

COLE/HAAG -- THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STANDARD SCRIPT FORMATS

The screenplay is a page-a-minute (the two hour feature = approximately 120 pages).

Use Courier 10 pitch (10 letters per inch) 12 point type font.

NO scene numbers.

NO shots/camera angles.

NO scene endings/transitions (CUT TO: DISSOLVE TO:).

NO justification.

NO hyphenation.

TAB SETTINGS

1"	1.6"	2.6"	3.3"	3.9"	5.9"	7.2"
Left	Direc-	Dialogue	Personal	Character	Trans-	Pg.#
Margin	tion		Direction	Name	itions	

THE TITLE (FLY) PAGE

1) TITLE - Line 25, centered, in caps. Quotes and underscoring may be used if desired.

2) Written by - Line 30, centered

3) Author - Line 32, centered

4) Name, Address, Phone number (optional) - at Left Margin (the last line of information should end no lower than line 60)

FIRST PAGE

1)"TITLE" - line 6, centered, in caps and quotes

2)FADE IN: - line 10, at tab 19, in caps, colon

## SCENE HEADING

INT. or EXT. LOCATION - TIME OF DAY

A scene heading may NEVER stand alone at the bottom of the page.

## BACK TO SCENE

This tells us that there was a short intervening scene which momentarily took us away from the original scene, and that we are now back to that original scene.

## INTERCUT - JOHN'S LIVING ROOM/MARTHA'S PARLOUR

An INTERCUT is used to indicate two separate scenes simultaneously. The INTERCUT is often used with phone conversations or to bring two specific locations together to form a scene.

## SERIES OF SHOTS

Usually action-oriented series of "mini scenes;" serves to move the audience quickly through time or a sequence of events. Each shot is designated with a cap letter.

Example:

## SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Sam Spade running down a shadowy alley.
- B) A car pulls across and blocks the end of the alley.
- C) Sam opens back door of car and runs through as in a Chinese fire drill.

## MONTAGE

Similar to and often confused with a SERIES OF SHOTS; these two are now used interchangeably. A MONTAGE incorporates at least two or more different but related subjects.

FLASHBACK - LOCATION - TIME OF DAY

END FLASHBACK

#### STAGE DIRECTIONS

Sometimes called the "business" of the scene -- any information describing a setting or location, situation, character, technical instruction, personal direction and the like. Only includes the necessary information. Brevity and word economy are essential.

Direction begins at margin [19] and cuts off at [73]. Double spaced down from the scene heading; extends across the page (55 characters and spaces long) in a single spaced format.

#### CAPITALIZATION IN STAGE DIRECTION

SOUND CUES (requiring technical reproduction; NOT those sounds made by the character on the spot).

CHARACTER NAME -- when a character is first introduced (and has a speaking part). After that the name is in upper/lower case.

AD LIB -- nondescript conversation (AD LIB comments..., AD LIB pleasantries...)

TITLES of books, songs or movies -- capitalized and in quotes.

VOICE OVER -- in stage direction always capitalized and spelled out (abbreviated when next to the character name in dialogue)

#### ABBREVIATIONS IN DIRECTION

- 1) f.g. (foreground)
- 2) b.g. (background)
- 3) O.S. (OFF SCREEN)

## CHARACTER NAME

The name of the character to whom lines of dialogue are assigned. Always in capital letters. The first letter of the character name falls in the middle of the page.

JOHN SMITH

DR. JEKYLL

JOHN SMITH (V.O.)

Dialogue...

(V.O.) - VOICE OVER means a) narration or b) that the voice of the character is transmitted mechanically (over telephone, radio, television, loudspeaker, etc.).

DR. JEKYLL (O.S.)

Dialogue...

(O.S.) - OFF SCREEN means that the character is not seen on the screen but is in an adjacent area readily available to appear on the camera.

## PERSONAL DIRECTION

Used sparingly, very short instruction intended for a specific character and no one else.

WAITRESS #1

(leaning forward)

Dialogue...

Indicate the manner in which the dialogue should be delivered.

WAITRESS #2

(excitedly)

Dialogue...

Always appear directly under the character cue (name), in parentheses, at tab (36) and cuts off at tab (55) -- approximately 19 characters (letters and spaces) long. All words are in lower case, no punctuation at the end.

Always appear directly under the character name or personal direction. Begins at tab (29) and cuts off at (60). Approximately 35 characters and spaces long. Upper/lower case.

To indicate more dialogue on the next page, **MORE** must be stated after the dialogue and **(CONT"D)** after the character name.

\_\_\_\_ (NEXT PAGE)

SAMPLE FORMAT:

Stage direction...

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                CHARACTER NAME
            (personal direction)
Dialogue...

                ANOTHER CHARACTER NAME
Dialogue...
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