

LEARNING RESOURCE

SPA - MEDIA ARTS



FILM & CINEMA

WRITING SCRIPTS

QUARTER 2 - MODULE 1

LEARNING RESOURCE for Media Arts

Media Arts

QUARTER 2: Film and Cinema (Writing Scripts)

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INTRODUCTION

Film and Cinema (Writing Scripts)

After getting an overview of film and Philippine cinema in the first part of the learning resource on Media Arts, some of you might have gotten interested in shooting films especially now that the digital technology has democratized film production. However, for a beginning filmmaker, it is better to learn how to write a script first before making your own film.



The production team of the short film “Hingalo”

Generally, a **script** is a printed version of a stage play, radio program, television show, or film and includes words to be spoken, as well as technical directions. It is virtually a complete production guide on paper, specifying what will be seen and heard in the final output. Specifically, a script for a film is called a **screenplay**. It provides the foundation for the film.

Why do we need to write scripts? Well, it can make some people rich because there is money to be made as a scriptwriter. It is also very fulfilling as there is some degree of satisfaction in having your words spoken by actors. Several people consider it as equally important as the director. There is also a certain amount of fame connected to writing a successful screenplay. It has its own rewards, whether it be monetary, admiration and respect from others, and even a little jealousy. There is more to it than those just mentioned.

This module tackles the basics of scriptwriting. It has six parts: the creative process, the narrative structure, creating characters in film, visual devices in storytelling, elements of a script, and writing dialogues. In this module, you will learn the fundamental skills and essential components of writing a script for a short film. Here we will cover how to come up with a good concept, how to structure a story, how to create characters, how to write an outline and then go from that to a sequence treatment and on to a script. When you have worked through this module you will be able to tell a story effectively in script form, and this skill will put you in a good position later, no matter what form of scriptwriting you decide to work on. By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the different film genres;
- Conceptualize stories for short narrative films;
- Utilize the basic elements of screenwriting, including character development and narrative structure, for a short film;
- Write the necessary requirements for a first draft of a script for a short film; and
- Apply knowledge of camera shots in preparation for a shoot for a short film

Take note, though, that what are provided and discussed in this learning resource are just guidelines instead of rules. You might end up suppressing creativity when you set up rules. You will also find out later that you can even break the rules in writing once you master them.



TOPIC 1

The Creative Process



Mercedes Cabral walking alongside election campaign posters in “Pamatid-Gutom”

Writing the script is a very accessible discipline. At the bare minimum, you just need a pen and a paper. Of course, it would be easier if you are using a computer and a screenwriting software. It gives you an opportunity to control the story. You can make the reader and, eventually (if your screenplay eventually got made into a film), the viewer laugh, cry or think about things he or she has never thought about through the people you have created and written about. You can have them get married, send them to another planet, take a life to save a life, do bad deeds that shock people or noble ones that inspire them. It is all up to you.

Both film and television are visual media. If we limit the discussion to narrative films, each has a story to tell, whether it be logical or illogical. Each film and TV program falls under a specific genre (comedy, action, drama, horror, and others). There are times when writing for film and TV transcends itself to become art. You can learn the craft, and it is very likely that a real work of art will come from someone who has not first mastered the craft. This module will provide you with an overview of the art and craft of writing scripts.

Most films are about someone who wants something and someone or something is trying to stop him or her from getting it. **At stake** is what the character will lose if he or she fails to achieve his or her goal. If you can write a story that features a character that has a clear and specific goal, and there is strong opposition to that goal, leading to a crisis and an emotionally satisfying ending, then you already know a great deal about scriptwriting.

There are basically two kinds of stories: **character-driven** and **plot-driven**. In character-driven stories, the focus is primarily on the dynamics of a character, a need, and a key relationship – the heart of the story. In plot-driven stories, the focus is primarily on the character's goal and the action – the spine of the story. You might have seen films with a sinking ship like “Titanic” and “Poseidon.” The former is character-driven as the story is focused on Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose (Kate Winslet) who fall in love aboard the luxurious, ill-fated R.M.S. Titanic. Meanwhile, the latter is plot-driven as it focuses more on the events before the luxury ocean liner Poseidon capsizes. The survivors are left to fight for their lives as they attempt to escape the sinking ship after it was swamped by a rogue wave.

Although not all films are narrative in nature, we will limit our discussion in this learning resource to those with stories. For those who are interested, some films can just focus on a certain **theme** or central message. It gives the film unity. The writer and/or the filmmaker wants the audience to learn or know the deeper meaning of a collection or combination of images, its message or significance. These are usually present in experimental films. Narrative films also have themes. They are usually not stated and must be inferred by the reader or viewer from the story.

In addition, in every story, the main character has a conscious **goal**. The goal is whatever your main character strives to achieve. The antagonist usually makes it almost impossible to reach that goal. The antagonist may come in the form of a person who either has the same goal or who, in some other way, opposes your main character's goal. Beneath the character lies an unconscious or subconscious **need**. The need can be related to self-esteem, or finding love, or living a better life – whatever the character needs to feel happy, satisfied, or accomplished.

The most difficult part of writing is knowing what to write so it is imperative to know how to come up with concepts for your story. Where do concepts come from? They may come from another film, news item or court case, someone's story or real life, memoir or diary, comics or graphic novel, short story or novel, neighbor's problems, experience while on a train or bus ride, dream, or one's own creative impulses. During the previous quarter, you might have watched the film or read the book “Dekada ‘70” written by Lualhati Bautista. It is about a middle-class family who struggles to survive in the era of dictatorship.

Every script starts with a **concept**. A concept is an idea for a film. The following are some other sample concepts and links to the corresponding films made from them:

1. A boy dreams of having his family picture taken only to find out that what is more important is that he still has a loving family by his side more than anything else.

