# SCREENPLAY STORIES
TEACHING RESOURCE

Students will have the opportunity to study the key conventions of story writing and discover how writers use the written word to convey visual representations and narrative in a screenplay.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To study the key conventions of script writing
- To discover how the screenplay writer constructs a meaningful narrative
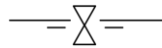
LESSON FOCUSES:

PRE-VISIT:

Students will revise, discuss and practice their knowledge of story structure in preparation for their visit to Warner Bros. Studio Tour

VISIT LESSON:

Using *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as an example, students will look at the structure of screenplay writing and will use authentic Harry Potter props as inspiration to develop their own stories in groups.

POST-VISIT:

Students will use the ideas that they came up with in the workshop to write their own screenplay. They will focus on the structure that was examined in the workshop to help shape their ideas.

WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

SCREENPLAY STORIES
PRE-VISIT LESSON

Students should work in pairs to decide on an event that has happened in school. This could be something as mundane as "What happened at lunchtime". Students should put the same events into different genre types, using the screenplay considerations worksheet for support – for example – comedy, horror, adventure.

Give some students a brief synopsis of a narrative, e.g. a student goes into the school grounds and is attacked by an unknown invader. Students should apply different genre iconography to this simple narrative. Ask students to develop the rest of the narrative, remembering that film scrips are written forms of a visual medium. Students could then act out their screenplay ideas to the rest of the class and decide which screenplay is the most entertaining.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:
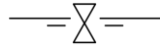
- Screenplay considerations
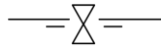
SCREENPLAY STORIES
POST-VISIT LESSON

Using the teaching resources attached, discuss in more detail with students the conventions of a finished screenplay. The teacher can display the annotated screenplay to demonstrate the different elements needed for a successful screenplay. Students can then use their story ideas from the workshop to write their own screenplay. If possible, students could develop their screenplay into a production by drawing a storyboard and filming a sequence.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:
- Annotated screenplay page
- Screenplay form analysis
- Writing characters
- Screenplay glossary
- Screenplay evaluation

WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

SCREENPLAY STORIES
SCREENPLAY CONSIDERATIONS

Representation
- Who is being represented?
- In what way?
- By whom?
- Why is the subject being represented in this way?
- Is the representation fair and accurate?

Genre
- To which genre(s) does the script belong?
- How will this be conveyed to the audience?
- What are the major generic themes?
- To what extent are the characters generically determined?

Audience
- Who is the target audience?
- What assumptions about the tastes and characteristics of the audience are implied in the screenplay?
- What do you know, or can you assume about the likely size of the audience?

Narrative
- How is the narrative organised and structured?
- How have specific narrative techniques been used?
- What are the major themes of the narrative? What values/ideologies does it embody?
- Does the narrative have three acts?
- Does the narrative conform to any narrative theorists? E.g. Todorov or Propp?
- How are heroes and villains created?

Institutions
- What will the budget of the film be?
- Will the script be funded by a public service or commercial institution?
- What difference does this make to the script?
- Who owns and controls the institution who will turn the script into a film?
- What is the size of the institution who will fund the script?

Values and Ideology
- What are the major values, ideologies and assumptions underpinning the script?
- What criteria have been used for selecting the content presented?
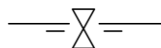
WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

Sample script page for teaching purposes only

Harry Potter
Deathly Hallows

Screenplay by Steve Kloves
Based on the novel by J.K. Rowling
© Warner Bros. 2010

Scene heading: includes time of day and location

168   INT. MAIN ROOM - SAME TIME - NIGHT   168

Bellatrix twirls a SILVER DAGGER in her fingers.

Instructions to Props Department about what to make

Indent character name

                    BELLATRIX
          This sword is meant to be in my
          vault at Gringotts. How did you
          get it?

Indent dialogue

                    HERMIONE
          I don't know what you're talking
          about.

                    BELLATRIX
          Liar. What else did you take?

Instructions to Special Effects Department

Instructions to Sound Department/Foley artists

169   INT. CELLAR - SAME TIME - NIGHT   169

CLICK! -- Ron, Deluminator in hand, sends a BALL of LIGHT
across the darkness and a GASLIGHT BLOOMS faintly.
Luna's pale face floats forward, hovers vaguely.

                    LUNA
          You look strange, Harry. Mr.
          Ollivander, look who's here. It's
          Harry Potter.

Harry looks past Luna and sees a GOBLIN (GRIPHOOK)
standing in the shadows. Next to him, sitting slumped
against the wall, is the wandmaker OLLIVANDER, looking
frail. His chin lifts slightly, runny eyes glimmering
against the light as he studies Harry's swollen face.

Instructions to Make-Up Department

Instructions to actors

                    HARRY
          Hello, sir.

Ollivander falters, his face troubled. Harry eyes him
curiously when Bellatrix's voice ECHOES through the
VENT.

                    BELLATRIX (O.S.)
          I'm going to ask you once again:
          what else did you and your friends
          take from my vault!

O.S. means Out of Shot

                    HERMIONE (O.S.)
          I told you. I don't know what
          you're talking --

Hermione SCREAMS in pain. Ron slams his fist against the
wall, turns.

                    RON
          We have to do something, Harry!

                                        (CONTINUED)

Always say if your script goes onto another page

WARNER BROS. STUDIO TOUR LONDON
THE MAKING OF Harry Potter

SCREENPLAY STORIES
SCREENPLAY FORM ANALYSIS

Ask the class to read through the script page and carry out analysis of the form and content of the script.

