



WIFILM ACT Curriculum

WIFI

Women in the Film Industry

Creative Role: Writer



Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, you will gain the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes:

Writer [Screenwriter]	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a writer in the film industry.• Basic knowledge of how to become a writer and be highly recognised as one.• Factual knowledge of the creative requirements of a writer in the film industry.• Theoretical knowledge of the nuances in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define 'writer'.• Describe the key roles and responsibilities of a writer in the film industry.• Examine and critique the creative requirements of a writer in the film industry.• Define 'nuances' in writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of the important role a writer plays in the film industry.• Awareness of the process involved in becoming a writer in the film industry.• Willingness to examine the creative requirements of a writer in the film industry.• Awareness of 'nuanced' writing.





What is a Screen Writer?

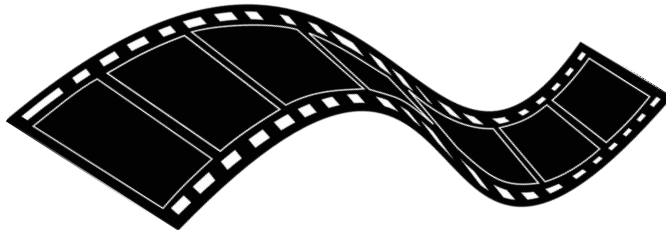
- A screen writer is the individual who writes the script of a production. They are also in charge of creating ideas that form the plot of a film or television series.
- A professional screenwriter has good spelling and writing skills, among other abilities, such as creativity and discipline in order to meet the necessary deadlines for production.





What is a Screen Writer?

- A screenwriter is responsible for producing a script that provides the director, producer, actors and others with an interpretation of the production.
- In other words, a screenwriter is responsible for the story of a show or film. They create the concept, idea and initial vision for the production.
- A screenwriter writes the story, the dialogue, the characters, describes each scene and character's actions for a show or film.





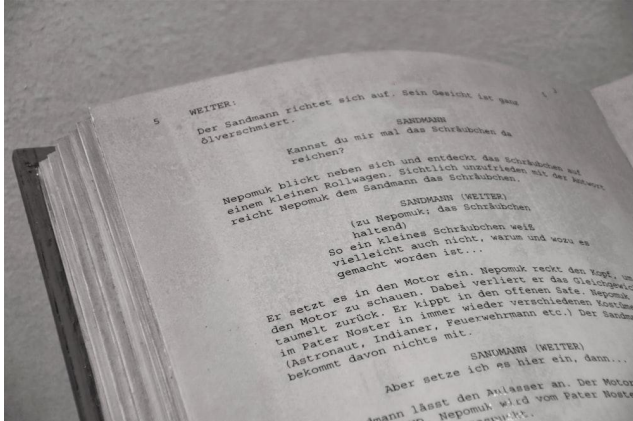
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What Skills Do You Need as a Writer?





What is a Script?

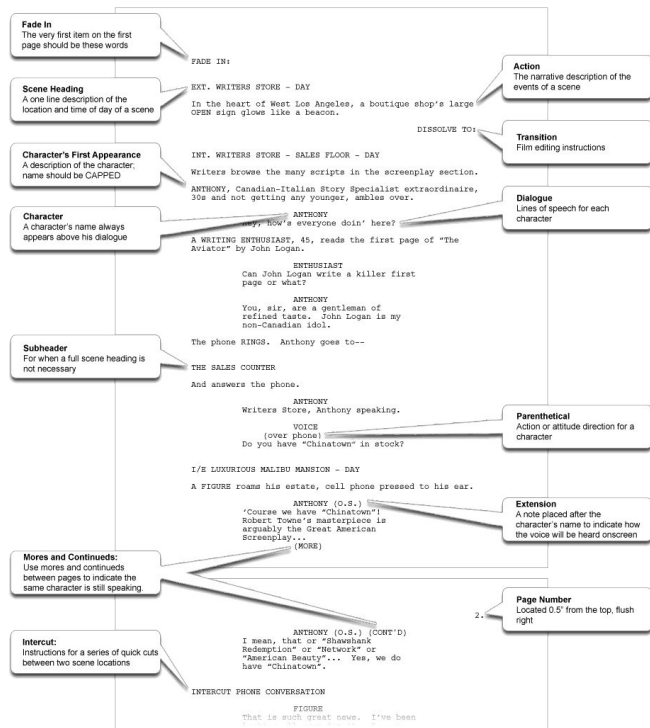


- A script (or a *screenplay*) is a document that details every aural, visual, behavioural and lingual element requirement to tell a story.
- A script is an outline of a story that the director producer and actors can build on to create the writers vision.
- A script is written in dialogue form and tells the audience of the story through speech. With a script, there is less reliance on a narrator to communicate the events of a story.





