

SHORT FILM TREATMENT & PITCH ASSIGNMENT

A treatment details the storyline, concept, and style of your proposed screenplay. It is used as a selling document so that you can convince a producer to invest in making your movie without them having to read the whole screenplay. Typically it would be used to get a meeting, or leave behind after your pitch. For a short film script, it will be about **2 pages long**. Your focus has to be on the story – why tell it? What makes it new, unique, relevant today to your audience? So concentrate on the most important plot points of the story, focusing on the exploits of the main character and defining the three act plot structure – the thesis or A story which typically sets up the circumstances which propel the main character, the antithesis or B story in which the character is challenged to grow, often by a different set of circumstances, setting, or people, and the synthesis or merging of the A and B stories into one at the end bringing resolution to the plot and the character's story arc. **You MUST state the ending**. Don't worry about spoilers – these producers need to know what your intention is and how the story goes in its entirety – BUT you cannot tell, summarize, or describe the whole thing.

As well, since you are producing a genre screenplay, you do need to work in some aspects of the genre through the literary elements as well as in the description of the visual realization – of the film style – video and audio, theatrical conventions, set design, staging, costumes, and so on, of your short film. Since this is an industry that uses marketing to get people in the seats, you also have to think through how your genre film will be sold – target audience, appeals to them, relatable or popular actors and music, tagline and so on.

“You will need to make the reader able to conceive, visualise and determine the kind of film it would be **just** from reading this document. The reader should be able to tell what kind of production values it will have, including whether its success would be dependent on a name actor and/or director and whether they would be interested in it; he would have an idea what audience the film would appeal to, and whether you have the professional capabilities as a screenwriter to deliver on your promise.”

This treatment will form the basis for your pitch and obviously serve as the outline for your screenplay. You will need to sell us on this story idea and film concept. So you have to be passionate about your genre, and your story concept – passionate enough to convince us it is worth making and that it will make a lot of money at the box office. You also need to know your story backwards and forwards so that writing out the dialogue, description, and visual realization component will come as second nature.

PROCESS

1. Using knowledge of your chosen genre from the novel you read and the 2 films analyzed, brainstorm a movie idea – use the mash up concept of this movie meets this movie and voila! Start with what you know and like, watch on TV, etc. for storyline ideas
2. Start working on the story synopsis, using the three-part plot structure.
3. Use the treatment template to begin to brainstorm and fill in some blanks – you may have to do some research online.
4. You will then submit the written copy, while working on the pitch with your own copy. **SUBMIT GC on top, peer reviewed RD, this checklist**
5. You will learn some spoken persuasion techniques and do some impromptu speaking to get comfortable selling an idea to an audience in person.
6. You will then deliver the pitch.

At this point, we will then move on to actually drafting your screenplay, now that you have the story and genre down pat, we'll look at industry formatting rules, and how to write dialogue, get your screenplay written.

** Adapted and cited from "The One Page Outline." *The National Film and Video Foundation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

SHORT FILM TREATMENT & PITCH CHECKLIST

PRODUCTION Criteria – The written FORM / 2 (_____ %)

- Followed all the rules and the template formatting for the industry standard
- Included all the headings
- Meets the 3 page limit
- Written spelling, grammar, etc is correct
- Production values, concept, genre etc. meet the expectations of the assignment – are well-developed through writing. Use of narrative and expository features to both tell and explain the story and the story's realization in film.

READING Criteria – CONTENT for BOTH (Oral/2 _____ % Written/3 _____ %)

- Know your stuff: the story, the genre and sub-genre or hybrid, the social context, the conventions (literary, theatrical, and cinematic)
- Selected the salient information for both contexts

TALK Criteria – The spoken DELIVERY / 3 (total _____ %)

- Context:** Is this a persuasive sales pitch for a Hollywood movie? Did you DO the task? Have you adjusted the register for your audience, you want the job, you're speaking to experts. Are you showing you know what this job is and how to get it done?
- Body language:** eye contact, movement, enthusiasm, facial expressions, and not distracted
- Preparedness:** Did you practice, think through, organize, time yourself (5 min)
- Resource management:** come prepared, don't waste time, have materials ready
- Charisma** – are you interesting to listen to? Effort to engage the audience
- Voice:** enunciation; articulation; intonation patterns, pronunciation; decibel level, rhythm
- Tone** is expert speaking clearly and audibly, authoritatively and knowledgeably
- Language:** proper use for this context
- Rhetorical devices:** emotional appeals, analogies, humour, cultural referents, etc.
- Fielding questions** extemporaneously, respectfully, and knowledgeably
- Structure** (Introduction, Body, Conclusion)
- Organizational structure:** cause/effect, classification, problem/solution, chronology, etc
- Development of content:** there is detail, elaboration, and flow, coherence, and unity
- Persuasive features:** narration, description, facts/statistics, examples, quotations

Comments: