

**THE SCRIPT FRENZY**  
**YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM**  
**PRESENTS!** 

# THE SCRIPTWRITER WORKBOOK

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**100%**  
awesome  
workbooks.  
We promise!



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Hello, Writer!

Congratulations. You are a courageous and creative soul—someone who scoffs at the word “impossible” and lives and breathes for the thrill of an insane challenge. This April, you will join thousands of other brave (and half-crazed) people just like you in writing a script in just 30 days!

Okay, so maybe you don’t scoff at the word “impossible.” You might not even consider yourself creative, but don’t let either of those things stop you from joining in the Frenzy. We believe that if you love movies, plays, comic books, and TV shows, then you can write them.

And once May rolls around and you have a script to show for all your hard work, you’ll realize that even the craziest goals are achievable.

Never written a script before? No problem. We’ve created this workbook to help you learn some of the most important tricks of the scriptwriting trade. We’ll help you create an amazing cast of characters, come up with a thrilling plot, and learn how to format your script like a pro.

So good luck and, most importantly, have fun. Know that whether you finish your script by April 30 or you don’t, you should be proud of yourself for even attempting this lofty feat of creative abandon.

May your writing adventure be out of this world!

Sincerely,

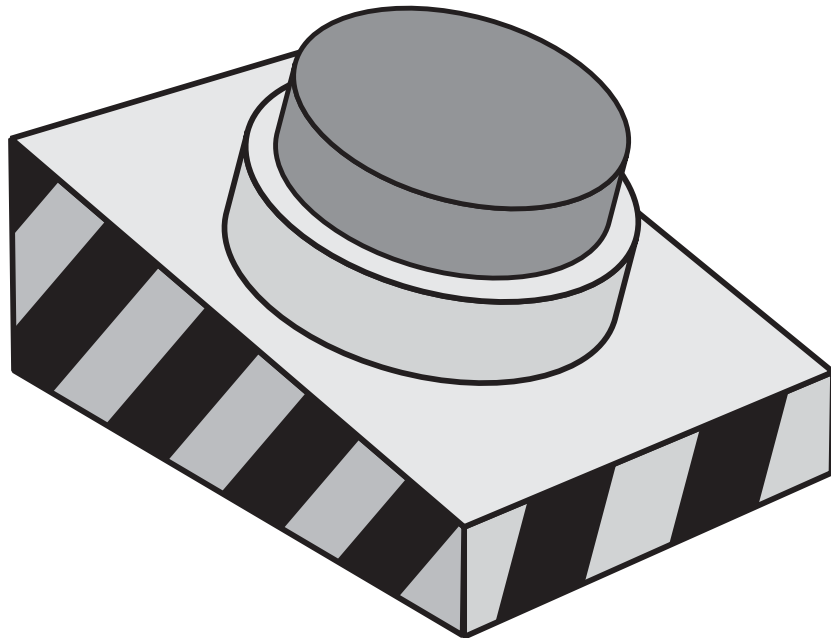
The Script Frenzy Team

# Inner Director Containment Button

Before we get started, you're going to have to temporarily do away with your Inner Director. Who is your Inner Director? He is the nagging, no-fun beast we bring along with us on all our scriptwriting endeavors. The Inner Director sits on your shoulder with his clapboard yelling "cut!", and pointing out all the ways you could write your script differently. When the Inner Director is in a particularly nasty mood, he might try to tell you that your ideas will not work and you shouldn't even be allowed to put pen to paper. The Inner Director is very helpful to have around after your script is written, when it's time to revise and even create a real play or film from your script, but this pest can really stifle your creativity if you let him sit on your shoulder as you write your first draft!

So here's what you do: no matter how ridiculous this might sound, close your eyes and imagine your Inner Director. Think about what he might look like. Is he holding a dictionary? Chasing after you with a clapboard? Once you get a good picture in your head of what he looks like, open your eyes and push the button below.

**Warning: Pushing the button will vacuum your Inner Director right out of your head until Script Frenzy is over. He'll be transported from your brain into an Inner Director Containment Cell, where we'll put him to use proofreading our important office memos. We have lots for him to do! And we promise that May 1, we'll give him back to you (so you'll have him around to help out with your script rewrites).**



Congratulations. Your Inner Director has been successfully contained. It's time to move on.

# What Makes a Script a Script?

What do plays, TV shows, movies, graphic novels, and comic books have in common? For one, all are stories told visually—either on stage or screen (plays, TV shows, and movies) or on paper (comic books). For another, they're all based on scripts! But what is a script, exactly?

A **script** is a map or outline that a director/artist will use to make a movie, play, comic book, or television show. When someone writes a script, he or she can only write what the audience of the movie/play/TV show/comic can see (action and description) and *hear* (dialogue).



So that's what all scripts have in common. But scripts can be different, too. Stage plays, movie screenplays, TV scripts, and comic books each have special ingredients and special advantages.

## Stage Plays

If you've read any script in the past, chances are you've read a stage play. Many stage plays are divided into three "acts," or big sections. *Romeo and Juliet* is one stage play you may have read or heard about.

Writing a stage play is wonderful because you don't need much to bring it to life. You can write one, grab a few classmates, and perform it just like that. You can ask the drama department at your school to produce part or all of your play. It can easily be performed over and over by different groups of actors, giving it a whole new life each time.

But having few props, effects, and scenes limits what you can do in a play. Showing a whole rock concert or a rocket launch, for example, could be difficult. Because building sets can be expensive, many stage plays use little background decoration and few scene changes. Sometimes an entire play is set in a couple rooms, much like a TV sitcom. As with TV, when there are very few visuals and only a handful of characters, the dialogue really has to be strong to carry the story.

On the other hand, having fewer scenes, props, and effects means you will write less description when you write a play. Plus, there will be fewer settings and scenes to keep track of!

Below, list some stage plays that you've seen (or read!) and liked:

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## Screenplays

“Screenplay” is just a fancy word for “script for a movie.” Like plays, movie screenplays are often written in three big acts.

In a screenplay, though, you can do all kinds of fantastic things on a giant screen that are hard to do on a real stage. You can jump through time and space. You can create a scene that takes place at a football game with 10,000 roaring fans, or in a cave filled with 1,000 live cobras. You can even write an animated film where the scenes are only limited by the artist's imagination.

To write a screenplay, you'll have to develop a complex plot that involves your protagonist going up against various challenges in order reach his or her goals. The biggest challenge for screenplays, though, comes when you start thinking about bringing your script to life. Producing a screenplay isn't easy. You or someone you know will have to track down a camera and film editing software. But don't let this scare you off! Writing a movie, even if it never gets made, is still a great creative adventure. Besides, as you've no doubt seen on recent visits to YouTube, these days almost anyone with a camcorder can make a movie and put it out there for the world to see.

