

Screenplay by Syd Field

Four Screenplays by Syd Field

The Screenwriter’s Workbook by Syd Field

Making A Good Script Great by Linda Seger

How To Write A Screenplay in 21 Days by Viki King

The Writer’s Journey by Chris Vogler

The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness by Maureen Murdock

Story by Robert McKee

And the classic, Adventures In The Screen Trade and follow-up Which Lie Did I Tell? by William Goldman

Also, a couple of other good texts worth noting are:

The Technique of Screen & Television Writing by Eugene Vale

Alternative Scriptwriting by Ken Dancyger & Jeff Rush

And specifically for the Australian market:

Scriptwriting Updated by Linda Aronson

Big Screen: Small Screen by Coral Drouyn
SCREENWRITING SOFTWARE

Although many writers prefer a simple word-processing package such as Word, there are also many software packages you can purchase to assist with formatting and editing screenplays and scripts on computer. They include:

- Final Draft
- Scriptware
- ScriptThing
- Script Wizard
- Movie Magic Screenwriter

On the other hand, Woody Allen writes longhand in pencil while lying face-down across his bed, and some writers still use a typewriter.

STORY DEVELOPMENT SOFTWARE

These packages contain built-in craft tools for dramatic story development and structure.

- Dramatica Pro
- Story Builder
- StoryCraft

FREE SCRIPT WARE TO DOWNLOAD:

Screenplay software is expensive. Here are some FREEWARE script writing programs you can download:

- Script Buddy (http://scriptbuddy.com)
- Story Mind (http://storymind.com)

Dependent Film (http://dependentfilm.net/files.html) offers three shareware templates: Script Maker, Simply Screenplay and ScreenForge.
KEEPING IT LOW BUDGET

Consider these Australian low-budget feature film makers:

Working Dog Ltd - The Castle
Rolf de Heer - Bad Boy Bubby
Paul Cox - Man Of Flowers
Jon Hewitt - Redball
David Caesar - Mullet

Low-budget international filmmakers:

Spike Lee - She's Gotta Have It ($75000, 1986)
Hal Hartley - The Unbelievable Truth ($100 000, 1989)
Robert Rodriguez - El Mariachi ($7,225, 1993)

The Average budget of an Aust film: $3.5 m
" a US studio film: $54 m

Internationally, US$6-12m films are seen as `low budget’...

Yet `high budget' in Aust is $3-6m AUS - eg Strictly Ballroom, Muriel's Wedding, Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Low budget is generally under AU$1.5 m : Proof, Romper Stomper, What I Have Written, Bad Boy Bubby, Only The Brave and Everynight... Everynight, and The Quiet Room were all under $1m. Mullet was just over $1m.

The Castle was shot on location in Melbourne and Canberra in 11 days with a Super 16 mm camera and on a budget of less than $1 million.

Michael Brindley (writer of the film `Shame’) in his workshop on "Writing the Low Budget Feature" says:

“- Think of production realities, crew functions and what things cost - make sure it's not television on the big screen!"

Movies to consider: The Castle, Proof, The Unbelievable Truth, sex lies & videotape, Reservoir Dogs

Source: Notes from 'LOW MEANS LOW' papers from the Low Budget Feature Seminar, Australian Film Commission, Woolloomooloo, 1996
RESEARCH YOUR LOW BUDGET MOVIE!

Roger Corman, legendary US low-budget exploitation film producer, and author of “How I Made 100 Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost A Dime” does market research on 3 areas of film:

1. Cast
   (i.e. Which stars to cast? Who do audiences want to see up on the big screen in films?)
2. Genre
3. Titles
   (i.e. Which of the following films would you go and see on the strength of the title?)

Monster from the Ocean Floor (1954)
Day the World Ended, The (1956)
Beast with a Million Eyes, The (1956)
It Conquered the World (1956)
Attack of the Crab Monsters (1957)
The Saga of the Viking Women and Their Voyage to the Waters of the Great Sea Serpent, (1957)
Stakeout on Dope Street (1958)
I Mobster... The Life of a Gangster (1958)
Brain Eaters, The (1958)
Bucket of Blood, A (1959)
Little Shop of Horrors, The (1960)
Terror, The (1963)
Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women (1968)
Naked Angels (1969)
Student Nurses, The (1970)
Gassss! Or It Became Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It (1970)
Death Race 2000 (1975)
Frankenstein Unbound (1990)
Bloodfist VIII: Trained to Kill (1996)
Suicide Club, The (2000)
Escape from Afghanistan (2002)
Haunting of Slaughter Studios, The (2002)