“Pipo”: <https://youtu.be/8zqMtkoO-OY>

2. An ambulance driver believes that a dying patient can be saved by running over stray animals on the streets. “Ambulancia” (Ambulance):
<https://youtu.be/y8bpGOA2a8o>
3. A mother, desperate to feed her child, takes part in the feeding program of the mayor of a city. Upon seeing the favorable response of the mayor’s wife to her child, she undertakes a disturbing gamble. “Pamatid-gutom” (Hunger Pangs):
<https://youtu.be/CJ97k0jwReE>

A scriptwriter conceives, creates, recreates, and alters what is already created. Thus, he or she is a creative person. Can creativity be taught? Yes. Can it be acquired? Yes, why not? Creativity is present in all living, rational beings. In scriptwriting, it is simply telling a story that is previously unknown. It starts from a germ of an idea and ends up with a larger-than-life story. It usually happens when you rationalize or justify something that is previously unheard of, unacceptable or objectionable.

ACTIVITY 1: Creative Exercise

Write a concept by creating a cinematic character from a common person, object, or other worldly things. You may use the sample concepts provided earlier to come up with interesting situations or descriptions to make them unique or different from the usual characters on film:

1. A bride
2. A detective
3. An alien
4. A robot
5. A postman
6. A nun
7. An assassin
8. An angel
9. A neighbor
10. A stewardess

You may start working on your own concepts once you have worked on this exercise.

REVIEWER

You may review the lesson on the creative process by accessing the presentation on slideshare:
<https://www.slideshare.net/MEYOR1/the-creative-process-48163615>



TOPIC 2

The Narrative Structure



Maliksi Morales at Rizal Park in “Pipo”

After coming up with a concept, you need to translate the big story idea into a workable story. What makes a good story? As a beginning writer, you should work on characters that you are passionate about, whether heroes (you love them) or villains (you hate them). There should also be something at stake: something

someone wants for the good of mankind (a vaccine for COVID-19) or something desired by many characters (the One Ring in “The Lord of the Rings”). In the short film “Pipo,” which is written and directed by Richard Legaspi, the protagonist and titular character played by Maliksi Morales wants to have a photo of his family taken.

There might be obstacles along the way to create **conflict** or the heart of the drama. Someone wants something and people and things keep getting in the way. The conflict can be physical (external) or emotional (internal). **External conflict** may consist of a personal and individual struggle between the main character and another one, or may pit the characters against fate, gods, forces of nature, social system, or any nonhuman force. **Internal conflict** centers on an interior, psychological conflict within the main character. Without a conflict, the story is not interesting, or worse there is no story at all. Since you are working on a script for a visual medium, you need to make the internal external and the abstract tangible or concrete.

As a suggestion, you may start with the “what if?” or the **premise** of a story. The premise is a concise statement or assertion that sums up the story or subject matter. You need it to jumpstart or to serve as the building block of your story. You need a dramatic structure or form to give shape to the story. This is where the **plot** comes in. It serves as the structure or skeletal framework on which you hang the meat of your story. It is a scheme, plan, or method to execute the premise. It is the structure of emotion and action. Without it, your story might fall flat, incapable of moving forward. It comprises the events in a character’s story.

Most screenplays have a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is called the three-act narrative structure. The beginning sets up the story, grab the reader's attention, and establish the situation for conflict. The middle complicates matters and develops the conflict, which eventually rises to a crisis.



Lou Veloso and Maliksi Morales in “Pipo”

The end concludes the story and gives the **resolution** to the conflict.

In “Pipo,” the boy, not wanting to be jeered at in front of his class for not having a family picture, makes up rumors to convince a photographer (Lou Veloso) to take a photo of his family at a lower price. In the end, he finds something far more important than having this picture.

Apart from this, you should also be concerned about hooking the audience and setting up what they need to follow in your story. The **hook** is what keeps the reader or viewer glued or interested in your story.

Another element to consider is **genre**, which carries certain characteristics. Genres identify similar film and television types. To write within a genre, it is necessary to study the form. Who are the main characters and how are they portrayed? What elements are usually present? A film's genre can be romantic comedy, action, drama, horror, science fiction, detective or mystery, disaster, fantasy, adventure, psychological thriller, Western, and so forth.

Each genre has certain common elements. For example, in a romance it might consist of boy meets girl, boy gets girl, misunderstanding alienates boy and girl, rival for girl throws out misinformation, and last-minute reveal of the truth leading to joyful reunion. Meanwhile, in a horror story there could a series of grizzly and inventive murders, the evil gradually closes in on the heroes, a scary isolated location, and a massive rainstorm with lightning and thunder.

There are even sample plot patterns which a writer can use as a guide. Some of them are boy meets girl, rags to riches or Cinderella story, journey movie, revenge or vengeance story, road movie, rites of passage, coming of age, unrequited love, dysfunctional family, ugly duckling story, triangle story, ship of fools, swashbuckling hero, and whodunit, among others.

However, you can make a screenplay better if you know how to set up or use **foreshadowing** in your story. Foreshadowing sets up events to come. It is used both in suspense and preparation, so the audience is cued to expect something, and anticipates it.

Preparation is a necessary technique to set up the audience for something that will be important later. It prepares us for certain actions or events, or for the appearance of a special object or person in the story. In this way, later occurrences no longer seem overly coincidental or contrived.

The **plant** is a preparation technique in which an object or person is presented so that it may be used later. In literature, it is more commonly known as Chekhov's gun. To paraphrase Chekhov, if you are going to use a gun in the third act, better show it in the first act of the story.

In screenwriting, you need to know how to set things up for a better **payoff** as it satisfies an audience's need for completion. Payoff is a piece of information provided to the audience, to be used later to develop the story or to answer questions. If the ending of the film was not properly set up, we would feel cheated or ripped off.

Using incidents that seem coincidental, convenient, or contrived affects a story's credibility and makes the audience feel manipulated. As a result, the audience is inclined not to believe these things. Aside from this, avoid coincidences that happen by chance rather than logical plotting. These include chance sightings, overheard conversations, and items forgotten or found. Another type of blatant convenience is the "idiot plot" in which the story develops because of a character doing something completely stupid and idiotic.

