

SCREENWRITING IN MIDDLE YEARS

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WHAT IS IT?

- Writing for a multimedia project such as a film, video game, graphic novel, tv show, etc
- Focuses only on what we can see on screen, written in present tense, rather than what is going on with the character internally
- It is written for the interpretation of the artists such as the actor, director, cinematographer, and editor. Not for the enjoyment of the reader

WHY TEACH SCREENWRITING

- Different way of writing
 - Different Perspective
 - Visual Language and Visualization
 - Written for the director, actor, crew, etc
 - Different and modern skills
 - Grammar and specific verbs
 - Ties to multimedia and AV projects

CORE CONCEPTS

- Descriptive Action
 - Action must be visual and descriptive
 - Specific language must be used
 - No inner thoughts of characters
- Formatting
 - Scene headings, margins, dialogue, etc
 - Kind of a pain in the.....
- Meant to be interpreted and produced

DESCRIPTIVE ACTION

- Writing what you can see
- Visualize it as you write it
- Avoid the inner workings of characters minds or over description
- Tell your story in actions
- Use specific vocabulary
- Avoid vague and general language

GOOD EXAMPLE

Int. School Classroom

Sam walks into the room, his head hung low. The class is about half full. Dante and Logan, sitting near the back, look at him and smirk. Sam, shuffles over to his desk, and slumps in his chair. Dante nudges Logan, raises a straw to his mouth, and launches a massive spitball that hits Sam square between the eyes. Sam stands up, kicks over his chair, leans over on his desk, and looks directly at Logan...

BAD EXAMPLE

Int. Classroom Day

Sam walks into the room. He is sad and thinking about his mom. Dante and Logan bully him. Sam gets mad.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Movie
- Graphic Novel
- Video Game

My Project: Short film in small groups. Covers screenwriting, storyboarding, filming, and editing.

MY PROCESS

Pre Production

1. Define a problem, conflict, etc
2. Describe beginning, middle, and end.
3. List of scenes with one sentence descriptions
4. Write
5. Revise
6. Produce

“There are no finished screenplays, only abandoned ones”

THE FORMAT!!!!

- Courier new 14pt font
- Scene Headings are a must!
- Dialogue!!!!
- Visual and Descriptive Action!
- Margins are a pain!
- BBC Screenwriting guide
 - <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/scripts/screenplay.pdf>

WRITING

- Word processing can be done, but can be difficult to stay in format
 - If you do this I would just scrap formatting and focus on descriptive action and scene headings
- CeltX is free screenwriting software. It really helps with formatting

CELTX DEMO

Celtx is a program that helps with screenplay formatting.

<http://www.celtx.com>

COMMON PROBLEMS

- Students write as a short story
- Language is too vague or general
- Screenplay is too long and cannot be shot
- Dialogue is written incorrectly

SOLUTIONS

- Revision
- Teacher Review
- Peer Review
- Focus only on what is on screen
- Correct format is not essential