Notable Corman films:
Boxcar Bertha (1972 - dir: Martin Scorsese)
Grand Theft Auto (1975 - dir & starring: Ron Howard)
Caged Heat (1974 - dir: Jonathon Demme)
Piranha 2: The Spawning (1981 - dir: James Cameron)
The Intruder... aka I Hate Your Guts! (1961)
The Fast & The Furious (1955)

Roger Corman started the careers of (among others): Jack Nicholson, Francis Ford Coppola, Bruce Dern, Peter Fonda, Jonathan Demme, Ron Howard, Martin Scorsese, James Cameron, William Shatner and Joe Dante.
THE SIX C'S OF LOW-BUDGET FILM MAKING:

by Michael Brindley*

CONCEPT - a cinematic approach to an original idea - "the triumph of content over form".

COLLABORATION - efficiency dictates that everyone is "working on the same show". The writer, director (film is the director's medium, TV is the writer's), DOP and production designer – and the actors!

CONTAINMENT - every camera move (new setup) costs time and money (which are the same thing). Keep them to a minimum. Can it be a 25-day shoot?

CAST - Try and get film actors. They'd best not be who you can see on TV!

CONTROL - on a low budget, leave as little as possible to chance (never work with WAK: water, animals, or kids!)

COST - know what you have to spend, and exactly how you will spend it (stunts, explosions, special effects, outdoor, nighttime, dialog in moving cars, expensive locations?)

It all comes back to CONCEPT: the strength of the low budget feature lies in its central idea.

*Source: Michael Brindley, “Writing the Low Budget Feature” from `Low Means Low' - Papers from the Low Budget Feature Seminar, Australian Film Commission, Woolloomooloo, 1996
### A SAMPLE FEATURE FILM BUDGET

**Title:** Sample Feature Film  
**Production company:** AIP

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| $385,600       |

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| $999,900       |

**Source:** [http://victorian.fortunecity.com/cloisters/46/ch10.htm](http://victorian.fortunecity.com/cloisters/46/ch10.htm)
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THE QUERY LETTER*

A Query Letter is an invitation for a producer/agent/director/actor to read your script. It should be no more than a page. An example:

Dear Mr Thalberg

Michael Eisner suggested I contact you about my new screenplay, LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL. It's a bittersweet drama about a Jewish man in 1943 Italy who tries to hide the horrors of the Nazi occupation from his young son by pretending it's all a big game. Although the historical events are sorrowful, the story is uplifting and even comedic.

My grandfather survived the Holocaust himself, and I wanted to bring to life some of the almost unbelievable stories he told me.

If you are interested in taking a look at the screenplay, please let me know. An SASE is enclosed for your reply. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours

* Source: suggestions from www.craftyscreenwriting.com
FINDING AGENTS, PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, ACTORS

To have your screenplay read, you need to contact talent.

**Online Trade Directories:**

The Australian Film & TV Production Directory:

FilmTVBiz.com is a free web database of talent contacts. Online registration is free, and you can contact the talent via anonymous email. (However it may soon charge a fee.)

Alternately,

The Australian Media Facilities Directory
http://www.amfd.com.au

Alternately, buy the *Encore Directory*, which is published annually. It costs approx $110, and lists all Encore-registered talent (and their credits) in the industry.

It is published by:

REED BUSINESS INFORMATION Pty Ltd
Tower 2
475 Victoria Avenue
Chatswood NSW 2067

Tel: 02 9422 2999
RELEASE FORM

This is an example of a (American) release form. Some producers ask that you send a signed release form along with your script.

Note- It is not advised that you use this exact form in Australia.

Writers' Script Network suggests that you ensure your attorney looks over the release form and that you have fully read and understand it before signing and using it.

Writers' Script Network accepts no liability or responsibility should any disagreements or suits, with third parties, result from use of this release form.

RELEASE FORM

Date: _____________________________
Writers' Name: _____________________

TO:______________________________

Following your request, I am submitting to you the following Script/s (referred to as "The Material") for your consideration:
TITLE: ____________________________________________________

Registration/copyright #: ________________________________

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS:
_____________________________________________________

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PLOT: (Log line)_____________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I realize that you (and your staff) are in the production and/or management of material for motion picture, television and/or other media and, as such, are likewise engaged in the search for material and literary properties and the development of ideas, stories and suggestions for exploitation in any and all entertainment media which said production or management necessitates. Such material, ideas or suggestions may relate to format, theme, characterizations, treatments and/or means of exploiting a production based on such ideas and suggestions once completed. As a result, I recognize that you will not discuss, consider or read ideas, scripts, treatments, formats or the like submitted to you by persons not in your employ without first obtaining the agreement of the person submitting same to the provisions of this letter.