Below, list some movies you've seen (or read scripts for!) and liked:

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## TV Scripts, or “Teleplays”

If you put a stage play and a screenplay in a blender on high speed, you'd get a TV script. Some TV shows are similar to movies in that they jump through space and time and have special effects. Others are more like stage plays in that they are filmed in very few locations, usually in front of a studio audience.

This is the great thing about writing for TV: there are so many choices! You can write an hour-long drama, sci-fi, or mystery show. You can write a 30-minute sitcom or cartoon. You can even write a script for a new episode of an existing show. Plus, TV scripts' plots are usually less complex than those of screenplays and plays. Though your characters usually have a goal in each episode, it is usually not life-changing! In fact, you don't want your characters to change much at all. The reason people keep watching a certain show is because they love the characters the way they are. You might want your protagonist's goal to be more life-changing than simply solving a crime—like saving the world from evil vampires, for example—but if he or she accomplishes this in the first episode then you'll have nothing to write about in the next.

Writing for the small screen has other challenges. For example, TV shows have a lot of talking. Without suspense, action, and fancy effects, you'll have to move the story forward and keep your audience's attention using a lot of really witty and quick dialogue. But don't be discouraged. If you're like a lot of people, you already know a lot about

television from watching it. And if you choose to write a TV script, you'll have the perfect excuse to watch even more television.

Below, list some TV shows you've seen (or read scripts for!) and liked:

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### **Scripts for Comic Books and Graphic Novels**

You don't have to be an artist to write comic books or graphic novels. Many comic books and graphic novels begin with scripts that look like those written for movies, plays, and TV shows. They may not even be written by the artists who draw them. Even if you are an artist, the first step in creating a comic book or graphic novel is writing the script.

The cool thing about writing a comic book, compared to other types of scripts, is that you have a lot of control over the final product. Usually, you will either draw the book yourself or work with one other artist to create the look and feel of it. Not only do you get to pick the characters, settings, story, and dialogue, you get to decide what goes in every panel. That's like a screenwriter getting to decide what goes in every shot of a movie, which is hardly ever the case.

Comic books and graphic novels are also pretty easy to produce. If you or someone you know is a good artist, you can draw the book after April and copy it yourself or have it printed by a print-on-demand publisher. You might even take your comic to a local independent bookstore to see if they will carry it alongside comics and "zines" by other local writers!

But writing a comic book or graphic novel isn't as easy as it may seem. Like all writers, comic-book and graphic-novel writers have to think about character, plot, setting, and dialogue. But if you write a graphic novel, you will have to create a lengthy and complex story line similar to that of a novel. With comic-book writing, you have to think about all the visual elements of a story, frame-by-frame. You have to decide on the "flow" of the panels, the style of your art, and which moments of the story you want to show or leave out. You also have to write a descriptive scene for each panel in the book, which takes a lot of time and patience.

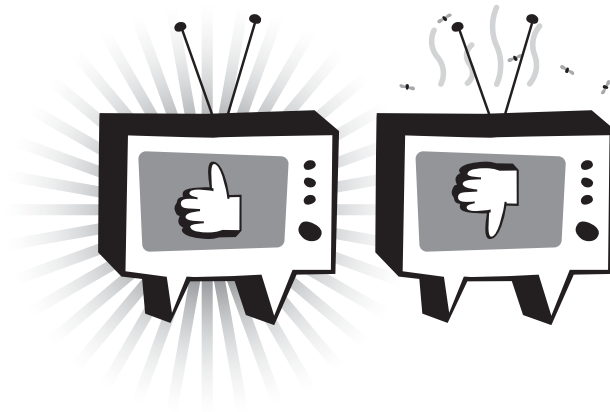
Below, list some comic books or graphic novels that you've read and liked:

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**Now you know the difference between four important types of scripts. Which will you choose?**



## Good Script, Bad Script

Out of all the movies, plays, TV shows, and comic books you've come across so far in your life, there were those that were ridiculously awesome and some that were just about as boring as watching paint dry. Before you start thinking about the script you'll be writing this April, it's helpful write down what, to you, makes a script "good" (interesting, exciting, etc.) and what makes a script "bad" (boring, stupid, etc.).

### Good Script

**Let's start by making a list of movies/TV shows/plays/comic books that you love.** The scripts you list here should be in line with the type of script you'll be writing in April. For example, if you're writing a screenplay, then write down three of your favorite movies.

1. Title \_\_\_\_\_
2. Title \_\_\_\_\_
3. Title \_\_\_\_\_



**Now, write a list of everything you can think of that make these movies/TV show/plays/comic books so amazing.** You can be as general or as detailed as you like; include anything from “the hilarious dialogue” to “it’s a musical about high school drama.” If you get stuck, here are some questions to think about:

- Were some of the characters particularly entertaining or believable? How did their words and actions keep you interested?
- Was the story particularly believable?
- How was the movie/TV show/etc. especially original? In other words, how was it creative?

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**Once you have finished this list, keep it with you at all times during April.** As you might imagine, the things you enjoying watching or reading are going to be things you are best at writing about.

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## Bad Script

**Now, make a list of all those movies/TV shows/plays/comic books that put you to sleep within minutes.** Again, this list should depend on what kind of script you plan on writing. If you’re writing a TV script, then jot down three TV shows you’d rather eat sand than watch ever again.

1. Title \_\_\_\_\_

2. Title \_\_\_\_\_

3. Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, write a list of things that make these movies/TV shows/plays/comic books so horrible and boring.** You can be as general or as detailed as you like; include anything from “cheesy dialogue” to “I don’t like TV shows staring talking french fries.” Again, here are some questions to think about:

- Did some of the characters seem unbelievable? What was unrealistic about their words and actions?
- Did the story seem like a "stretch"? Why?
- Was the movie/TV show/etc. especially predictable?

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**Just like the list of things you love in a script, keep this list with you at all times during Script Frenzy.** It might seem strange to remind yourself of the things you dislike in scripts, but these items are experts in the art of ending up in your script without permission.

# Casting Your Characters

Most people think that an action-packed plot is what makes a script good, but an action-packed plot won't hold someone's attention if the action is performed by unbelievable, unoriginal, and uninteresting characters.

## Boring Characters vs. Original, Well-Developed, and Interesting Characters

**Boring Character:** There's this girl named Jordan. She is 15 and likes to talk on the phone a lot.

**Interesting Character:** Like most teenage girls, Vu is obsessed with her cell phone. But Vu doesn't use her phone to communicate with her friends at school nor with the (living) members of her family. Vu doesn't really see the point in talking to anyone with a pulse when you have the ability (like she does) to dial up the dead.

She spends her nights talking to people like Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein. At lunch she text-messages with Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony. It goes without saying that being able to talk to history's greatest minds has helped her improve her math and science skills and ace her history tests, but recently she's spent less time talking with important historical figures and more time talking to Kate.

Kate may have lived (and died) in the early 1900s, but you'd be surprised at how much a teenager from 1909 has in common with one living in 2009.

Which movie would you want to see: the one about Jordan or the one about Vu and Kate?

