# Screenwriter's Initial Draft Pad
HOW TO USE THE PAD

The **Screenwriter's Initial Draft Pads** are to be used for works in progress. The non-repro blue grid lines follow current professional screenplay format to help you maintain format when writing by hand. For greater ease, we have increased the horizontal line height on our paper to 18 pt. as opposed to the 12 pt. standard of a typed page. Therefore, handwritten pages will usually produce a script page that is two-thirds capacity of a typed page. Scripts written on Initial Draft Pads are ultimately meant to be transcribed into a typed, finished product.
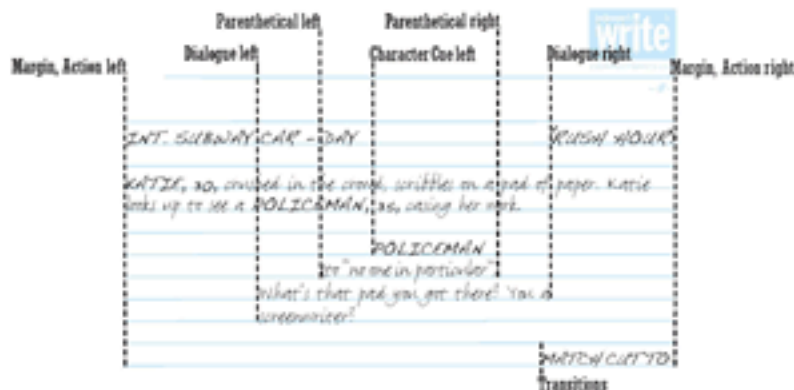
SCREENPLAY FORMAT GUIDELINES

A screenplay is printed on 8 1/2" X 11" three-hole-punch paper, bound by two brass #5, 1 1/4" brads. Use two fasteners, leaving out the middle hole. No other binding is professionally acceptable.

A screenplay consists of a title page and 90-120 (recommended) script pages, printed on only one side.

Title page:

The title should be vertically and horizontally centered on the title page, the title in all capitals. Under the title is the word "by," followed on the same line with the author's name in upper-lower case. If more than one writer contributed to the first draft, an ampersand separates their names. WGA rules have changed; the writer contibuting the most to the script is listed first on both spec and production scripts. The word "and" is used when a significant rewrite contribution has been completed by a writer other than the original draft writers:

<div align="center">

RAIDERS OF THE CHARACTER ARC
by John Doe & Jack Smith
and Jill Hill

</div>

Your contact information should be flush left to the transition margin at the bottom, right side of the page. If you have an agent, their contact information should be used in lieu of your own:

John Doe and Jill Hill
P.O. Box 1
Sunshine Valley, California
myfirstscreenplay@aserver.com

Script page margins:

The measurements we use for the **Screenwriters Intial Draft Pad** are based on industry standards and are measured in inches. They may differ from some screenwriting computer program formats, which vary widely.

Description and action:	Left margin, 1.4"; right margin, 0.9"; width, 6.2".
Dialogue:	Left margin, 2.9"; right margin, 2.3"; width, 3.3".
Character Cue:	Left margin, 4.2"; no right margin.
Parentheticals:	Left margin, 3.6"; right margin, 2.9"; width, 2.0".
Transitions:	Left margin, 6.1"; right margin, 0.9"; width, 1.5".

Numbering:

Page numbers are placed flush right on the first line of the page, starting on page 2. (Do not number the first page.) Use dashes for bracketing a number (EXAMPLE: -2-) instead of a period after a number (EXAMPLE: 2.). The latter is an indicator reserved for scene numbering on a final shooting draft only. Writing commences two line spaces beneath the page number.

First page:

Your title should be upper-lower case (not all capitals) bracketed by quote marks on the top of the first page. Leave two line-spaces and write FADE IN:, flush to the left margin:

<div align="center">

"Movie Title"

</div>

FADE IN:

FADE IN: should not be used anywhere else in the screenplay. This traditionally indicates the film is fading in from opening credits. Never indicate credits. Where credits go is determined by someone else in the production chain.

Last page:
Leave one line-space, then, at flush right, add FADE OUT. FADE OUT (ended in a period) appears nowhere else in the screenplay. THE END (underlined) can also be centered after leaving another line-space. This is optional, as it is redundant to FADE OUT.

<div align="right">

FADE OUT.

</div>

<div align="center">

<u>THE END</u>

</div>

Scenes:
Space twice (one extra line-space) between scenes. Scenes are not numbered in spec scripts. Always begin a scene with a scene heading. Never end a page with a scene heading. A page should end with action, dialogue or a transition.

Headings:
Headings are also called sluglines. Headings are always in all capitals.