ACTIVITIES

- Highlight the setting of the scene in the screenplay
- Using a different colour, highlight the stage directions. (Stage directions indicate how characters move, react and interact with other characters in the scene)
- Highlight the number of characters in the scene
- Highlight the description of the set design in the screenplay

Now that students know how to set out a screenplay, ask them to try writing their own scene from their own story.
They should choose the following:

- Characters
- Setting and time where the scene takes place
- Genre of the story

Below are some ideas that will help students to write their own stories:
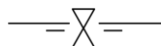
CHARACTERS

How are they feeling at the start of the scene? Students could create a word bank to show feelings– e.g. happy, furious,
disappointed, giddy, shy, angry, horrified, relaxed, etc. Students could use dictionaries to look up the meaning of the words they have chosen. Consider the facial expressions and body language of the character.

SETTING
Does the scene take place inside or outside – Interior– INT. or exterior – EXT.?
What are the main features of the setting? Ask students to use adjectives to describe the setting. They can add these to their word bank.
Think about how the set can be designed. They can do pencil sketches to illustrate the design of the set.

SCREENPLAY STORIES
WRITING CHARACTERS

Here are some ideas to help you when you are writing your characters for your screenplay:

- Create a mood board. Cut out pictures from a magazine, download pictures from the internet and stick them on a piece of card or paper. This will give you ideas about the appearance of your characters.
- Draw a picture of your character. Think about their physical appearance– gender, age, hair, skin, physical appearance.

Now think about how your character feels in the scene you are writing:

- Are they scared, nervous, excited, happy? How could you show this with their facial expressions, gestures, movements of their arms and body?
- How could you write this in the stage directions?
- How could you write this in their speech?

Think about the other characters in the scene you are writing:

- What are the roles within the scene? Villain, friend, supporter, relative? Make this clear in your stage directions and in their speech.
- How are your supporting characters feeling? Furious, disappointed, anxious, delighted?
- How do they treat your main character?
- What is their purpose in the scene? How can they move the action forward?

Other points to remember:

- Write where your scene is set on the top line of the scene. Make sure you use CAPITAL LETTERS. Say whether the scene is set during DAY or NIGHT.
- Include all stage directions in the scene. The stage directions will show the action in the scene.
- Write the characters' names in CAPITAL LETTERS. Centre their names on the page.
- Use your mood boards and drawings to help you to describe your characters.
- Read out the speeches to make sure that they flow.
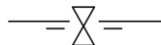
SCREENPLAY STORIES
SCREENPLAY GLOSSARY

Beat – A pause interrupting dialogue, denoted by (beat), to indicate a significant shift in the direction of a scene.

Character name – When any character speaks, his or her name appears on the line above the dialogue. In screenplays, the name is positioned roughly in the centre of the line.

Continuing Dialogue – Dialogue spoken by the same character that continues uninterrupted onto t he next page, marked with a (cont'd).

Continuous Action – Sometimes included in the scene heading when moving from one scene to the next, as the action continues.

Dialogue – The speeches between characters in a film.

EXT. – Exterior. Outdoors.

INT. – Interior. Indoors.

O.C. – Abbreviation for Off Camera, denoting that the speaker is resident within the scene but not seen by the camera.

O.S. –Abbreviation for Off Screen, denoting that the speaker is not resident within the scene.

Scene – Action taking place in one location and in a distinct time that moves the story to the next element of the story.

Scene Beading – A short description of the location and time of day in a scene. For example: EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN– DAY would denote that the action takes place outside a mountain cabin during daylight hours.

Simultaneous Dialogue – When two characters speak at the same time, written in two columns side by side.
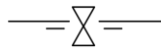
SCREENPLAY STORIES
SCREENPLAY GLOSSARY

Super – Abbreviation for "superimpose" meaning the laying one image on top of another, usually words over a filmed scene (e.g. Berlin, 1945)

Title – Text that appears onscreen denoting a key element of the movie, a change of location or date, or person involved in the making of the movie.

Transition – A script notation denoting an editing transition within the telling of a story. For example, DISSOLVE TO: means the action seems to blur and refocus into another scene, and is generally used to denote a passage of time.

V.O. – Abbreviation for Voice Over, denoting that the speaker is narrating the action onscreen.

WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

SCREENPLAY STORIES
SCREENPLAY EVALUATION

- My screenplay has a title page

- I have used capital letters for the character names

- I have used capital letters to give the scenes a title

- I have introduced and described the scene – Interior (INT) or Exterior (EXT), place and time of day

- Every time the setting changes in time or place, or moves inside or outside, I have started a new scene

- I have described the setting in the stage directions

- My stage directions are written in the present tense

- Characters' names are written in the middle of the page

- I have started a new line for every new speaker

- I have used capital letters to indicate props, sound effects or new characters

- I have created a problem for the characters

- I have created a solution to the problem for the characters

- I have created a villain for my screenplay

- There are NO speech marks
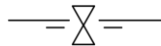
NATIONAL CURRICULUM/EXAM BOARD LINKS
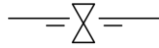
English
KS2
Writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

KS3
Making inferences and referring to evidence. Studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these

GCSE
Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas; select and synthesise evidence from different texts
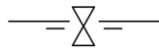
—⧖—

Media Studies
GCSE
Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning

A-level
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media and contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes

—⧖—

Film Studies

GCSE

Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to the production of film or screenplay

—⧖—