The start of the animated film "Up" is a good example of setting up a story or situation: <https://youtu.be/AyYG0GGvErE> The marriage sequence has no dialogue, a lot of touching moments, and many visual elements, including Ellie's "My Adventure Book" and balloons lifting Carl's cart. Not only is the audience hooked, but the story is set up. Almost everything that follows derives from this sequence. Ellie becomes the motivating force of what Carl does thereafter. Each payoff is touching, dramatic, funny or some combination thereof. Apart from being a good example of foreshadowing, it also shows the significance of establishing emotional, motivational, and visual elements early. The screenplay of "Up" uses objects and characters more than once, which lends the story a sense of unity. This is cinema.

As a whole, a good story is unified in plot, believable, interesting, both simple and complex and uses control in handling emotional material. By being unified in plot it means that the story



The family photo in “Pipo”

focuses on a single narrative thread of action, where one event leads to another logically and naturally. For believability, it has a certain truth that can be created through “the way things really are” (observable truths), “the way things are supposed to be” (internal truths) and “the way things never were and never will be” (artistic semblance of truth). It captures and holds the audience’s attention. It should be simple enough to be expressed cinematically, but it should also have some complexity to sustain interest. Last but not the least, the way the film manipulates the audience’s emotions should be honest and appropriate to the story.

If you already have a plot in mind, you can write a storyline or sentence outline, a sequence-by-sequence account of the entire story for your script. Why do you need to write the outline? It provides you with an overview of the script. In addition, it gives you a good grasp on the structure. It also enables you to develop and improve the story. Aside from the structure, take the following into consideration: the number of scenes and locations, the number of characters in the story, and the total running time, among others. You may work on a script for a short film. A short film may run from a minute to around 20 minutes depending on the requirement. Once your storyline has been approved, start writing your sentence outline.

EVALUATION:

Here is a guide to evaluate your story:

1. Is the subject timely in a general way?
2. It is not necessary that a story is topical, but it helps. For example, during a pandemic, the story should reflect the ways that we are affected by it. What people are looking for in these types of films is entertainment, not documentaries about social issues but if the story can be about something already on people's minds, so much the better.
3. Is it fresh?
4. Is it about something meaningful?
5. Do you have a good conflict?
6. To sustain audience interest, the conflict of the story must be strong. If it is just a little disagreement, one that could be worked out easily, the film's story is going to sag badly in the middle. You must find a conflict that does not lend itself to compromise.

ACTIVITY 2: Conceptualization

Come up with three concepts for a screenplay that you are planning to write based the previous discussion. Choose one of them and write it out according to character and action. As a start, do not be specific yet. Be as general as possible and avoid details. Do it until you can express it clearly and concisely in three or maybe four sentences.

REVIEWER:

You may review the lesson on the different dramatic elements of a story by accessing the presentation on slideshare: <https://www.slideshare.net/MEYOR1/dramatic-elements-of-a-story>



TOPIC 3

Creating Characters in Film

An interesting character is important in every screenplay. Without one, you have no action. Without action, you have no conflict. And as mentioned earlier, without conflict, you might have no story to tell.

The fictional character can be represented through what we learn about the person and what we can deduce about him or her. The rest of his or her characteristics are not needed in the story. Only a representation of the character is provided in the script, selecting only those which are connected to his or her central problem. Including those which you do not need in the development of the story will only prolong its running time. As a guide, try to find some easily recognizable trait for the character and decide what this character's first impression is among other people. A three-dimensional character will also help move your story forward.

What are the three dimensions or components of a character? They may be **physical**, **sociological**, or **psychological**. Some examples of physical component are appearance, sex, age, built (thin, tall, athletic) and bearing, attractive or unattractive physical attributes, color and style of hair, typical clothing and its condition, gestures and mimicry, way of talking (accent, slang, articulation), and any defects (deformities, illness).

The sociological data could be a character's relation to others, ethnic background and nationality, social class, education, profession (income, working conditions), living conditions, family (marital status, children, relationship with other family members), friends (at work and outside of work), hobbies, interests, political and religious views and affiliations, and name.

The psychological dimension may consist of the character's ambitions (long and short-term objectives), frustrations (everything that prevents him or her from achieving his or her goals), dreams (which he or she might consider unattainable), personal weaknesses, temperament, intelligence, attitude toward life (optimistic or pessimistic, rebellious, happy, selfish or selfless), fundamental values (concrete expressions of what the person holds dear, for example, family, life, hard work), romantic or sexual disposition, complexes (inhibitions, phobias, fixed ideas), and special talents (music, sport).

In "Up," Carl's relationship with Ellie motivates his actions. At the start of the story, we see how she inspires him and how their opposite traits complement. The goal to take the house



*Enchong Dee and Erich Gonzales at the MRT station in
"Paano Ko Sasabihin?"*

to Paradise Falls drives the story, while the unconscious need to move on from the past, have a new adventure, and reconnect with people drives the relationships of the characters.

It is important for the audience to care or relate to your main character. You can make them sympathize with the main character if he or she is skillful, an underdog or a victim of injustice, noble, vulnerable or has an ongoing pain, or other characters sympathize with him or her. In "Paano Ko Sasabihin?" (How Do I Say This) written and directed by Richard Legaspi for Cinema One Originals, two strangers (Enchong Dee and Erich Gonzales) find love in a chance encounter on the train to work. What if the attractive guy (Dee) a girl (Gonzales) meets on the MRT thinks she is also deaf? Is she ready to pretend to be deaf? What if both are just pretending to be deaf so as not to disappoint each other? Although

they lied to each other, there are other character traits provided in the story that could help them gain sympathy.

Character traits can be manifested through action (what the person tries to do and how he or she tries to do it), reaction (how the person reacts to new situations and do what other people do), reactions of others, dialogue (particularly what he or she hides, what the other person does not say, his or her way of speaking which is just as important as what he or she says), appearance, clothes, characteristic patterns of behavior, relationship to props and/or setting, contrast with what others do, and through name. A character trait is often enhanced if minor traits are provided which contradict the main attribute. For example, a ruthless man is more dangerous if he is shown to be thoughtful and loving in certain situations.