What does a script look like?



Source: <https://www.nfi.edu/script-writing/>

This is an example of a script detailing; dialogue, actions, and the correct format of what a script should look like.

There are many script writing software online that automatically format scripts.

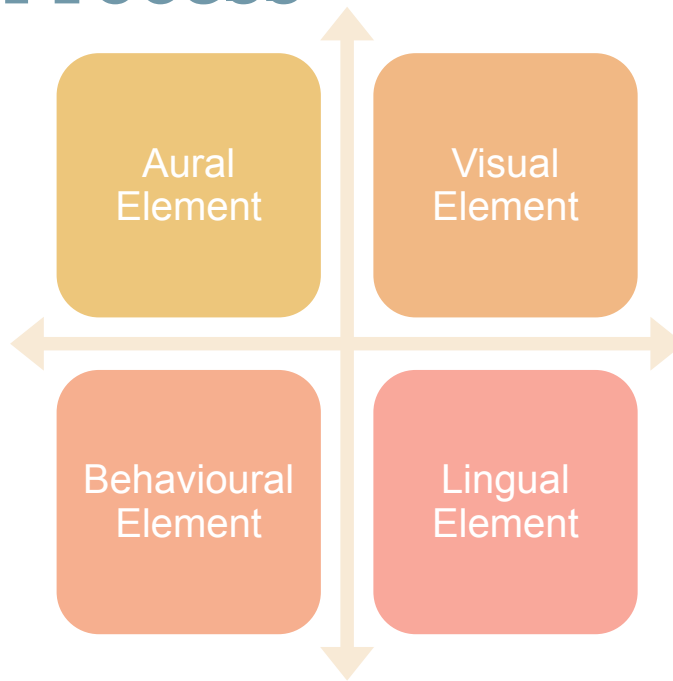
- ☐ <https://www.writerduet.com/>
- ☐ <https://studios.amazon.com/help/amazon-storywriter>
- ☐ <https://www.finaldraft.com/>





The Screen Writing Process

- Screen writers tend to follow a linear writing process. This is similar to authors writing a story, but a screen writer also has to consider setting, lighting, and the overall 'visual' element of a film production.
- Firstly, a screen writer has to consider 4 different elements of their script: aural, visual, behavioural and lingual. This incorporates all aspects that will appear in the film and gives cast and production team members an interpretation of the *vision* of the script.





How do Screen Writers write?

1. Idea

- Any idea that comes to your mind

2. Premise

- A short piece of writing that captures your story

3. Synopsis

- A summary of the story

4. Treatment

- A prose version of the story, excluding dialogue.

5. Step Outline

- The story broken into sequences; containing a brief description of what is happening in each scene.

6. Drafts

- A preliminary stage in the writing process, always subject to revision. It includes dialogue and is written in format.

7. Script

- Written in a proper format. This outlines every aural, visual, behavioural and lingual element required to tell a story for the film medium.

- **Any writing process can be exciting. It can be helpful to follow a step-by-step process to guide you while you are creating your script.**





What does a script focus on?



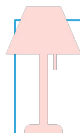
Cast

- Speaking & Non-Speaking



Extras

- Talent and atmosphere



Props

- Objects characters interact with



Vehicles

- On-screen cars, boats, trains, etc.



Stunts

- Action requiring stunt expertise



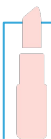
SFX

- Explosions, squibs, rain, wind, etc.



Costumes

- Character wardrobe



Makeup

- Blood, wounds, prosthetics, etc.



Livestock

- Large animals such as cows, horses, etc.



Wrangler

- Small animals such as dogs, cats, mice, etc.