Not only are characters with hidden depths and secrets more fun to watch in a movie, they're also more fun to write about! Though you'll end up writing about a bunch of different people in your script next month, all of them will fall into one of three categories: **the protagonist**, **the supporting characters**, and **the antagonist**.

The **protagonist** has the starring role in your script. In most stories, the protagonist is on a journey to get what he or she wants more than anything else in the world, whether it's fame, or revenge, or something as simple as making friends.



**Supporting characters** help the protagonist achieve his or her goal. Many scripts have several supporting characters, including your protagonist's family members, friends, neighbors, helpful wise old gurus— you name it. These characters also have dreams of their own, and their adventures will add even more action and excitement to your script.

The **antagonist's** job is to stand in the way of the protagonist achieving his or her goal. That does not mean that all antagonists are evil, scheming monsters. Some antagonists stand in the way simply because of jealousy, or misunderstanding, or by having a set of goals that conflict with the protagonist's. If Gavin is your protagonist and he wants to take Kim to the dance, but Chet asked her first, this doesn't mean Chet is a "bad guy." He's just another guy who likes the same girl. Then again, there are those antagonists that are just plain evil. It's up to you to decide who's going to stand in your protagonist's way, and how he or she is going to do it.

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It's a great idea for you, the writer, to try and get to know all your characters before you begin writing. We asked a team of scientists, mathematicians, and creative writing gurus from around the world, "What's the easiest way for a writer to get to know his or her characters?" Hands down, they all agreed the single best way is to **fill out a Character Questionnaire for all your characters.**

# Character Questionnaire

Go ahead and fill out the following questionnaire for your protagonist, antagonist, and for as many supporting characters as you'd like.



## **Section One: General Character Questions**

Complete Section One for every character in your script.

## **Section Two: Questions for Your Supporting Characters**

Complete Section Two just for your supporting characters.

## **Section Three: Questions for Your Antagonist**

Complete Section Three just for your antagonist.

## **Section Four: Bonus Questions!**

Complete Section Four if you want to get to know all your characters even better. Remember, the more you know about your characters, the easier it will be to bring them to life in your script!

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## Section One: Complete this section for all your characters!

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Height:
4. Eye color:
5. Physical appearance:
7. Hobbies/interests:
8. Where does he or she live? What is it like there?
9. Description of his or her bedroom:
10. Special skills/abilities/strengths:
11. Family (describe):
12. Favorite bands/songs/type of music:

13. Favorite movies:
14. Favorite TV shows:
15. Favorite books:
16. Favorite foods:
17. Favorite sports/sports teams:
18. Political views:
19. Religion:
20. Pet peeves:

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## Section Two: Supporting Character Questions

1. Relationship to the protagonist:
2. Character's favorite thing about the protagonist:
3. Similarities to protagonist:
4. Differences from protagonist:

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## Section Three: Antagonist Questions

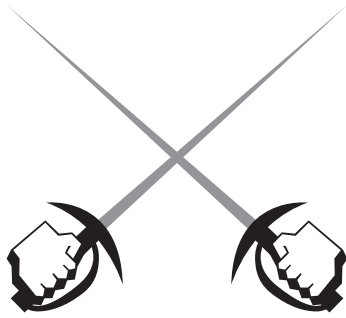
1. Why is he or she facing off against the protagonist?
2. Any likeable traits?

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## Section Four: Bonus Questions!

1. Favorite clothing style/outfit:
2. Special gestures/movements (e.g., curling his or her lip when he or she speaks, always keeping his or her eyes on the ground, etc.):
3. Things about his or her appearance he or she would most like to change:
4. Speaking style (fast, talkative, monotone, etc.):
5. Fondest memory:

6. Insecurities:
7. Quirks:
8. Temperament (easygoing, easily angered, etc.):
9. Negative traits:
10. Things that upset him or her:
11. Things that embarrass him or her:
12. This character really cares about:
10. Things that make him or her happy:
11. Deepest, darkest secret:
12. Reason he or she kept this secret for so long:
13. Other people's opinions of this character (What do people like about this character? What do they dislike about this character?):
14. Dream vacation:
15. Any pets?
16. Best thing that has ever happened to this character:
17. Worst thing that has ever happened to this character:
18. Superstitions:
19. Three words to describe this character:
20. If a song played every time this character walked into the room, what song would it be?



## Creating Conflict

Now that you know *who* your characters are, it is time to figure out *what your characters are going to do*. **Most movies, TV shows, plays, and comics are ultimately about the same thing: the journey a protagonist goes on to get what he or she wants.** Whether the goal is to become the next *American Idol* or to discover the cure for the common cold, his or her journey is never easy, and your character will encounter many setbacks along the way. Though they're no fun for your protagonist, these obstacles are what make your story exciting to read.

Imagine a story about a guy named Gavin who wants to take Kim to the prom more than anything in the world. How boring (and short) would the story be if Gavin just went ahead and called Kim up, asked her to prom, and got the answer he was hoping for? What if Gavin is the shy nerdy type and has a serious fear of talking to girls, and he has to convince Kim that she should go with him instead of Chet, her current date and the captain of the football team?

This story has both **external conflict** and **internal conflict**.

### External Conflict

**The external conflict is the one between a protagonist and antagonist.** In the above story, the protagonist (Gavin) has a goal (to take Kim to the prom), but a motivated antagonist (Chet) has his own agenda (to also take Kim to the prom). The struggle between Gavin and Chet over Kim is the external conflict in this story.

### Internal Conflict

**The internal conflicts are the fears and insecurities that a protagonist has to overcome in order to get what he or she wants.** In the story above, Gavin has to overcome his fear of talking to girls in order to convince Kim to go to the prom with him instead of Chet.





If you have completed your **character questionnaires**, you already know a good amount about the major players in your novel. Now it's time to answer some deeper questions about your characters' hopes and fears in order to **create the conflicts** that will make your novel interesting.

**Take out and review your character questionnaires, then fill in the blanks below.**

**Your Protagonist**

More than anything in the world, my protagonist wants:

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But he/she is afraid of:

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And his/her greatest weakness is (is it something like Kryptonite or more like Hostess snack cakes?):

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Not to mention that no-good antagonist . . .

**Your Antagonist**

More than anything in the world, my antagonist wants (this can be as simple as defeating the protagonist or something more ambitious like world domination):

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My antagonist’s “issue” with the protagonist is:

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My antagonist is afraid of:

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His/her greatest weakness is:

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Congratulations! You now have the basic ingredients for a juicy story: **external conflict and internal conflict**. Know that your internal and external conflicts will overlap throughout your script. Once your characters find out about each others' fears and weaknesses, you better believe they will use them against each other mercilessly as they fight to make their own dreams come true.

### Bonus Challenge: Ask Me About My Logline



**Logline:** a one-sentence, "25 words or less" description of a screenplay.

Now that you know the basic story of your script, we challenge you to write your logline. Loglines need to be short and catchy and encompass the conflicts of your script.