You may study characterization in "Four Sisters and a Wedding," a Star Cinema film directed by Cathy Garcia-Molina and written by Vanessa Valdez and Jose Javier Reyes, through a video essay by Lei Landicho and Heinrich Domingo: <https://youtu.be/MvanYy9dWH0>

Landicho and Domingo discussed how the film did a decent job in developing the characters in the story, citing how the script paired with good acting made them entertaining and relatable.

You may also watch “Tanging Yaman” directed by Laurice Guillen or its “supercut” on ABS-CBN Star Cinema’s YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/fWg3NVmvi6Y> Get to know the matriarch Loleng (Gloria Romero), her children Danilo (Johnny Delgado), Gracia (Dina Bonnevie) and Arturo (Edu Manzano), their respective spouses Celine (Hilda Koronel), Francis (Joel Torre) and Nanette (Cherry Pie Picache), Loleng’s grandchildren Boyet (Marvin Agustin), Rommel (Jericho Rosales), Madeleine (Janette McBride), Chona (Carol Banawa), Andrew (John Pratts), Cacay (Shaina Magdayao), and John-john (CJ Ramos), and their neighbor Joel (Dominic Ochoa).

ACTIVITY 3: Characterization

Describe the main characters in “Four Sisters and a Wedding” after watching its “supercut” on ABS-CBN Star Cinema’s YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/1jDNHr45HiM>

You may focus on the Salazar matriarch Grace (Connie Reyes) and her children, Teddie (Toni Gonzaga), Bobbie (Bea Alonzo), Alex (Angel Locsin), Gabbie (Shaina Magdayao), and CJ or Reb Reb (Enchong Dee). You may also describe their housekeeper Toti Marie (Cecil Paz), Bobbie’s boyfriend Tristan (Sam Milby), Chad (Bernard Palanca), Frodo (Janus del Prado), CJ’s fiancée Princess (Angeline Quinto), and her parents, Jeanette (Carmi Martin) and Honey Boy (Boboy Garovillo).

PRESENTATION/REVIEWER:

You may review the lesson on characterization in films by accessing the first part of the presentation on slideshare: <https://www.slideshare.net/MEYOR1/character-and-dialogues>



Visual Devices in Storytelling

In writing scripts, remember that a film is physical, concrete, specific, filled with moving images/pictures, heightened by juxtaposition, connection, disconnection, and interaction. Screenwriters are usually advised to “show, don’t tell.” Once you have mastered how to do this and have adjusted well in your transition from writing for other medium to writing for films, you can further improve your skill by learning how to use a visual device in storytelling.

What is a visual device? It is an object which enhances or adds meaning to an artwork, in this case a film. It is something people can hold for symbolism and meaning. Used individually or in combination, visual devices are things that add impact and interest to the viewing experience. They can make a scene more effective and more energetic, add mood, nuances, texture, subtext, and rhythm

to a scene, and intensify the viewer’s experience so he or she can feel it, rather than just understand it. Here are some examples of visual devices:

1. **Visual as recurring theme or motif** – images related to an idea, feeling or action that is the subject of a story keep on appearing in certain parts of the film. For example, you may show clocks or watches in the film if the story is focused on the importance of time.
2. **Visual as interesting setting** – you may change the neutral location into a more interesting locale. For example, in “That Thing Called Tadhana,” Mace (Angelica Panganiban) and new friend Anthony (JM de Guzman) run together to a place at the edge of the mountain and sea of clouds. In Sagada, Mace unloads herself of everything, screams all her pain from his ex-boyfriend. Will she be able to forget him and move on?



Enchong Dee and Erich Gonzales in a rainy scene in “Paano Ko Sasabihin?”

3. **Visual as time of day or season** – make the time of day more interesting by setting the scene during sunrise when a baby is being born or sunset when he said goodbye to his wife. You may also set the scene during harvest time when she said that she is pregnant.
4. **Visual as irony** – when the audience knows more than the character getting the effect or they see something that the character cannot see. “I’m so happy,” says the character but little did he know that his wife is being killed at his back.
5. **Visual as action or business of character** – give the characters an interesting activity while they are talking. In “One More Chance” directed by Cathy Garcia-Molina, Popoy (John Lloyd Cruz) keeps on removing the chicken skin before giving the fried chicken to Basha (Bea Alonzo).
6. **Visual as props of character** – the prop, which is an object used by an actor during a performance or screen production, differentiates the character from others. For example, in “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” created by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, the protagonists are distinguishable from each other by the color of their masks and weapons as they protect New York City from a gang of criminal ninjas. Leonardo (Leo) wears a blue mask and uses two katana swords. Raphael (Raph) wears a red mask and uses a pair of sai. Donatello (Donnie or Don) wears a purple mask and uses a bo or wooden staff while Michaelangelo (Mikey or Mike) wears an orange mask and uses a pair of nunchakus.
7. **Visual as props for trigger** – the presence or absence of the prop triggers or causes a negative emotional response as well as any physical symptoms associated with it. In “Baby Driver” directed by Edgar Wright, the protagonist and titular character Baby (Ansel Elgort) seems always connected to a pair of earphones which he attaches to his wide collection of iPods and slick tunes as he works as a young getaway driver.
8. **Visual as alter ego of character** – may be another personality, or alternative self, or an object or image which serves as an alter ego (Latin for “other I”) of the character.
9. **Visual as bomb** – an object which brings a revelation when found or when it appears in a scene. Literally, it may be a bomb in the jeepney or it may be a secret hidden inside a wooden chest. In “Four Sisters and a Wedding,” the Salazars and the Bayags face off in a game of charades, which reveals to the Salazar matriarch Grace (Coney Reyes) the real job of one of her daughters, Teddie (Toni Gonzaga).