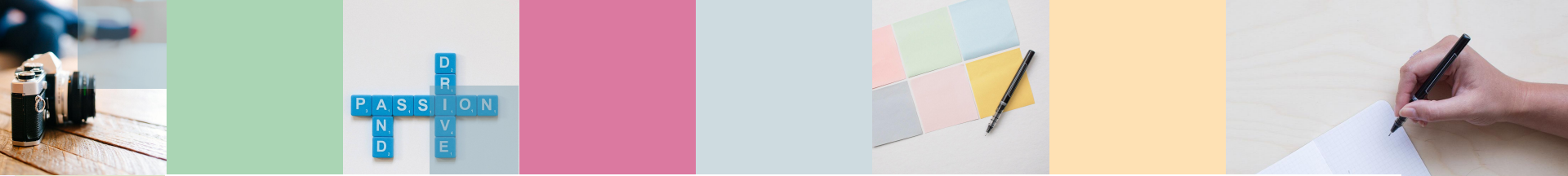




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How to Format a Screenplay

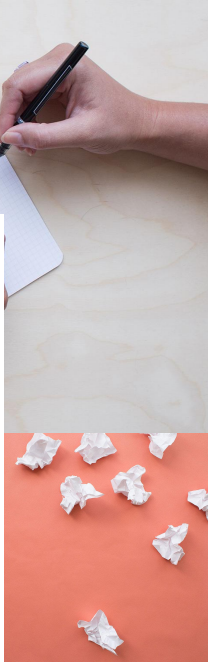


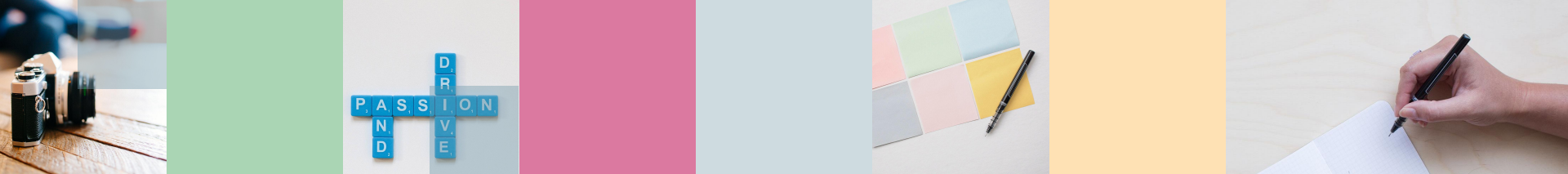


Formatting Elements of a Script

There are many elements to include on your script, such as:

- One and one and a half-inch margins
- Fade-in/Fade-Out
- Scene Headings
- Action Lines
- Character Dialogue
- Parenthical
- Extensions
- Mores and Continueds
- Shots
- Intercuts





Learning Activity 1: Brainstorm your Script

Your Life

Humanity
Vs.
Technology

The
Greatest
Sacrifice

A Grand
Gesture

A Puzzle

Your
Favourite
Day

An Unjust
Love

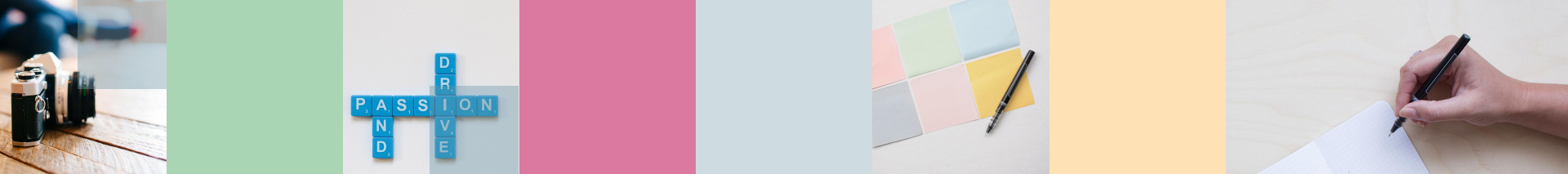
A Resolution

Power &
Corruption

Survival

Heroism





Learning Activity 1: Brainstorm your Script

- **Step 1:** The idea behind this activity is to brainstorm an idea for your script. Brainstorming is a great way to get your ideas onto paper and envision what you want to achieve. To brainstorm in this activity, you can choose to write your ideas down or create a mind-map.
- **Step 2:** First things first, think about what genre your script is going to be. Is your film going to be a mystery, a romance, a comedy, an action film, a western? Identify what category your script falls into.
- **Step 3:** Think about a title for your production. This can be something you revisit later, however it can be helpful to think of a title of your script so that you can envision what it will be about.
- **Step 4:** Think about what story you are going to tell. This will be the *plot* of your script. What is going to happen? How will it happen? Create a brief summary or *premise* of your script.