Your logline should have a clear beginning, middle, and end, and will usually start by introducing the main character like so:

The president of the chess club...

Then describing the character's journey:

hopes to impress a girl by joining the football team...

And finishes by summarizing the story's outcome **without** giving away the ending:

...only to find that what works on the chess board doesn't necessarily work on the football field ... or in the game of love.

**Write your logline below.**

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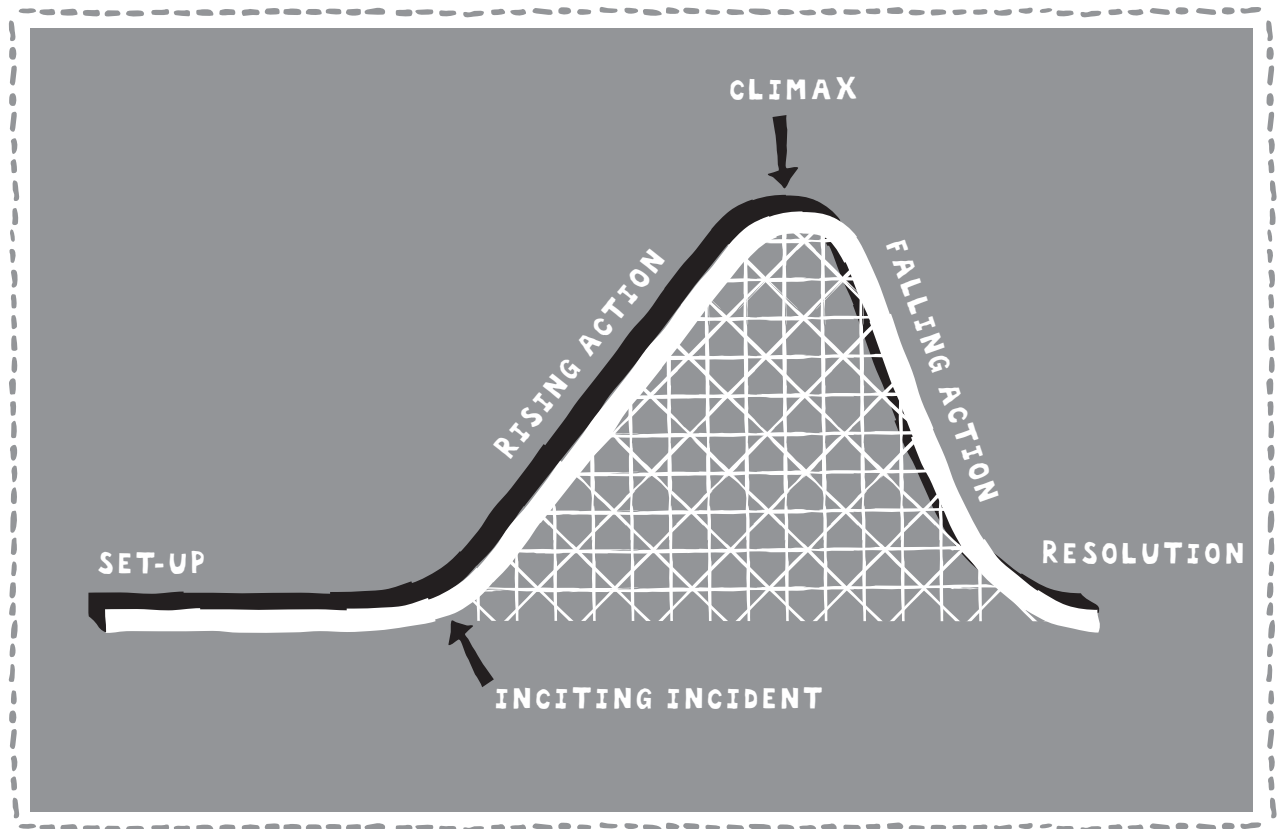
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# Outlining Your Script

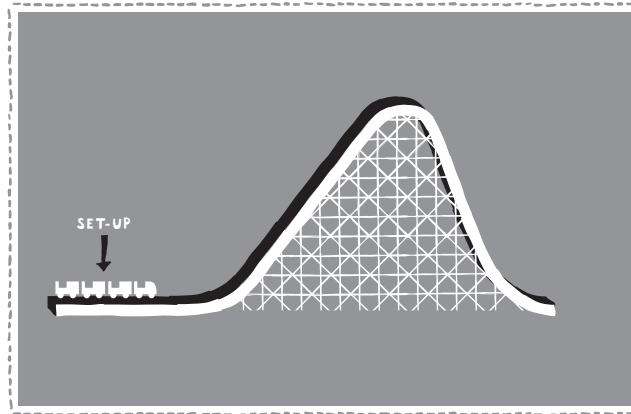
Now that your story has conflict (and maybe even an attention-grabbing logline) you probably have an idea of *what* is going to happen in your script this April. You may know what kind of journey your protagonist will undertake, and what will stand in his or her way. Now it's time to take the next step and map out *how* everything is going to happen.

Writing an entire script from beginning to end may seem pretty daunting, but with a good plan, it won't be as hard as you think. Trust us. Most stories have the same structure, and break down into the same six sections that make up a **plot**. See the diagram below.



Even if this is stuff you already know from English class, read all the sections below carefully before you move on to map out your own plot.

## The Set-Up



### What kind of rollercoaster are we getting on?

Though some scripts begin with an “inciting incident”—which you will read about in just a second—many of them start by telling the reader a little bit about the characters, the setting, and the conflict before jumping into the action. Just like you'd want to know what kind of rollercoaster you're getting on before waiting in line, a movie executive might want to know what kind of script he or she is about to read before reading the whole thing.

### *Here is an example of a story's set-up:*

INT. BORIS' BEDROOM - DAY

BORIS' mohawk bobs up and down as he plays guitar in his room filled with ROCK BAND POSTERS, GUITAR MAGAZINES, and many different GUITARS, AMPS, and GADGETS. His mom, WILMA, walks into his room with a plate of UNCOOKED POP-TARTS. BORIS swings his GUITAR behind his back.

BORIS

Mom, I'm SO over it!

WILMA

Over what? What does that even mean?

BORIS

Everything. I am bored with everything.

WILMA

I don't understand you at all, little man. You have every guitar and guitar gadget in the world! What else do you need?

BORIS shoves a POP-TART in his mouth.

BORIS

How many times do I have to tell you to stop calling me "little man"? I'm 18! I'm way too old to be sitting in my bedroom like a loser. I want to be in a band. I want to travel the world...

WILMA

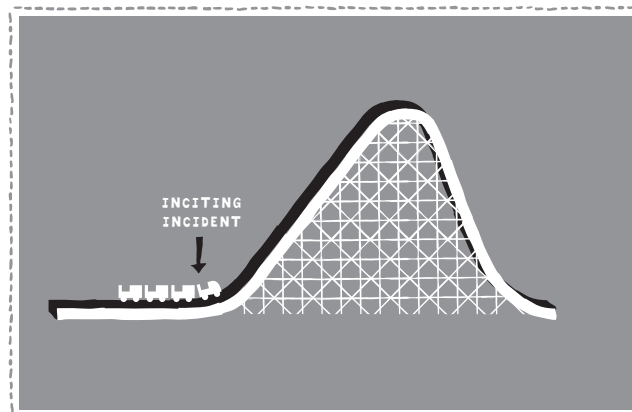
Why don't you try out for that new reality TV show, *So You Think You Can Rock?! I hear auditions are coming to Detroit next weekend, and the grand prize is a two-million dollar contract with Sony Records.*

BORIS

Yeah right! I'd pass out cold in front of an audience that big. And that judge, Billy Van Carnage, is a total jerk. I get nervous just thinking about him.

Okay, that was a good set-up. We have been introduced to the protagonist and the story's main conflicts: Boris wants to join a rock band and travel the world, but he has crippling stage fright (**internal conflict**), and it has been hinted that Mr. Van Carnage is also going to pose a problem for Boris (**external conflict**).

### The Inciting Incident



#### Getting on the rollercoaster.

The inciting incident launches your protagonist into the adventure whether he or she is ready or not. It can be a pretty scary moment for your main character. Once it happens, there's no turning back.

**Here is the inciting incident that happens in this story:**

INT. GUITAR CENTER - NIGHT

BORIS is looking at a STRATOCASTER when he sees ABIGAIL at the counter. BORIS ducks behind a DRUM SET, but it's too late. He's been spotted.

ABIGAIL

That guitar you were looking at is pretty awesome. You should get it. It matches your shirt.

BORIS

(Stammering)

Yeah, totally.

ABIGAIL

So guess what? Crude Medicine is trying out for *So You Think You Can Rock?! this weekend.*

BORIS

You're so cool. I mean, that's so cool.

ABIGAIL

And I am so glad I ran into you. Our lead guitarist is MIA, and we're totally freaking out. If he doesn't show by this weekend, will you fill in for the tryout?

BORIS

Wow . . .

ABIGAIL

I'll take that as a yes. I'll be at your place at 8 AM sharp Saturday.

ABIGAIL hands BORIS a CD.

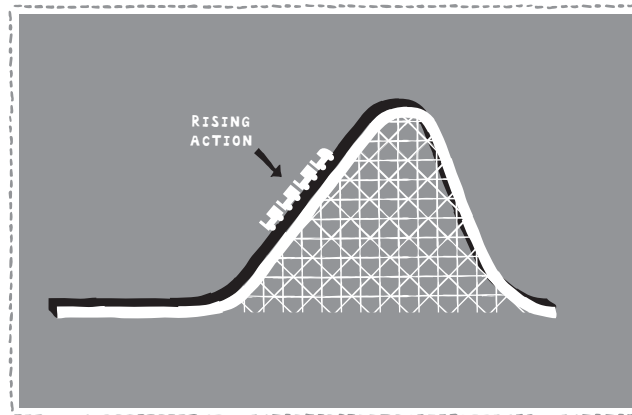
ABIGAIL

Just make sure you know the solo on the first track. See ya Saturday!

If an inciting incident never happened, Boris would more than likely continue to eat breakfast pastries and play guitar alone in his bedroom. This might sound like a pretty fun life to live, but it is not a very fun life to watch.



## Rising Action



### **Climbing the big hill.**

This will be the longest section of your script. You will develop your characters, deepen their relationships with one another, and lay out everything that happens to them before the **climax**. Think of the rising action as the biggest hill on the rollercoaster—the higher you go, the more suspenseful it gets. The rising action is made up of many events, each of them building to the most exciting part of your story: the climax.

### ***Here is a summary of some of the rising action in this story:***

1. Abigail pulls up outside in her beat-up Volkswagen Jetta and Boris—trying not to look back to his room where his guitars, amps, and pedals are looking sad and deserted—says goodbye to his mom.

Abigail honks until Boris finally hugs his mom, grabs his vintage Fender Jaguar and runs out the door.

2. As soon as they arrive at the auditions, Boris starts to get nervous. He can barely talk to people, but Abigail and the other two band members, Zach (the drummer) and Megan (the bassist), do all the talking. Though Boris is nervous about getting on stage, he finds himself becoming more and more comfortable around Abigail. She is unlike any other girl he has ever met. And she seems to like him.

3. When it's time for Crude Medicine to get up in front of the judges to play, Boris can hardly see straight. Boris knows the song like the back of his hand, so all he has to worry about is not throwing up or passing out.

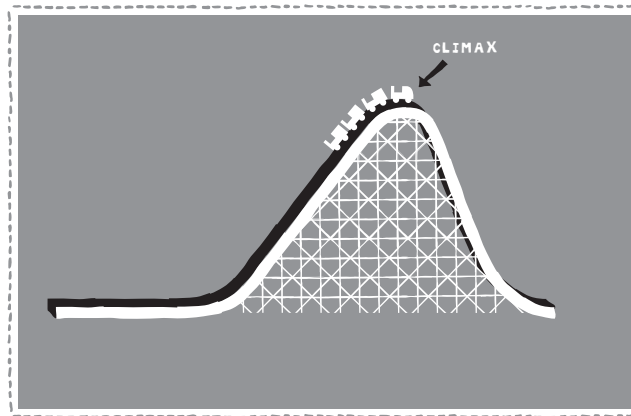
Boris makes it all the way through the song just fine, and Abigail sings lead and nails it. All the judges are blown away, except one.

Billy Van Carnage comments that chick singers are totally "last year" and that the greenish tinge to Boris' skin during their performance was making *him* nervous.

But the rest of the judges outvote him. Crude Medicine is on its way to stardom.

4. Crude Medicine makes it all the way to the final episode and each performance gets easier for Boris. Boris figures they are going to win, and spends less time worrying about impressing the judges and more time daydreaming about all the ways to spend his part of the prize money—a six-month tropical vacation with Abigail, a new house for his mom, or maybe a large donation to a local music school for urban kids. Losing, at this point, is not an option.

### The Climax



#### The top of the rollercoaster.

This is the “gasp” moment at the very top of the rollercoaster, right before your high-speed drop. This moment doesn’t last long, and neither does the climax in your script. It can be as short as one scene—just enough to make an audience hold their breath in suspense and ask, “What’s going to happen next?!”

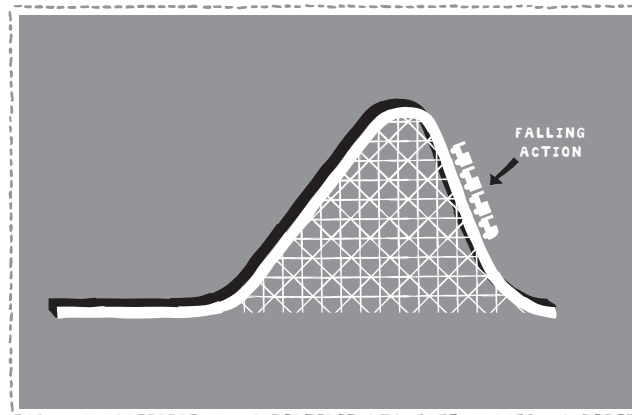
#### *Here is an example of a climax:*

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK?! AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The members of CRUDE MEDICINE run on stage in their new matching ORANGE JUMPSUITS and WHITE SUNGLASSES. The audience cheers. ZACH counts them in with a few clicks of his DRUMSTICKS.