10. **Visual as background** – place an interesting happening at the background which can be in contrast with the emotion of the scene or can serve as a commentary to what is happening. In the music video of “Kung ‘Di Rin Lang Ikaw” by December Avenue featuring Moira dela Torre, the bride and the groom can be seen in the background while the bride’s friend, who has been in love with her for a long time, is shown on the foreground.
11. **Visual as extra emotional touch** – use something valuable to a character due to personal or emotional association. It can be a photo from the past or any object with sentimental value.
12. **Visual as graphic or animation** – a digital representation of non-text information or an animation appear in a live-action film. This is present in Scott Pilgrim’s fight scenes against Ramona’s exes to win her back or in the film version of Spongebob Squarepants.
13. **Visual as continuity to the next scene** – combine more-or-less similar shots into a sequence as an editing transition. This is evident in how the film “Kung Paano Siya Nawala” shows the main character’s struggle with face blindness, a cognitive disorder of face perception in which the ability to recognize familiar faces is impaired, while other aspects of visual processing and intellectual functioning remain intact.
14. **Visual as foreshadowing** – warns or indicates what is to come later in the story. This can be seen when Selina Kyle is foreshadowed as Catwoman when she falls in a Batman film.
15. **Visual as metaphor or symbolism** – one thing is similar to another or an object is used to represent an abstract idea. The house in “Up” is a symbol of Carl’s wife Ellie and his memories of her. Likewise, Ellie’s “My Adventure Book” becomes a symbol of the theme as it inspires Carl to have a new adventure. When Carl is about to lose his house, which represents his life with Ellie, he uses balloons to literally uproot the house and head up and out to Paradise Falls. However, Russell the boy scout is on the front porch.

Max Balatbat as Nando “Hingalo”





Mercedes Cabral as the mother in “Pamatid-Gutom”

ACTIVITY 4: Visual Devices

Name ten visual devices found in the short film “Mansyon” written and directed by Joel

Ruiz: <https://tinyurl.com/y9xdn5kq>

PRESENTATION/REVIEWER:

You may review the lesson on visual devices in storytelling by accessing the presentation on slideshare: <https://www.slideshare.net/MEYOR1/visual-devices-in-storytelling>



Elements of a Screenplay

A script is a document that outlines every aural, visual, behavioral, and lingual element of a story. Writing a script for your production enables you to organize the way in which you may present the material. There are different script formats but for the purpose of this module, we will focus on the **single-column script**, which is more appropriate in writing for film.

There are different parts or elements of a single-column script. The **scene heading**, also called the **slugline**, tells the reader of the script where the scene takes place. It is a short description of the location and time of day of a scene. In other words, where are we standing? Are we indoors (INT.) or outdoors (EXT.)? Where do we put the camera? Where is the scene located – in the BEDROOM, LIVING ROOM, at the BASEBALL FIELD, or inside a CAR? It may also include the time of day – NIGHT, DAY, DUSK, DAWN.

“EXT. NIPA HUT – DAY” means that the action takes place outside a nipa hut during daylight hours. Notice that it is formatted in uppercase letters or written in ALL CAPS. It uses period after the INT. or EXT. and hyphen between the other items. It may also include production information like CONTINUOUS ACTION, ESTABLISHING SHOT or STOCK SHOT. It is aligned flush left, rarely long enough to reach the page margin. Other examples are:

INT. BEDROOM – MORNING

EXT. ROXAS BOULEVARD – SUNSET

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

EXT. PASIG RIVER - DAWN – ESTABLISHING

EXT. QUIAPO - FEAST OF THE BLACK NAZARENE - STOCK FOOTAGE

Meanwhile, the **scene description** or **action** shows the “business” of the characters or what we see on the screen. It describes in the most visual way it can, what happens. It sets the scene and describes the setting. It introduces the characters and sets the stage for the story

The scene description runs from left to right margin. When the character appears for the first time, the name is formatted in uppercase letters. Action is written in real time. Every moment takes place now. Always use verbs in the present or present progressive tense. Use the active voice. Keep paragraphs short. Do not let the scene description or action go on and on over four or five lines. The reader may scan long action paragraphs without reading them.

Next, the **character name** is a script element which can be an actual name or description or an occupation, identifies who is talking. It is also written in ALL CAPS and placed at the center of the page. It lets the reader know that a character's dialogue follows. It can be an actual name of the character (JOHN) or description (FAT MAN) or an occupation (DOCTOR). Sometimes, the writer might have COP #1 and then COP #2 speaking. Be consistent in using character names.

Dialogue is simply every word we hear on the screen, everything that comes out of everyone's mouth. Great dialogue is a window into the soul of your character – it sounds real and conversational. The audience should feel like a fly on the wall, hearing natural interplay between characters.

Dialogue is also placed on the center, below the character name. Dialogue rules apply when anyone on screen speaks – during a conversation between characters, when a character talks out loud to himself, or when a character is off-screen and only a voice is heard.

The **parenthetical** is a direction to the actor about how to read the dialogue. A parenthetical remark can be an attitude, verbal direction, or action direction for the actor who is speaking the part. It should be short, to the point, descriptive, and only used when necessary.

Parentheticals are left indented at 3.0" and the right margin is 3.5" although that is a bit flexible. A parenthetical remark is NOT centered under the character name. Parentheticals are also used in some scripts as the (continuing) notation. If a character is speaking followed by an action line and then the same character continues speaking, this notation can be used.

On the other hand, an **extension** is a technical note that denotes how the character's voice will be heard by the audience. It is 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 (O.S.) voice can be heard from a character out of the camera range, or from another room altogether. An O.S. denotes that the speaker is not resident within the scene. A voice-over (V.O.) narration is used when a character is speaking while he or she isn't in the scene. A V.O. denotes that the speaker is narrating the action onscreen.

The **transition** is a script element which indicates that we are, in some way, moving to a different scene or shot. The following are just some examples:

CUT TO:

DISSOLVE TO:

SMASH CUT:

QUICK CUT:

FADE TO:

FADE OUT

The **shot** tells the reader that the focal point within a scene has changed. It is formatted like scene headings, flush left margin, all uppercase letters. Be very judicious using a shot to redirect the reader's focus as "directing" runs the risk of interrupting the flow of storytelling.