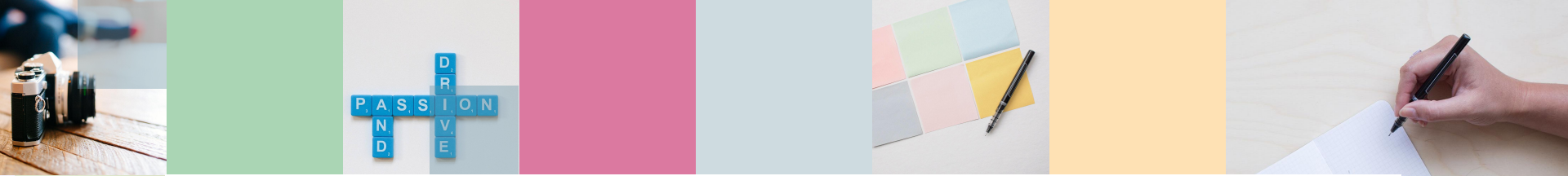
Script Brainstorm:

Genre:	
Title:	
Plot [Summary]:	
Characters:	
Setting:	
Climax:	
Resolution [Ending]:	



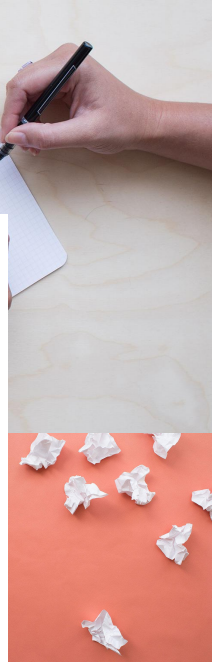
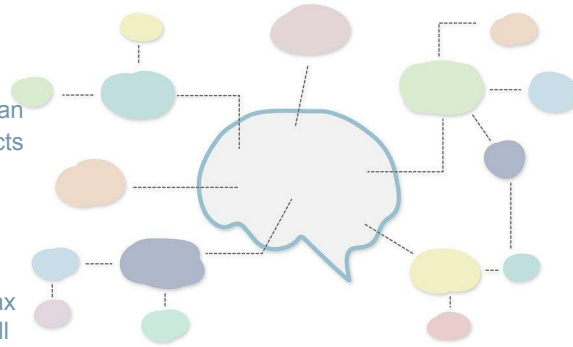
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Learning Activity 1: Brainstorm your Script

- **Step 5:** Think about what characters you are going to create. Will your story involve a male or female protagonist? Will it involve many characters, or perhaps you would like to feature a smaller cast? Try to identify types of characters, even if they do not have names yet!
- **Step 6:** Setting: Where is your story going to take place? Setting plays an important role as it establishes the mood, reveals characters and conflicts and gives clues to a story's theme.
- **Step 7:** Climax: The climax of your story will be where the conflict reaches its peak. The climax of a story makes your audience mentally prepared for the resolution or 'ending' of your story. Identifying the climax when brainstorming your script can help you to see where your story will go.
- **Step 8:** Ending or *resolution*. What will the outcome of your story be? What do you want the final message to be? Resolutions are important components to stories as they offer a solution to the central conflict of the plot. While not all resolutions are uplifting or 'happy endings', they provide closure to your audience.





Helpful Tips for your Script Writing

- ☐ One page of properly formatted script equals about one minute of film
- ☐ Write a *treatment* before writing your final script.
- ☐ Read the dialogue you have written out loud to yourself.
- ☐ Try to cut unnecessary, irrelevant details, scenes, props, etc.
- ☐ Think of the parts of the script outside of the dialogue as an instruction manual.



Case Study: Diablo Cody – Women in Film (Screenwriter)



Source;
<https://www.glamour.com/story/barbie-movie>

Brook Mauro, known professionally as Diablo Cody is an American writer, screenwriter and producer. After gaining recognition on her online blog, she was encouraged to try writing screenplays.

Since then, Cody has written:

- *Juno (2007)*
- *Jennifer's Body (2009)*
- *Tight (2010)*
- *Burlesque (2010)*
- *Young Adult (2011)*
- *The Magic Bracelet (2013)*
- *Evil Dead (2013)*
- *Paradise (2013)*
- *Ricki and the Flash (2015)*





Case Study: Diablo Cody – Women in Film (Screenwriter)



Source;
<https://www.glamour.com/story/barbie-movie>

- Diablo Cody's screenplays stray away from American commercial comedies and delve, in some ways, into satire.