I hereby acknowledge and agree as follows:
I warrant that I am the sole owner and author of the above described material and that I have the full right and authorization to submit the material to you. I agree that any part of the submitted material which is not novel or original and not legally protected may be used by you without any liability on your part to me and that nothing herein shall place you in any different position with respect to such non-novel or non-original material by reason hereof.

You shall not be under any obligation to me with respect to the submitted material except as may later be set forth in a fully executed written agreement between us. I realize that you may have had access to and/or may have independently created or have had created ideas, themes, formats and/or other materials which may be similar to the theme, plot, idea, format or other element of the material now being submitted by me and I agree that I will not be entitled to any compensation by reason of the use by you of such similar material.

Sincerely, Signature:

____________________________________________

Print Name: ____________________________________________
Your Street Address: _____________________________________
Town/City: ____________________________________________
State: _________________________________________________
Postal/Zip Code: _________________
Country: ______________________________________________
Telephone: ____________________________________________
Fax #: ________________________________________________
Your Email Address: ____________________________________

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This is an example of a (American) Non-Disclosure Agreement. Note- It is not advised that you use this exact form in Australia, it is simply an example of one. However you, as a screenwriter, may wish to have anyone to whom you give your script to, sign an NDA.

NDA

In connection with the presentation to me of certain facts and information by __________________ (hereafter referred to as “________________”), regarding its various business activities and relating to my possible involvement with or connection to the above, I agree to abide by the following terms and conditions:

1. In consideration for being provided with certain facts, information, plans, products, customer lists and records, technology and technical information, methods, processes, products, inventions, product design information, cost and pricing information, computer programs and listings, source code, object code, marketing techniques, trade secrets, copyrights, other intellectual property, creative ideas and/or proprietary information (hereafter collectively referred to as “Confidential Information”), and having the opportunity to consider participation in the business activities of __________________, I hereby agree to refrain from disclosing in any manner, to anyone, any and all Confidential Information that is provided to me, except with the express written consent of ____________________.

2. All Confidential Information and other items furnished to me by __________________ will be considered confidential and proprietary. I shall not duplicate or copy any Confidential Information, written materials, artwork, designs, prototypes, equipment, audio materials, or video materials that have been given to me by __________________. Upon the request of __________________, I agree to immediately return any Confidential Information, written materials, artwork, designs, prototypes, equipment, audio materials or video materials that have been given to me, or that are otherwise in my possession or control, as a result of my involvement and communication with ____________________.

3. I acknowledge that ____________________ or its designee is the owner and copyright holder of all Confidential Information, written materials, artwork, audio materials and video materials given to me. I understand that any use in any manner of such Confidential Information or other materials by me without the express written consent of ____________________ is a violation of federal copyright law, and will subject me to applicable penalties and legal remedies.

4. If it appears that I have disclosed (or have threatened to disclose) any Confidential Information, ____________________ shall be entitled to an injunction to restrain me from disclosing, in any manner, any Confidential Information. ____________________ shall also have the right to pursue any and all other legal remedies available in this Agreement or otherwise by law, in the case of any violation of any provision of this Agreement by me.
5. I acknowledge that should I violate any of the terms of this Agreement, _________________ may commence legal action against me for breach of contract and/or copyright infringement. Along with monetary damages, _________________ shall be entitled to injunctive relief or the specific enforcement of this agreement, in addition to any other legal remedies available at law. I agree to pay all of _________________’s court costs, expenses and attorney’s fees incurred in pursuing any legal action against me.

6. I agree that all of my employees and agents shall be bound by all of the terms of this Agreement. I shall not disclose any information covered by this Agreement to any of my employees or agents without the prior written consent of _________________, and unless such employee or agent has first signed a copy of this Agreement.

7. I acknowledge that neither I nor _________________ have any obligation under this Agreement to use any Confidential Information in any manner, or to purchase any service or product or item from each other, or to offer third parties any services, products or items which incorporate any Confidential Information. I further acknowledge that this Agreement does not create any agency, partnership or joint venture between _________________ and myself, or _________________ and any other person, firm or entity.

8. The interpretation and enforcement of this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the state of Washington. The venue for any legal proceedings involving this Agreement shall be in the courts of Snohomish County, Washington. I hereby agree to be subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of Snohomish County, Washington, for the purposes of any legal proceedings involving this Agreement.

9. This Agreement shall not be assignable by me. I shall not be permitted to delegate any of my duties, responsibilities or obligations under this Agreement, except with the prior written consent of _________________. This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect until revoked in writing by _________________.

Signed this ________ day of ______________, 20____.

Company:

By____________________________

[Your signature]

Signature:

Print Name:

Address:

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Winston Churchill

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