ANGLE ON --

EXTREME CLOSE UP --

PAN TO --

LOUISE'S POV --

REVERSE ANGLE --

When two of your characters speak simultaneously, **dual dialogue** or side by side dialogue is used. The following is an example:

Rachelle and John are in a heated argument.

RACHELLE

Get out of my life! I can't stand you anymore!

JOHN

Don't you yell at me!



"Hingalo" writer and director Anna Isabelle Matutina

Let us look at the screenplay of "Hingalo," a short film written and directed by Anna Isabelle Matutina. It is about a desperate man who tries to save his wife and the life of their unborn child in what seems to be the longest tricycle ride of his life. You may watch it here: <https://youtu.be/JkCHF1VbGZI>

HINGALO

(for the ABS-CBN News Channel's amBisyon 2010 program)

by Anna Isabelle Matutina

1. EXT. DEPRESSED AREA – NIGHT.

NANDO (30), is running towards a parked tricycle in panic. In his arms is his wife, TINAY (28), who is bleeding heavily. A few feet behind them is their neighbor, TIKYO (35), giving quick instructions as he hands Nando the keys and a towel.

TIKYO

Sa Espino Memorial mo na dalhin.

Kami na bahala sa mga bata.

Nando puts Tinay carefully inside the tricycle and uses the towel to try to stop the blood flowing between her legs.

NANDO

Salamat, Pare.

Nando starts the tricycle and leaves.

2. EXT. ROAD – NIGHT.

Nando desperately tries to concentrate on the road ahead as he hears his wife screaming in pain.

TINAY

Nando! Nando, wag masyado mabilis!

NANDO

Sandali na lang, Tinay. Malapit na tayo.

3. EXT./INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL – NIGHT.

Nando stops the tricycle at the emergency entrance of a private hospital and starts to carry a crying Tinay inside. They are approached by one of the nurses bringing with her a wheelchair for Tinay.

NURSE 1

Ano pong nangyari?

NANDO

Nakunan po yata asawa ko.

The nurse glances furtively at the tricycle parked just outside the entrance. The security guard approaches Nando.

GUARD

Ser, bawal po iwan ang tricycle sa tapat.

NANDO

Sandali lang, tulungan niyo muna asawa ko.

The nurse goes to her station and talks to the other nurses. One nurse starts making calls. Nurse 1 returns to Nando.

NURSE 1

*Sir, dalhin niyo na lang po siya sa government hospital.
Malapit lang po 'yun. Tumatawag na yung kasamahan ko
para mabigyan agad ng tulong ang asawa niyo. Guard,
pakitulungan na lang sila at ituro mo kung saan yung (name of
hospital).*

Nando looks confused as the guard starts carrying Tinay back to the tricycle.

TINAY

Nando? Ano nangyayari?

NURSE 1

Wag po kayo mag-alala misis. Konting tiis na lang.

NANDO

Sandali! Ba't hindi niyo muna kami tulungan?!

NURSE 1

*Sir, bilisan niyo na po habang hindi malala
ang kondisyon ng asawa niyo.*

GUARD

Ser, diretsuhin niyo lang po tong kalye. Sa pinakadulo, kaliwa po kayo. Nasa highway lang po yung ospital. Madaling makita.

Nando, having no other choice, quickly starts the tricycle and leaves.

4. EXT. ROAD – NIGHT.

Nando glances quickly at his wife.

NANDO

*Tinay! Tinay, kaya pa di ba?
Kaya pa yan! Wag ka bibitiw!*

Tinay cries as she stares down her blood-soaked dress. She presses the towel harder between her legs. Her struggle to save the baby, apparent on her face.

5. INT. PUBLIC HOSPITAL – NIGHT.

Many people are being rushed in the emergency room. Women who are about to give birth, unconscious men who were either stabbed, shot, etc, children crying. Nurses quickly come and go.

A very pregnant lady suddenly grabs one of the nurses.

PREGNANT LADY

Lalabas na! Lalabas na talaga!

NURSE 2

*Nay, pigilan niyo kung ayaw nyo malaglag
ang baby niyo sa lapag! Inaayos na po ang kama.*

Nando enters the hospital carrying Tinay and quickly looks around for a wheelchair.

NANDO

Nurse! Pahiram kami ng wheelchair. Nakunan ang asawa ko!

NURSE 2

Kumuha ka na lang ng upuan dun

at ubos na ang wheelchairs namin.

Nando sees an empty chair between the pregnant lady and a man with a bleeding head.
Nurse approaches Tinay and checks her vital signs.

NURSE 2

Ilang buwan na po ang bata?

NANDO

*Magdadalawang buwan pa lang po.
Ayaw tumigil ng pagdugo eh.*

Another nurse (NURSE 3) approaches them with a wheelchair.

NURSE 2

Ayan na 'nay! Halika na kayo.

PREGNANT LADY

Lalabas naaaa!

Nurse 2 covers pregnant lady's mouth and quickly wheels her away.

NANDO

*Nurse, baka ho puwede nyo nang maasikaso asawa ko.
Nanggaling na po kami sa kabilang ospital
at pinalipat kami dito. Kanina pa po siya nagdudugo.*

Nurse 3 studies Tinay's condition with a slight frown on his face.

NURSE 3

Saan pong ospital kayo galing?

NANDO

Sa Espino Memorial po.

NURSE 3

Ser, di naman kaya uminom ng pampalaglag misis niyo?

NANDO

Ano?

NURSE 3

Marami ho kaming natatanggap na ganyang kaso. Minsan, galing sa aborsyonista. Andami-dami naming pasyente araw-araw, pati mga iresponsableng nanay dito pa pumupunta.

NANDO

Gago ka!

Nando punches the nurse in the face. Nurse 2 sees this on her way back and runs to assist Nurse 3.