"I think there is room for those other films, although my goal is for the viewer to get a more lasting sense of my stories every time they go to the movies."

- Diablo Cody focuses on "a way of telling stories with a darker tone, with a look more turned-on social problems. The truth is that young people are underrepresented in cinema, and I believe that my scripts fill a gap by offering a more realistic image of what they really live and are".





Case Study: Diablo Cody – Women in Film (Screenwriter)

De-briefing Question 1

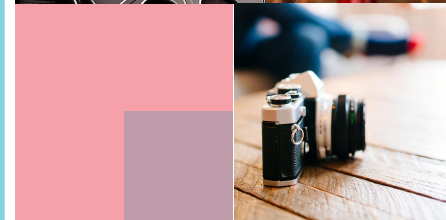
This story shows an example of how Cody writes about topics that are important to her. As a screenwriter, what topics would you like to highlight through your work?

De-briefing Question 3

Cody tends to write stories that pertain to the genre of 'satire'. What genre most appeals to you when you think about screen writing?

De-briefing Question 3

Cody was motivated to write after becoming successful in an online blog. What motivates you to write as a screenwriter?





Strategies to enter the Screenwriting profession:



Start Writing

- If a career in screenwriting is something you are interested in, you should start writing and keep writing.
- Get started on writing your first draft!

Learn the Business

- Learn all about the screenwriting process.
- Focus on how to tell a story through the medium of film.
- Read as many screenplays as you can and learn the trade!

Find a Mentor

- A great way to learn the trade of screenwriting is to find someone who can mentor you.
- Mentorship is a great way to get a foothold in the film industry.





Strategies to enter the Screenwriting profession:



Enter the Film Industry

- A great way to gain access to the world of film is to get a job in the film industry. Why not try an assistantship?
- This can help you to network within the industry.

Join a Writer's Group

- Joining a writer's group can help you to pursue a career in screen writing.
- By learning from others, you can discuss and debate plot ideas, character development, writing techniques, etc.

Create a Portfolio

- Build a portfolio on your writing projects. This can help you to design, develop and organise your ideas.
- This can be great to show to others within the film industry so that they can get an insight into your works.



Opportunities of being a Screenwriter

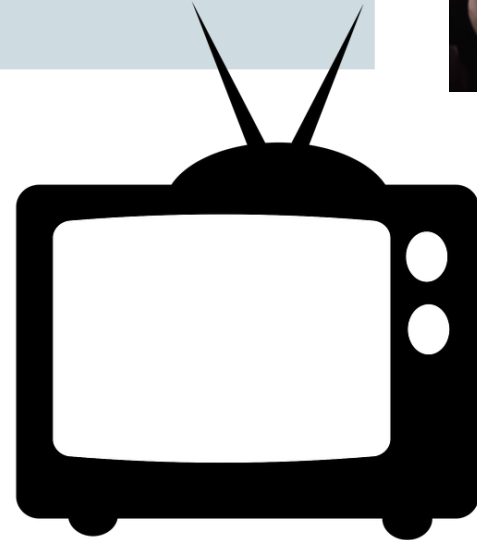
You will gain the opportunity to tell a story on the big screen.



You can make a difference to the gender imbalance that exists within this industry.



You can highlight prevalent issues through the medium of film.





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The Gender Imbalance in the Screenwriting Industry - Did you know?

Across the film
industry, only 1 in 6
screenwriters are
women.

In 2020, only
26.5% of women
were screenwriters.

Only 1 in 10
feature films is
written by a
woman.

Across the film
industry, only 1 in 6
screenwriters are
women.

Women represent
only 14% of all
Oscar nominations
for best screenplay.