A master scene has three parts. The first indicates the location of the camera. INT. is used as an accepted abbreviation for INTERIOR and EXT. for EXTERIOR. If the camera moves quickly from outdoors to indoors within the same shot, you can use EXT./INT. The second part of a master scene reveals the story-location of the scene, preferably described in one or two words such as BROWNSTONE MANSION or KITCHEN. The third part of a master scene exists as technical information for the lighting crew. Use only DAY or NIGHT. Never use time-specific terms such as DUSK or DAWN. These are irrelevant to lighting personnel and are inappropriate in a screenplay as there are no such concepts in cinematic language.

From outdoors, a character may see inside through a window and vice-versa—the character might be walking outside of a grocery store and through the window see someone purchasing food. The heading would read: EXT. GROCERY STORE. Or the man inside the grocery store might see a woman walking past outside. The heading would read: INT. GROCERY STORE.

Example of master scene heading:

INT. LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

Other environmental details that might need to be included in a heading would be date, time, dream or imagination, the last two always written as FANTASY. These sort of details are placed in parentheses, flush to the right margin:

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT   (SUMMER 2006)

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY   (FANTASY)

To exit a fantasy to a reality scene, end your next slug line with THE PRESENT, flush right, in parentheses. THE PRESENT means a return to whatever passes for the present in your story: in the past, as in a period piece, or in the future, as in science fiction.

The same rules apply to FLASHBACKS as for FANTASY headings.

If any environmental detail of a master scene changes, it represents a new scene and a new master heading is added.

Secondary headings indicate a change in location within the master scene; they may indicate passage of time; they can be used for inserts and intercuts.

To indicate an actor's change of location through continous action within a master scene, use the secondary heading KITCHEN:

INT. LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

Katherine and Michael watch television.

<div align="center">

KATHERINE
Popcorn. I need popcorn.

</div>

Katherine stares at Michael expectantly, sighs loudly, and rises from the couch.

KITCHEN

Katherine pours popcorn into a bowl and pours a variety of spices over it.

Use secondary headings to show a change of where the camera is looking within a master scene:

DENNIS

pulls his wallet out and hands it to the

POLICEMAN

who keeps his eyes on Dennis. He glances for a second at the wallet.

LATER is a secondary heading used to show that the scene jumps to another moment in time without changing locale. CONTINUOUS should never be used in a screenplay; all scenes are automatically considered continuous unless otherwise noted.
Secondary headings also include showing inserts:

INSERT — ADVERTISEMENT

which reads: SINGLES WEEKENDS. DON'T BE ALONE. JOIN US FOR A WEEKEND OF DANCING, SWIMMING AND DINING.

BACK TO SCENE is a stand-alone heading which is used to come out of an insert and back into the master scene.

Description and action:
Description and action is made up of only two things: what is seen on screen and what is heard on screen. Nothing else.

"Show, don't tell."

Description should be simple, active, specific, evocative, and visual. It should suggest movement. Use verbs and nouns which create visual, sensory and auditory images. Use economy of language. Remember, your goal is to make the script easy to read.

Characters:
All speaking characters are capitalized when they are first introduced. Characters without speaking parts are not capitalized. Introduce a character by name and rounded-off age (unless under twenty-one). Describe only absolutely necessary details:

GABRIELLE, 25, windswept, enters the shop, clinging onto packages as if they would blow away.

A character's nature should be determined solely by his or her actions and should never be described in the script. In novels, the writer is allowed to tell us how the character feels and thinks. Screenplays are visual and the character's inner life should be shown through their decisions and dialogue. Anything a character does, ranging from kissing someone with lust or slapping a face in anger to the slightest mannerism—a nervous cough—reveals something about who that character really is. What would you see on the screen? No character would stop the story onscreen, turn to the audience and explain it and neither should the writer. Actions speak louder than words.

Major and minor characters are given names, but some minor characters and all those without speaking parts are usually described by their function, such as Elevator Operator, Waitress or Bystander. To differentiate these characters you may want to give them uniqueness such as Aging Elevator Operator or Hostile Waitress.

Characters can have many names but you should use their primary name in all dialogue captions (the name that appears above a line of dialogue). All the other names can be used in the description/action sections.

Parentheticals:
Parentheticals have only two uses. The first is to change directionals; i.e. the direction to whom the speaker is adressing:

<div align="center">

KATHERINE
Ellen, I am going to be alright.
(to Michael)
Tell her, will you, please?

</div>

The second use of parentheticals is to reveal a change in voice.

<div align="center">

KATHERINE
(whispering)
Tell her, will you, please?

</div>

Never use a parenthetical to direct actors. You must show what you intend your character to say and how to say it through the dialogue. Never use a parenthetical to describe action or description.