They begin to play, but all the INSTRUMENTS are out of tune, including the MICROPHONE. Within seconds, they are booted off stage.

## The Falling Action



### The high-speed drop.

The falling action is what happens next. It is the fast-paced, action-packed part of your script. You're finally speeding down the tracks of the rollercoaster with your hands in the air! Does the antagonist get defeated? Do the protagonist's dreams finally come true? If so, how?

#### *Here is an example of falling action*

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK?! JUDGES TABLE - NIGHT

The JUDGES sit around a table. BILLY has a huge smile on his face.

GILL

I just don't get it. They were doing so well.

BILLY

I told you that chicks can't rock.

A STAGE HAND runs up to the judges table with a DVD in his hand. Without saying a word, he pops it in the PLAYER. The DVD is of BILLY, messing with the band's equipment before the show.

BILLY

It's not what it looks like . . .

Before BILLY could say another word, two beefy SECURITY GUARDS come in and drag BILLY out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK STAGE - NIGHT

CRUDE MEDICINE takes the stage once again. This time they nail the song and the crowd cheers.

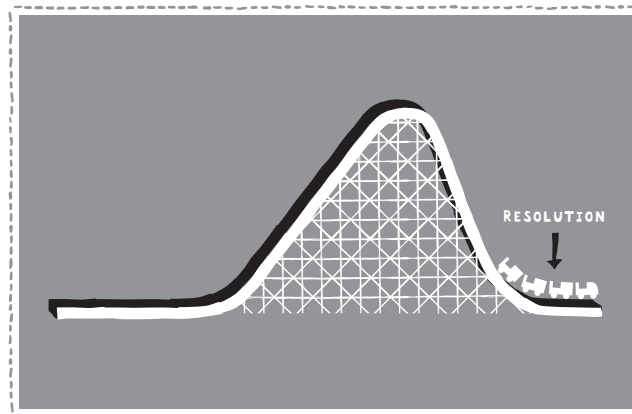
CUT TO:

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK?! STAGE -MINUTES LATER

GILL

We are proud to announce that the winner of the 2011 season of *So You Think You Can Rock?!* is Crude Medicine!

## The Resolution



### Getting off the rollercoaster.

This is how things work out in the very end, after your protagonist gets (or doesn't get) what he or she wants. It has been said by creative writing sages that your characters—especially your protagonist—must change over the course of the script. This change happens little by little as your character battles his or her fears, defeats villains, and builds friendships and relationships with a cast of amazing characters. All of these adventures will end up changing the way your main character sees the world and his or her place in it. Try to use the final scenes to highlight those changes.

### ***An example of a resolution:***

INT. SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT

CRUDE MEDICINE is playing to an arena full of rabid fans.

BORIS  
Hello Detroit! It is good to be  
home!

ABIGAIL and BORIS kiss and the fans scream.

ABIGAIL  
All right, enough of that. Let's  
rock!

-----

Now it's your turn to create your plot. Believe us, if you fill out this worksheet, writing your script will be ten times easier in April. You don't have to describe everything that will happen in your script here. This is just to help you get an idea about what'll happen in the beginning, middle, and end.

**1. Describe your set-up:**

In one to two paragraphs, describe a scene that introduces your characters, your setting, and the main conflicts in your story. You may want to review your conflict worksheet before you do this.

**2. Describe your inciting incident:**

In one paragraph, describe the event that causes your protagonist to begin his or her adventure.

**3. Describe some of your rising action:**

Write a list of five events that build up to the climax of your script. Don't forget to include all of your supporting characters and the antagonist.

**4. Describe your climax:**

In one paragraph, describe what will happen in the climax of your script.

**5. Describe your falling action:**

In one to two paragraphs, describe what happens after the climax. Does your protagonist get what he or she wants? Does the antagonist get defeated? How?

**6. Describe your resolution:**

In one to two paragraphs, describe how everything works out in the very end. Is it a happy ending? Sad? Remember to show how your characters changed because of their journey.

## Example Plot Rollercoaster

Boris and Abigail leave for tryouts. Boris starts to fall for Abigail. crude Medicine make it onto the show. crude Medicine makes it to the final episode.

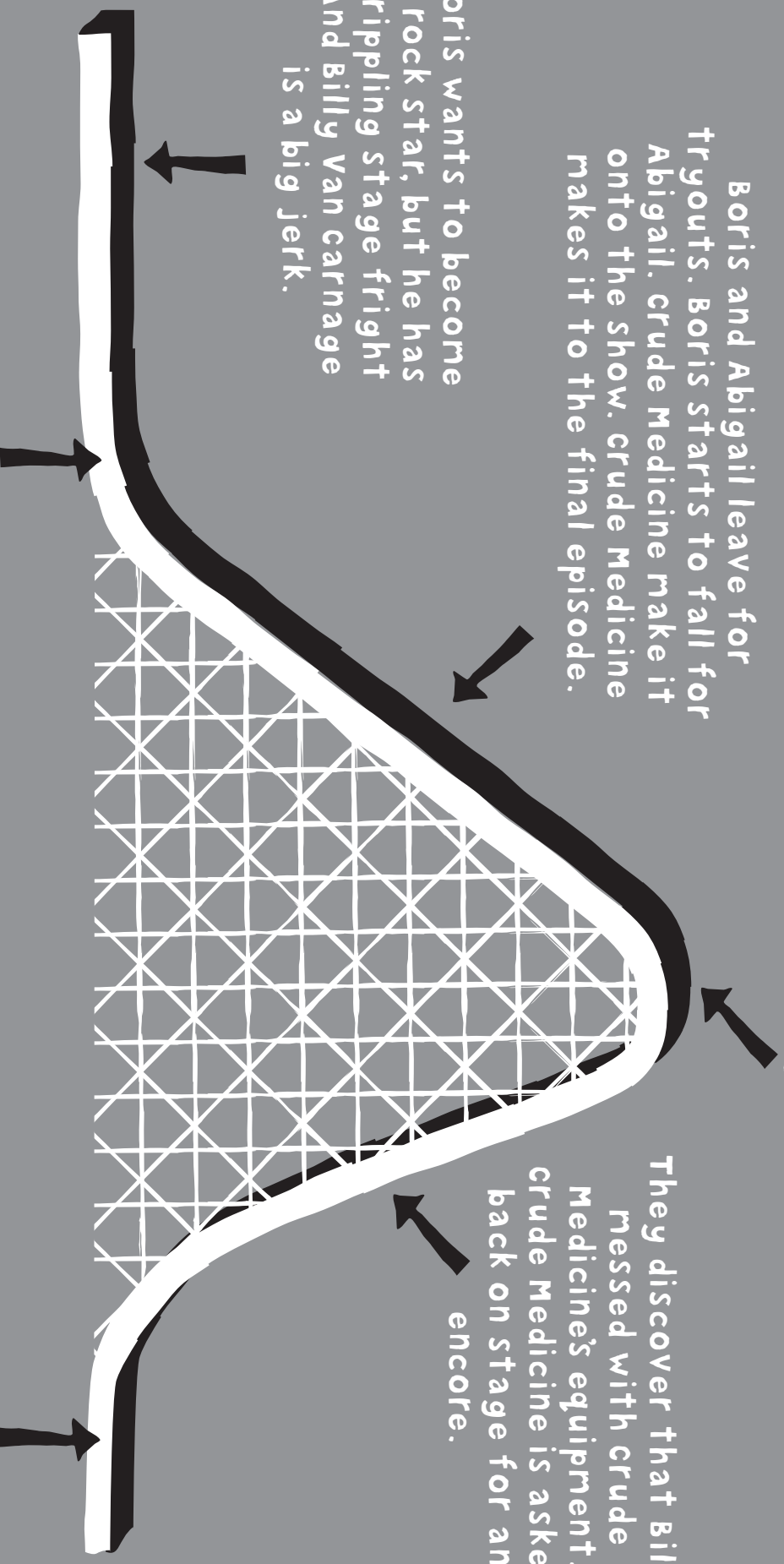
Boris wants to become a rock star, but he has crippling stage fright And Billy Van carnage is a big jerk.