NURSE 2

Ser, ang dami-dami pong pasyente at kulang na mga nurse, mananakit pa kayo!

NANDO

Wala bang tutulong sa asawa ko?!

NURSE 2

Ser, konting hinahon naman po. Ginagawa na namin lahat. Wala na po kaming libreng kama. Hindi na po kaya ng ospital. Ilipat niyo na lang po sa kabilang ospital. Kulang na kami sa supplies. Mas makakatulong po sila. Nasa dulo lang po ng highway.

Nando cries helplessly.

NURSE 2

Ser, wala na po tayong magagawa para sa bata. Pero kaya pang salbahin ang asawa niyo. Hindi rin ho namin gustong mamatay ang asawa niyo. Mas makakabuti po na ilipat niyo ng ospital. Kahet po diaper, wala na kami. Bilisan niyo na po.

Some bystanders, who just helped another man inside the emergency, try to help out and carried Tinay back to the tricycle.

6. EXT. ROAD – NIGHT.

Nando is crying while trying to concentrate on the road. He looks at Tinay who is getting weaker and weaker with the great amount of blood she has lost. A shadow of doubt crosses his face.

NANDO

Totoo ba ang sabi ng nurse? Tinay?

Tinay cries and weakly shakes her head.

NANDO

*Kakamatay lang ng bunso natin...ba't mo naman gugustuhing
magpalaglag? Alam ko hirap tayo...pero nangako naman
akong gagawan ko ng paraan para makapagpatali ka na?*

Tinay's heart breaks as she hears the hurtful words of her husband. She tries to plead with her eyes but Nando refuses to look at her. Nando looks straight on the road that seems to never end. After a while, he composes himself and glances at his wife. Tinay has lost consciousness. Not realizing this, Nando tries to cling on to some hope.

NANDO

*Wag ka mag-alala Tinay...pagkatapos nitong gabing ito,
kakausapin ko si Tikyo. Sa tingin ko, puwede nating rentahan
tong tricycle nya. Pambayad din sa gastos natin. Baka
sa susunod na taon, puwede na nating mapag-aral ang
panganay natin.*

Nando looks at Tinay again. She is not responding. Extremely bothered, Nando stops the tricycle to check on his wife.

NANDO

Tinay?

He checks her pulse. He then runs back to his seat and drives in full speed.

7. EXT./INT. PUBLIC HOSPITAL – NIGHT.

Much like the previous hospital, patients and nurses crowd the emergency room. In the flurry of people, Nando emerges carrying her wife. Both of them are soaked in blood.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

8. EXT. ROAD – NIGHT.

Nando is driving the tricycle, his expression unreadable. Slowly, we see his face contort in anguish. He is alone in the tricycle as Tinay's blood drips from the seat.

THE END



Left, Max Balatbat driving a tricycle. Right, the camera team taking a shot of the tricycle being parked in “Hingalo”

ACTIVITY 5

Write a sentence outline based on the short film “Wag Kang Titingin” written and directed by Pam Miras. You may watch the short film here: <https://youtu.be/KkYmH5wjCKc>

Once you are done with this activity, you may work on your own story.



Writing Dialogues

A common error in writing dialogues is loading them with too much information. Many film stories are weakened by poor dialogue. One good way of getting it right is first to try to write the scene with no dialogue at all and asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the scene?
- What do the characters want?
- What happens in the scene?
- Can this be shown through physical action, gesture, looks, props, setting?

As mentioned before, the dialogue must be realistic and credible in its context. When characters speak, we should have the impression that these people speak in this way and no other.

What are some functions or purposes of dialogue? One, the dialogue should move the action forward. It should be a driving force in the drama. It should give information. However, the information should come naturally from the context and not be placed in the mouths of the characters.

The dialogue should characterize the person who speaks. The way he or she expresses himself or herself tells us a great deal about him or her. It must express the speaker's mood. The way it is expressed is more important than the words spoken. It should characterize the person being spoken to or about. If we see a person who is condescending and rude toward everybody but becomes cautious and respectful when a certain person appears, the new character does not need to say or do anything.

Dialogues may use common language but express great passion, and even become a catch phrase in popular culture. Read dialogues aloud to hear how it really sounds. If you have a difficult time reading a line, it may not be good dialogue. Organize a script reading and hear the dialogues from other people. This may also be done with actors.

Although dialogue should sound natural and not made up, everyday speech is full of repetition and excesses. It contains too many and redundant words. Film dialogue simulates real speech but does not copy it. Thus, the writer should practice selection, concentration, and compactness. It must also be based on oral rather than written forms. Film dialogue is not grammatically correct.

The intensity of the dialogue should reflect the intensity of the situation. A less intense scene permits dialogue that is more discursive. In a dramatically heightened situation, the dialogue is spare and more compressed. The lines should be written so that they say one thing at a time. They should be as short as possible. Any additional words should be dropped. Connecting words like “and,” “but,” “because,” and others should be avoided. Words that reinforce like “really” and “very” have no place in dialogue.

Text refers to the wording of the dialogue or conventional meaning of the words. Subtext is the deeper veiled meaning behind the words, true intentions, and goals of the characters. It shows



the real – and often unspoken – rapport between the characters. Practice writing dialogues with subtext, rather than “on the nose” or direct to the point ones.

Remember that film is still a visual medium. Gestures, exclamations, and actions should take the place of the spoken word whenever possible.

The scene with Nando, Tinay, hospital nurse and security guard in “Hingalo”

ACTIVITY 6: Dialogues

Watch the short film “Faculty” written and directed by Jerrold Tarog and differentiate the way the two characters talk to each other. You may access the film on either of these links: <https://vimeo.com/9267941> or <https://vimeo.com/11659044>

Once you are done with this activity, you may finish writing your own screenplay.