Useful Resources – Top Tips

9 Screenwriting Tips

- Check out 9 screenwriting tips to help you become a better screenwriter.
- <https://ifilmthings.com/top-screenwriting-tips-for-screenwriters/>

An Insider's Guide to Becoming a Screenwriter

- Do you have what it takes to become a screenwriter?
- <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/insiders-guide-to-becoming-screenwriter>

How to become a Screenwriter

- Tips for Screenwriting and the 6 Habits of Successful Screenwriters
- <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-become-a-screenwriter-10-tips-for-screenwriting-and-the-6-habits-of-successful-screenwriters-with-spike-lee-shonda-rhimes-and-judd-apatow>

Signs you Have What it Takes to Be a Screenwriter

- 10 signs to recognise that you may have that could make you a great screenwriter
- <https://screencraft.org/2018/11/18/10-signs-youre-great-screenwriter/>

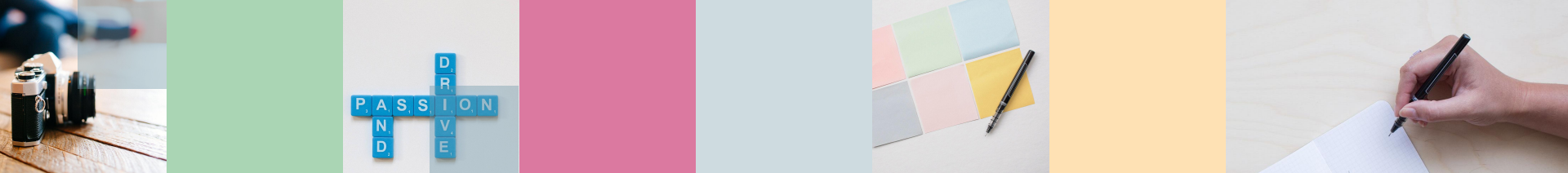
Tips to Become an Awesome Screenwriter

- How to Become a Screenwriter: 10 Tips for Becoming an Awesome Screenwriter
- <https://filmlifestyle.com/how-to-be-a-screenwriter/>

How I Became a Professional Screenwriter by Cristine Conradt

- A real-life depiction of a female screenwriter's journey.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7EWWbXxH-o>





Learning Activity 2: Starting your Script

studio binder

FADE IN: 1

SCENE HEADING
One line description of the location and time of day

ACTION
The description of the actions in a scene

CHARACTER
Identifies the character who is speaking

DIALOGUE
The lines of speech your character says

INTERCUT
Instructions when cutting to multiple locations

SUBHEADER
Used when there are minor changes in a location

FADE IN
Marks the start of the screenplay.

SCENE NUMBER
Generally numbered only in the shooting script

TRANSITION
Used as transitional instructions for editing

EXTENSION
Clarifies where a character is when they can't be seen

PARENTHETICAL
Provides info on how the actor should say the line

SHOT
Indicates the camera angle or movement in a scene

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT
WE OPEN on a modern suburban home. The front window illuminated by the lights inside. We see the silhouette of a small human figure as it runs back and forth. We push in closer as we slowly see a BOY running around the house.

CUT TO: 2

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT
A GREEN BALL sits on a counter top. A young hand snatches it. It belongs to FILBERT (9), wiry, lost in his own imaginary world. Dressed as a Knight. A toy sword in his other hand.

*** FILBERT (V.O.) ***
This is my castle. I am sworn to protect it. Anyone that stands in my way shall bear the wrath of the almighty.

Just then, the babysitter walks by. BECKY (23), trendy, distracted. She is midphone call with Filbert's mom, TRACY.

BECKY
(into phone) *
Oh yeah, he's being good. He's just fighting over of trolls.

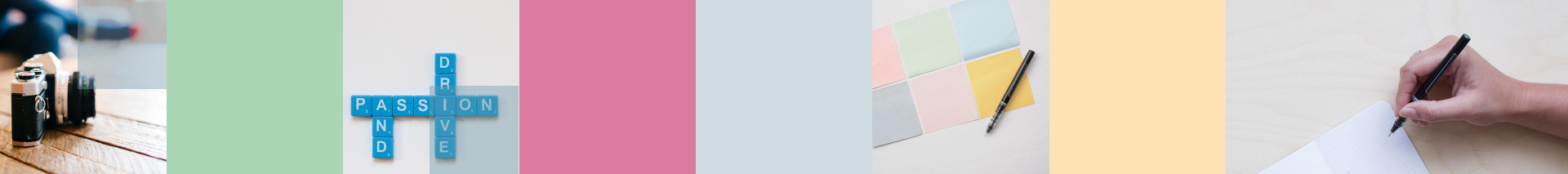
INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

TRACY
Oh that's perfectly normal. Filbert lifts his sword into the air, lets out a big battle cry, and sprints from the kitchen to --

HALLWAY
Filbert comes around the corner, distracted by his fantasy, bumps into the wall. His favorite ball slips from his hand. Everything alone down for Filbert.