crude Medicine goes on stage for their final performance. Their instruments are out of tune. They get forced off stage.

They discover that Billy messed with crude Medicine's equipment. crude Medicine is asked back on stage for an encore.

Abigail invites Boris to stand in as crude Medicine's guitarist for the *So You Think You can Rock?* tryouts.

crude Medicine becomes a hugely popular rock band. Boris and Abigail get together. Boris has gotten over his stage fright.



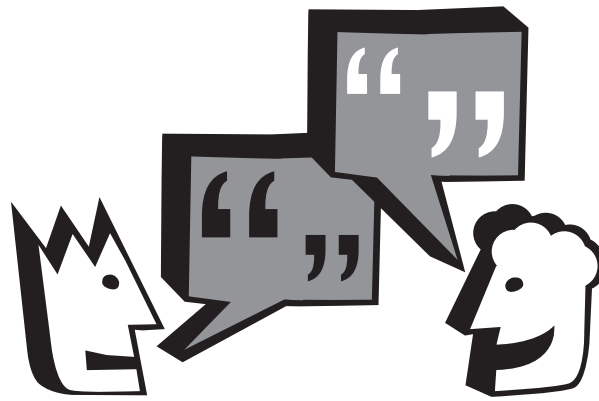
Now, fill out your very own plot rollercoaster using the plot outline you just made.

The image shows a plot rollercoaster template on a grey background. A thick black line forms a rollercoaster track that starts at a peak on the left, descends into a valley, rises to a second peak, descends into a third valley, and finally rises to a fourth peak on the right. The central valley is filled with a white grid pattern. Five white rectangular text boxes with horizontal lines are positioned around the track, with black arrows pointing from each box to a specific point on the track: the first box points to the first peak, the second box points to the first valley, the third box points to the second peak, the fourth box points to the second valley, and the fifth box points to the third peak.

## **FINAL NOTE ON PLOT!**

As you probably know, no two rollercoasters are the same. They all have different hills and drops, different speeds, different twists, turns, loops, and tunnels. The same goes for scripts. That is what makes them different and exciting. Sometimes they begin with the inciting incident or work backwards from the resolution to the beginning. Scripts are filled with flashbacks, flash-forwards, and unexpected plot twists. And scripts don't have to have happy endings, either. Just like life, sometimes things don't work out exactly the way you planned them to. During Script Frenzy, experiment with the plot you create by thinking beyond the "typical one-hill rollercoaster" formula. Rearrange events, add some twists, and flip that resolution on its head. You'll be surprised at how much this can energize your story.





## Writing Awesome Dialogue

**Scripts are made up of the following four things:**

1. Dialogue
2. Character Names
3. Action
4. Description



Let's start by going over the first two: **dialogue** and **character names**.

**Dialogue is what happens when your characters speak to one another.** Above each line of dialogue is a character's name, which should always be written in ALL CAPS and centered above the dialogue like so:

```
BILLY  
I told you that chicks can't rock!
```

**In a script, dialogue should do one, if not both, of the following:**

1. Reveal characters' relationships to one another.
2. Move the story forward.



Here's a couple of example exchanges to illustrate each:

***Dialogue that shows the relationship between characters:***

PALMER

Hi Jane, haven't seen you around here in a while. How's life?

JANE

Could you just try to call me "Mom" every once in a while? That's what I am you know: your mom! You call your dad, "Dad."

PALMER

Maybe you should think about why that is for a few seconds. It's not a hard one to figure out.

JANE

How many times do I have to say I'm sorry? I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry! Is that enough?!

PALMER

You can't apologize your way out of this one, Jane!

From this conversation, we can safely assume that Palmer and his mother have a strained relationship. Jane has done something to hurt her son so much that he won't even call her "Mom," and no amount of apologizing is going to make up for her mistake.

-----

***Dialogue that moves the story forward:***

AGENT BURNHAM  
We found the missing file.

AGENT SMITH  
So, was I right? Is Mr. V in fact  
a serpent-human hybrid?

AGENT BURNHAM  
Yes, but there's something you  
might find even more interesting.

AGENT SMITH  
(Laughs)  
Can't imagine what that could be.

AGENT BURNHAM  
Mr. V is your father.

Dialogue like this can change the course of a script's storyline, moving the story to a whole new level. As a matter of fact, this is a great example of an inciting incident. After this short exchange, Agent Smith's life is changed forever.

# Your turn!

## Define Relationships Between Characters

In the lines below, write a short scene of dialogue between two characters in your script that helps define their relationship with one another. This can be a positive relationship or a conflicting relationship.

CHARACTER  
NAME



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER  
NAME



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER  
NAME



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER  
NAME



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue




\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


## Move the Story Forward

In the lines below, write a short conversation between two of your characters that moves your story forward. Tip: You may want to look back at the inciting incident in your plot outline.


CHARACTER NAME 

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue 

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER NAME 

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue 

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_


CHARACTER NAME 

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue 

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER NAME 

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue 

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Awesome. Now let's move on to the other two script ingredients: **action and description**.

# Lights, Camera, Action!

Now that you know a lot about dialogue and you know how to format character names, we'll move on to talk about the other two important ingredients in a script, the action and description. If dialogue in a script is what's said, action and description are what's seen. Basically, these two elements make up everything that is not dialogue.



## Facts about action and description:

1. **Action** is what your characters are doing in a scene.
2. **Description** adds details to a script about a scene's location, important props within a scene, and the time in which a scene takes place.
3. In a stage play, action and description are referred to more generally as **stage directions**.
4. **Action** and **description** are always written in the present tense.
5. You can only write about what you can see. That means you can't write about what a character is feeling or thinking. You can only describe what he or she looks like from the outside.
6. Scriptwriters should be selective in writing action and description. You should only describe what a director/artist needs to know in order to make your script come to life.
7. **Character names** within action are always written in ALL CAPS.
8. Important props, sound effects, and actions in a screenplay are often also written in ALL CAPS.
9. If you want to read more about the action and description or stage directions read "How to Format a Screenplay" and "How to Format a Stage Play" on the Writer's Resources page on Script Frenzy's YWP website.

**You will find action and description at the beginning of each scene in a screenplay like this:**

→ INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK?! AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

All the members of CRUDE MEDICINE run on stage in their new matching ORANGE JUMPSUITS and WHITE SUNGLASSES. The audience cheers. ZACH counts them in with a few clicks of his DRUMSTICKS.

They begin to play, but all their INSTRUMENTS are out of tune, including the MICROPHONE. Within seconds they are booted off the stage.

→ **This is a slugline. Sluglines are only found in screenplays and are written in ALL CAPS.** They state whether a scene takes place inside (INT.) or outside (EXT.), where a scene takes place (the location), and whether it takes place during the DAY or at NIGHT.



**You will also find action within blocks of dialogue like so:**

WILMA

I don't understand you at all,  
little man. You have every guitar  
and guitar gadget in the world!  
What else do you need?

BORIS shoves a POP-TART in his mouth.

BORIS

How many times do I have to tell  
you to stop calling me "little  
man"? I'm 18! I'm way too old to  
be sitting in my bedroom like a  
loser. I want to be in a band. I  
want to travel the world . . .

# Your turn!

Let's practice writing **action** and **description** for your script. **Take out your "Writing Awesome Dialogue" worksheet and answer the following questions for one of the conversations you wrote.**

1. Where does this scene take place?

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2. Is it daytime or nighttime? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is happening in this scene? Are the characters eating anything, watching TV, walking down the street, or battling to save the world?

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Now let's practice putting it all together in an introduction to this scene.

### **If You're Writing a Screenplay**

**Circle the appropriate slugline descriptions and write your action and description in the space below the slugline.**

SLUGLINE  INT./EXT. \_\_\_\_\_ - DAY/NIGHT  
(circle one) LOCATION (circle one)

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**If You're Writing a Stage Play**

The stage directions in an introduction to a scene in a stage play are called *scene directions*. Notice how little space you have to write your scene directions. You have to say a lot in very few words:

( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

# Formatting Your Script

Script formatting is a lot easier than you might think. If you've completed the last two worksheets, you probably have a pretty good idea about how a script is put together. Plus, we've created some scriptwriting templates that will guide you through the process.

If you're writing your script on a computer, check out the last week of the Scriptwriting Boot Camp for Middle School Students to find out more about formatting your script using a word-processing program.



**Take out your "Writing Awesome Dialogue" worksheet and your "Lights, Camera, Action!" worksheet. Copy your dialogue and scene introductions into the script template appropriate for the kind of script you are writing. We've provided both a "Stage Play Template" and a "Screenplay Template." We've even provided a space for you to add some action/description in between the dialogue in your scene.**

## STAGE PLAY TEMPLATE

( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

Scene Directions



CHARACTER  
NAME



\_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write some action  
between the  
dialogue here if  
you'd like!



( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# SCREENPLAY TEMPLATE

SLUGLINE  INT./EXT. \_\_\_\_\_ - DAY/NIGHT  
(circle one) (circle one)

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---

Action/  
Description 

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CHARACTER NAME  \_\_\_\_\_

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Dialogue 

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Write some action between the dialogue here if you'd like!

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# Script Frenzy's Affidavit

This is an agreement that lays out your rights and responsibilities as a scriptwriter. Make sure that both you and a teacher, parent, or reliable friend sign this contract. Once this affidavit is signed, the contract will broadcast your scriptwriting intentions throughout the universe.

Really.

## SCRIPT FRENZY'S AFFIDAVIT

### CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby pledge my intent to write a  
\_\_\_\_\_ -page script in one month's time.

By taking on this absurd month-long deadline, I understand that notions of craft, brilliance, grammar, and spelling are to be chucked right out the window, where they will remain, ignored, until they are retrieved for the editing process. I understand that I am a talented person, capable of heroic acts of creativity, and I will give myself enough time over the course of the next month to allow my innate gifts to come to the surface, untouched by self-doubt, self-criticism, and other acts of self-bullying.

During the month ahead, I realize I will produce clunky dialogue, clichéd characters, and deeply flawed plots. I agree that all of these things will be left in my rough draft, to be corrected at a later point. I understand my right to withhold my manuscript from all readers (except possibly my teacher) until I am ready. I also acknowledge my right to brag about the perils of the writing process, should such bragging prove useful in garnering me respect, attention, or freedom from household chores.

I acknowledge that the month-long, \_\_\_\_\_ - page goal I set for myself is absolute and unchangeable, and that any failure to meet the deadline, or any effort on my part to move the deadline once the adventure has begun, will result in well-deserved mockery from friends and family. I also acknowledge that, upon successful completion of the stated writing objective, I am entitled to a period of gleeful celebration and revelry lasting days, if not weeks, afterward.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
TEACHER/PARENT/RELIABLE FRIEND'S SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

# Script Frenzy 30-Day Commitment Calendar

Your page-count goal for the month may seem impossible from where you're sitting now. That's totally okay. Big creative projects like scriptwriting are daunting even for professional writers, but we're here to tell you a secret: **If you break big goals into a series of smaller goals, the impossible becomes totally possible. Easy, even.** To help make next month's challenge a piece of cake, we've come up with this commitment calendar.

It is best to set aside time each day to write, but be realistic with your scheduling. If you can only write three days a week because you have soccer practice, be make sure to take that into consideration when filling in the calendar. Jot down the number of hours and pages you plan on writing each day.

**Tip: If you want to find out just how many pages you will need to write each day, divide your total page-count goal by the number of days you've set aside for writing during the month. For example, if your page-count goal is 50, and you can make time to write on 25 days, you will need to write 2 pages each day you've scheduled.**







# The Frenzied Chart of Scriptwriting Progress

Write your page-count goal at the top of this page, and color this chart in as you make progress on your script. To find out what each milestone should be, divide your total page-count goal by 10. This number will be how many words you have to write to reach the next milestone.

If your page-count goal is 50, you'll need to write 5 pages to reach the first milestone, then another 5 (or 10 total pages) to reach the second milestone, and so on.

