

SAMPLE SCRIPT PAGES

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Comment: Make sure you scripts have **your name** on them. Both Screenwriter and Final Draft can generate a title page for you.

Comment: Put the script's title on the first page of your document. It should be centered and italicized.

Comment: **Every** script begins with these two words, in caps, followed by a colon.

Comment: This is the **location** of the scene. In this case, since it is written in generic terms, the Location Manager will look for a typical city street.

Comment: There is always a dash between the location and the time of day.

Comment: This is called a **slug line**. It is always capitalized. It begins either with EXT (exterior) or INT (interior) followed by a period.

Sample Script Pages

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET -- MORNING

Comment: This is the **time of day**. DAY or NIGHT (always capitalized) are perfectly acceptable. Use something more specific if it's important to the sequence of the story.

TODD VENNEMAN -- early twenties, close-cropped hair, trouble on his mind -- weaves his way through the remains of the late-morning rush. Todd clearly knows where he is going, but he's not quite of this crowd. Where others bob and weave with abandon, sensing the flow of the crowd like a point guard running a play, Todd has to watch where he's going. He's no stranger, but he's no native either.

Comment: The **first time and only the first time** a new character appears in a script, you must capitalize his or her name IN THE ACTION BLOCK.

His eyes flit up and down the storefronts, finally coming to rest on Atlas Coffee.

Comment: This is **action**. It is the descriptive part of the screenplay.

EXT. ATLAS COFFEE -- MOMENTS LATER

Comment: If you name a place, the Art Department will make a sign which says exactly what you say in the slug.

A woman with back pack, diaper bag, and stroller is attempting to negotiation her way out of the coffee house as Todd arrives. Todd holds the door for her. He's that kind of guy.

Comment: Used when there's a very brief change in time.

Comment: An "extra" is not capitalized.

Only when the young mother is safely on the street does Todd head --

INT. ATLAS COFFEE -- CONTINUOUS

Comment: Continuous is used **only** when we follow a character from one location to another with no break in time.

Inside the coffee shop. His pauses before heading to the counter, searching out

NTOZAKE GARCIA-FURCAL

Comment: This is a **shot**. It's capitalized, stands on its own line but is within the same location. The Cinematographer will line up a close up.

the barrista behind the counter. With a name like that (thanks Mom and Dad), she was born terminally hip. This is most definitely her day job. She's alternative everything. Todd likes her. He hasn't figured out that she's gay.

NTOZAKE
(instant)
Hey.

Comment: The CHARACTER NAME is capitalized and centered and placed because the character's speech.

Comment: This is a **parenthetical**. It is indented further than dialogue but not as far as the dialogue. It is used when you want to instruct the actor as to how to say a line. Do not overuse these.

Comment: This is **dialogue**. It is indented 1.5" from the left margin. It is **not** centered.

TODD
(takes his time)
Hey.

Todd scans the board. He's not really looking for something to order. He wants to find something he can say.

TODD (CONT'D)
Just the coffee.

Ntozake goes to get it. Todd looks longingly at her, then, embarrassed, away.

Out of the corner of his eye, Todd SEES something. Whatever it is disturbs him. We stay on Todd's face -- his flickering steel-grey eyes -- until Ntozake's VOICE jolts him.

NTOZAKE (O.S.)
Hey. Country.

Todd snaps back to reality. LOOKS at Ntozake.

NTOZAKE (CONT'D)
Your coffee.

TODD
Thanks.

He passes her the correct change, takes the coffee, his eyes lingering for just a moment. Ntozake's already on to the next in line.

Todd moves towards a table by the window. He sips his coffee, staring. Not out on the passing parade. At something beyond.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

A twelve-year old boy runs with careless freedom along a lush green hillside. A stick swishes through the wind; there's not another person in sight.

This is YOUNG TODD, a boy completely at home in his body and his world. All his early adolescent urges are satisfied by the simple act of locomotion; nothing bad has every happened.

A hawk circles in the sky above him.

INT. ATLAS COFFEE -- MORNING

Comment: Note that character names, parentheticals, and dialogue **always** stay together. You **cannot** have a character name at the bottom of a page and the dialogue at the top of the next page.

Comment: O.S. stands for **off screen**. It is used when the character is present in the scene but not on camera.

Comment: When a scene is a **flashback**, indicate it at the end of the slug line, after the time of day.

Comment: Because Young Todd will be played by a different actor, you must alert the Casting Director by putting the name in caps.

Todd trembling at the memory, something awful on his face.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

We SEE what Todd does: *the same hawk improbably zooming down the middle of the city street.*

I./E. ATLAS COFFEE/CITY STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The hawk is relentless, unstoppable, never losing height or speed. It keeps coming until it **CRASHES through the window.**

TODD -- THE HAWK'S POV (SFX)

We see -- through treated film -- the hawk's target:

TODD'S STEEL GREY EYE

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

The steady **beep ... beep ... beep** of hospital monitors.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

The lights of the hospital room are as bright as the night outside is black.

Todd lies in the bed, tubes and sensors running to his body, a bandage around his eyes.

Next to him, a man sits stoically in the chair next to him, his face lined with grief. This is ALERIC, Todd's father.

Todd turns in bed. His eyes may be bandaged, but he knows Aleric is there.

TODD
Get out of my life.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Young Todd trails his stick into the gentle, flowing river. Still carefree, happy. And then -- the stick catches ... tugs ...

Todd pulls upwards on the stick, against the current, lifting, pulling the remains of a

BLOODY SHIRT

Comment: Since we are simultaneously seeing action in the coffee shop and out on the street, we slug the line INT./EXT. (or I./E.) and then write **both** locations, corresponding them so that the interior matches the INT.

Comment: SFX means **special effect**.

Comment: A particularly jarring cut. Use this term very sparingly.

Comment: In a production script, there will be a "cut to" after each scene. In a **writer's draft**, you **only** use it when you want to direct the reader's attention to the cut. CUT TO is aligned with the right hand margin.

out of the racing water which becomes flecked with red.

TODD (V.O.)
I went looking for a place of peace.
(beat)
Who was I to think I could find it?

†

†

Comment: V.O. stands for **voice over**. It is used when an **off screen narrator** is speaking. The person speaking **is not physically present in the scene**.

Comment: Note that when dialogue is longer than one line, the second line has the same indentation as the first line. Screenwriter and Final Draft will do this for you. If using word, you must create a template to make this look correct.