FILBERT'S POV
IN SLOW MOTION - The ball tumbles down the stairs. WE HEAR each bounce echo as the ball travels down the steps.

Try your hand at writing a script!



Learning Activity 2: Starting your Script

- **Step 1:** The time has come to begin your script. In the previous activity, you brainstormed ideas for your script. Now that you know how to write a script and have gained an insight into the fundamentals of script writing, you can begin to write your script for a short film.
- **Step 2:** Based on your ideas in Activity 1, build on your premise to write an actual script. For the purpose of this activity, you will stick to the theme and ideas you created in Learning Activity 1, and now write a short film of 5 minutes [this will mean about 5 pages of a script].
- **Step 3:** You can choose to draft your script manually, or complete it using one of the following script creating programmes:

<https://www.writerduet.com/>

<https://studios.amazon.com/help/amazon-storywriter>

<https://www.finaldraft.com/>



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End of Module:

De-briefing Question 1

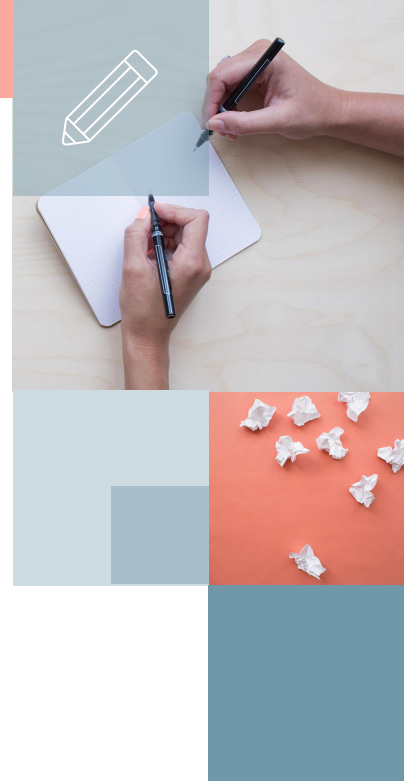
What inspires you to write a script? Do you have a story you want to tell? Do you have an issue you want to highlight?

De-briefing Question 3

What do you personally think about the gender imbalance in the tv and film industry? How does this affect the media we consume?

De-briefing Question 3

What are the advantages of publishing your script to your audience? What impact will this have?





References:

- [Nashville Film Institute – Screenwriting ://www.nfi.edu/script-writing/](http://www.nfi.edu/script-writing/)
- How to Format a Screenplay: Screenplay Formatting 101: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uZ7labVOM>
- [Tips for Screenwriters: https://filmthings.com/top-screenwriting-tips-for-screenwriters/](https://filmthings.com/top-screenwriting-tips-for-screenwriters/)
- 10 Tips for Screenwriting:
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-become-a-screenwriter-10-tips-for-screenwriting-and-the-6-habits-of-successful-screenwriters-with-spike-lee-shonda-rhimes-and-judd-apatow>
- [How to become a screenwriter: https://filmlifestyle.com/how-to-be-a-screenwriter/](https://filmlifestyle.com/how-to-be-a-screenwriter/)
- [Insider's Guide to Becoming a Screenwriter:
https://www.theguardian.com/careers/insiders-guide-to-becoming-screenwriter](https://www.theguardian.com/careers/insiders-guide-to-becoming-screenwriter)
- [10 Signs You're a Great Screenwriter: https://screencraft.org/2018/11/18/10-signs-youre-great-screenwriter/](https://screencraft.org/2018/11/18/10-signs-youre-great-screenwriter/)
- [How I Became a Professional Screenwriter: By Cristine Conradt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7EWWbXxH-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7EWWbXxH-o)
- Screenwriting Exercises: <https://industrialscripts.com/screenwriting-exercises/>
- 20 Best Female Screenwriters Today: <https://lwies.com/articles/20-best-female-screenwriters-working-today/>
- Call for Action on UK's Screenwriter Gender Inequality: <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-44209815>
- Gender Inequality Among Writers in a Culture Industry: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/189696>
- Gender Inequality in Screenwriting Work:
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314041524>





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WIFI

Women in the Film Industry



CREATIVE EXCHANGE



INSTITUTO
PARA EL FOMENTO
DEL DESARROLLO
Y LA FORMACIÓN



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