

Screenplay Format

The do's and don't

Terminology and Lingo

❖ Scene Heading

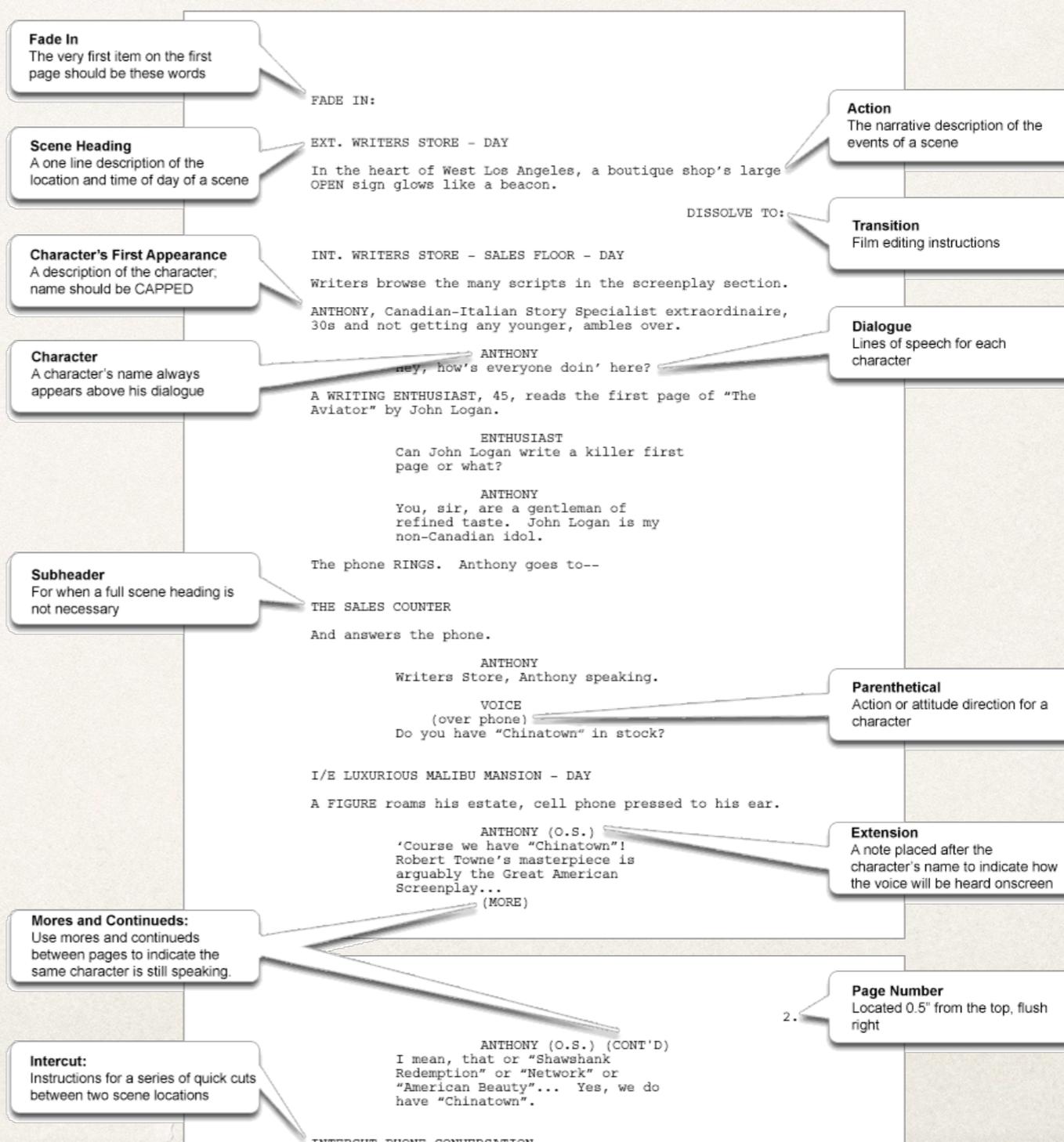
❖ Action

❖ Character

❖ Dialogue

❖ Parenthetical

❖ Transition



Scene Heading

- ❖ The Scene Heading, sometimes called Slugline, tells the reader of the script where the scene takes place.
- ❖ Are we indoors (INT.) or outdoors (EXT.)?
- ❖ Next name the location: BEDROOM, LIVING ROOM, at the BASEBALL FIELD, inside a CAR?
- ❖ The time of day - NIGHT, DAY, DUSK, DAWN...
- ❖ All information is used to "set the scene" in the reader's mind.

Action

- ❖ The ACTION or Description sets the scene, describes the setting, and allows you to introduce your characters and set the stage for your story. Action is written in REAL TIME.
- ❖ Every moment in a screenplay takes place NOW.
- ❖ Use the active voice (a window slams shut) not the passive voice (a window is slammed shut).

Character

- ❖ Before a character can speak, the writer inserts a CHARACTER NAME to let the reader know this character's dialogue follows.
- ❖ A character name can be an actual name (JOHN) or description (FAT MAN) or an occupation (DOCTOR). Sometimes, you might have COP #1 and then COP #2 speaking.
- ❖ It is okay to identify the speaking parts like this, but actors will like you more if you personalize their part with a name. Try to be consistent.

Extensions (of CHARACTER)

- * An Extension is a technical note placed directly to the right of the Character name that denotes HOW the character's voice will be heard by the audience.
- * An Off-Screen voice can be heard from a character out of the camera range, or from another room altogether.
 - * V.O. - Voice Over
 - * O.S. - Off Screen

Dialogue

- ❖ DIALOGUE rules apply when anyone on screen speaks.
 - ❖ During a conversation.
 - ❖ When a character talks out loud to himself
 - ❖ When a character is off-screen and only a voice is heard.

Parenthetical

- ❖ A Parenthetical remark can be an attitude, verbal direction or action direction for the actor who is speaking the part.
- ❖ Parentheticals should be short, to the point, descriptive, and only used when absolutely necessary.
- ❖ Generally disfavored, because they give direction to an actor that may not be appropriate once on the set.

Parenthetical



FRANKIE
→ (wryly)
Good mornin', Bluebird.

JULIE
→ (sleepily)
What? What time is it?

FRANKIE
→ (getting out of bed)
After six. You're gonna be late
again and I don't want to hear
it.

Transitions

- ❖ Transitions are typically frowned upon, and are only used when absolutely necessary.
- ❖ CUT TO:
- ❖ DISSOLVE TO:
- ❖ SMASH CUT:
- ❖ QUICK CUT:
- ❖ FADE TO:
- ❖ FADE OUT (never at the end of the script)
- ❖ Always justified on the right.

Title Page

- * Centered on the page, vertically and horizontally - The title of your script in bold type if possible
- * Two lines below that, centered on the line - Written by
- * Two lines below that, centered on the line - Your Name (and co-writer, if any)
- * In the lower right hand corner your contact information (include agent or email address)
- * In the lower left-hand corner you can put Registered, WGA or a copyright notification.
- * **It should not be on special paper, no graphics, or colors **

Writing Time!

- ❖ Over the next four classes we will be workshopping and writing a short story!
- ❖ Go EXTREME!
 - ❖ Anything goes! (aliens, explosions, kidnapped presidents, zombies, etc.)
- ❖ Go REALISTIC!
 - ❖ More grounded! (friendships, relationships, family strife, etc)
- ❖ Everything should follow the three act structure and make sense!
- ❖ Both Stories should be between 8-10 pages in length.
- ❖ Due Wednesday May 4th!