PRESENTATION/REVIEWER:

You may review the lesson on Dialogues in Films by accessing the latter part of the presentation on slideshare: <https://www.slideshare.net/MEYOR1/character-and-dialogues>

Pitch Presentation Rubric

For evaluating student works – this may be applied to pitches and presentations

Criteria	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Excellent
Organization	The audience cannot understand the presentation because there is no sequence of information.	The audience has difficulty following presentation because the student seems distracted.	The student presents information in logical sequence which the audience can follow.	The student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which the audience can follow.
Subject Knowledge	The student does not have a grasp of the information presented. He or she cannot answer questions about subject.	The student is uncomfortable with the information presented and can answer only rudimentary questions.	The student is at ease with expected answers to all questions but he or she fails to elaborate.	The student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all questions with explanations and elaboration.
Text and Content	Text and content are copy-pasted from other material with little or no editing. Text has poor readability quality.	Text and content are copy-pasted from other material but edited for length or readability.	Text and content are adapted for the presentation, edited for length and readability, and communicates concepts clearly.	Text and content are specifically designed for the presentation, communicate concepts clearly, and enhance the quality of the presentation.

Criteria	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Excellent
Graphics and Images	The graphics/ images used are unnecessary or do not support or relate to the text and presentation.	The student uses graphics/ images to relate to text and presentation.	The student's graphics/ images reinforce and explain screen text and presentation.	The student's graphics/ images are the primary means of presentation and student relies on minimal text to present material.
Presentation Skills	The student mumbles, pronounces terms incorrectly and has poor presentation skills.	The student pronounces terms incorrectly and gets distracted easily. Audience members have difficulty understanding presentation.	The student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can understand the presentation.	The student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can understand. The student is confident of the presentation with a clear purpose and ability to engage the class.

Writing Output Rubric

For evaluating projects involving a screenplay or any part of the writing process

Criteria	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Excellent
Elements/ Principles/ Key Concepts	The student showed little evidence of understanding of the elements, principles, or key concepts of the topic. There is no evidence of planning.	The student did the project adequately demonstrating some understanding of elements, principles, or key concepts of the topic.	The output shows that the student applied the elements, principles, or key concepts of the topic effectively; showed an awareness of the creative process; and planning is evident.	The output shows that the student planned carefully, made several drafts, and showed grasp of the elements, principles, or key concepts of the topic. The project was executed to a high quality.
Creativity / Originality	The student fulfilled the project but gave no evidence of trying anything unusual. He or she might have copied work.	The student tried an idea which was adequate, but it lacked originality; solution or output can be termed "cliché."	The student tried a few ideas before selecting one; made decisions after referring to more than one source; found or pursued an unusual way of achieving the output.	The student explored several choices before selecting one; tried unusual combinations; made connections to previous knowledge; showed problem solving skills to come up with an innovative solution.

Criteria	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Excellent
Technical Execution	The project was completed with minimal or poor use of technique.	The project showed correct technique with one or two attempts to apply advanced techniques.	The project showed creative and applied use of fundamental techniques. Very minor flaws can be seen.	The project showed a large degree of creativity and application of style to the technique. There are no visible flaws in the execution.
Craftsmanship / Skill	The student showed below average craftsmanship and lack of pride in finished work.	The student showed average craftsmanship; adequate, but not as good as it could have been, a bit careless.	With a little more effort, the work could have been outstanding. The project lacks the finishing touches.	The project was beautifully and patiently done. It was as good as hard work could make it.

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Online resources

29 Screenwriting Mistakes. In <https://youtu.be/gyFHlxdOSsw>

Character Development. In <https://youtu.be/ngZQUebMSEg>

Desire the Driving Force of All Successful Screenplays. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/desire-the-driving-force-of-all-successful-screenplays>

How to Format a Screenplay. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-format-a-screenplay>

How to Write a First Draft of a Screenplay. In <http://www.screenstyle.com/fromcontofir.html>

How to Write Better Descriptions. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-write-better-descriptions>

How to Write Great Dialogue. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-write-great-dialogue>

How to Outline Your Screenplay. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-outline-your-screenplay>

How to Rewrite Your Screenplay. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-rewrite-your-screenplay>

How to Sell Your Screenplay. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/how-to-sell-your-screenplay>

How to Write a Screenplay: Script Writing Example & Screenwriting Tips

<https://www.writersstore.com/how-to-write-a-screenplay-a-guide-to-scriptwriting/>

How to Write Your First Screenplay. In <http://www.screenstyle.com/wryofisc.html>

On Creating Character. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/on-creating-character>

Introduction to Storytelling. In https://youtu.be/ru84HBS7B_4

Sample Script Page: THE GODFATHER

http://www.filmschoolonline.com/sample_lessons/sample_script_page.htm

Screenplay Format: A Guide to Industry Standard Script Formatting

<http://www.movieoutline.com/articles/screenplay-format-a-guide-to-industry-standard-script-formatting.html>

Screenplay Format Guide:

<https://www.storysense.com/SPFormat.pdf>

Screenplay, Teleplay, Stage Play: What's the Difference? In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/screenplay-teleplay-stage-play-whats-the-difference>

Storytelling Advice. In <https://youtu.be/NL0KQu9JiDQ>

Story Structure. In <https://youtu.be/bKrCKg9ggVI>

Ten Simple Keys to Plot Structure. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/ten-simple-keys-to-plot-structure>

The Leavebehind. In http://tvwriter.net/?page_id=6411

The Logline. In http://tvwriter.net/?page_id=5729

The Outline/Story. In http://tvwriter.net/?page_id=7074

The Secret to the First 10 Pages. In <http://www.finaldraft.com/learn/articles/the-secret-to-the-first-10-pages>

Three-Act Structure - Story Structure Tips - Screenwriting
<https://youtu.be/H6QD5Pbc50I>

What If... In <https://youtu.be/m5AW93Ya0UE>

World and Character. In <https://youtu.be/26UrsVnMXV8>

Writing the Dreaded Outline. In http://tvwriter.net/?page_id=4994

Your Unique Perspective. In https://youtu.be/1mTO_ax-M3Q

Your Favorite Stories. In <https://youtu.be/7HLTDIGkkX4>

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