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LEARN SCREENWRITING BY WRITING ONE SCENE

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BIG IS SERIES OF SMALL

In this short writing class, you'll learn how to write **one scene in a screenplay format**.

I'll give you a 'clean' frame/situation and from there you'll insert your take on it. Through this simple exercise, you'll also learn many additional techniques.

+ SCREENPLAY FORMAT + WRITING TECHNIQUES + FILM & TV





WHAT YOU NEED FOR THIS CLASS

Something to write on. *Your creativity and curiosity.*

- + Pen & Paper
- + Writing Application



+

SCREENPLAY
FORMAT

CONTINUED:

8.

SCHUBERT
Skin?

MOZART
Skin to skin.

SCHUBERT

st.

SCHUBERT (CONT'D)
get the papers.

to himself. Doesn't enter the conversation.

OLEG (V.O.)
The real bitch is of course, that
they need to finish a list of 1571
deeds over a lifetime, to become
human again. But it's almost
impossible to achieve, since the
system works very slow.

EXT. BY A WINDOW, DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK, ICELAND - DAY

Mozart is not happy. A young Circledrawer, VIGNEZ stands
still under a window while Mozart gives a speech.

OLEG (V.O.)
We try to improve, but we have
problem of inefficiency. They get
the list late, and if they have a
project of helping someone die,
they might die after 10 years, and
they have to do it in right order,
so they wait, 10 years for one
project.

MOZART
It smells bad up there in the room?
Do you think I care? Do you really
think I give a darn if it smells?

VIGNEZ
It's horrible.

MOZART
How are you going to watch a window
by standing down here. What if it
falls on the wrong person? Then
what?



CLEAR OUTCOME

Before we begin, let's
remember our **outcome** we
are going to write

one scene

in a screenplay format.



"Ideas are like mice, you
have to catch them

- Jerry Seinfeld



INCREMENTS *FOCUS* RESULTS

In this class, we're going to explore the power of focusing on our creativity by using a pre-defined limitation. It's challenging to write a story. It's even more challenging writing a story for film & TV because it requires a large amount of quantity of scenes tied together.

Using a Limitation - The point is to avoid overwhelm and by that help your creativity out to the real world. Limitation lasers down big tasks into increments. Into do-ability.

In this course we are going to practice, and emphasize practicing writing one scene in a screenplay format, helpful metaphor could be, if we wanted to express a song in our heart, it can be helpful to know how to write music notes, the point is to get our song out there in the world, and learning the screenplay format is like that.





HELPING YOUR IMAGINATION

Coming up with an idea, or even interpreting an idea you already have, can easily induce overwhelm and by that reduce your ability to work on it.

In this class, we learn to limit the chance of overwhelm by pre-defining our writing plan and chopping down the creative process into **manageable pieces**.

When we discover an idea, a part of that process is the inability to control it. Because when we try to **control** our imagination, it rebels and thereby gets in the way of letting it out.

Working with an idea, and learning how to write in a screenplay format. Are **two** different things. We want to avoid doing **two things at the same time**. In this class we're only going to focus on the latter.

We're going to use a frame technique, I'm going to give you a framework, it's going to be simple, but it's going to invite your imagination to it.

The point is to show you how imagination, and any ideas you might have, sometimes need a bit of help. And in the next session, I'm going to tell you more about the frame we're going to work in.

*In this class, **you will not** be working with your original idea. But as soon as you **understand** the approach, you can **switch** to your idea.*



THE STORY BEHIND THIS WRITING CLASS



ABOUT ME: *My name is Olaf. I am a filmmaker with over 20 years of experience. I've directed films and documentaries and sold original concepts to studios over the course of my filmmaking career, I've written over 30 screenplays and in this class I'll share all my writing tools.*

Whenever I start a new project, I'm always looking to be transported. I keep close attention to my own body, my feelings and kinda measure myself into this new world. The biggest challenge that I face, with any new project, is because my ideas are complex, I always have to re-visit the practice of simplicity.

I've been writing for over 20 years and five years ago, I got stuck. I was working on this scene in a screenplay I was writing. It was about a person who had to cross a street. And I had this person on one end of the street for about six months! Because I was always overthinking it.

Then I realized that I'd been unable to help my character across the street. I had been unable to do SIMPLE. This was a big wake-up call and the method in this class is something I constantly use in my writing class, but more importantly, myself.





"Doing simple is the antidote to complexity. And like any good paradox, the ability to do simple allows us to create much more complexity."

Anytime I work on an idea, I use the method in this class for myself - it helps me remember how to take one step at a time. Ideas run, even fly. Writing is about taming them.

We actually can do simple, but when we're in our writing world, it's hard to realize it. This technique will help us snap out of overthinking.

You will learn this technique, while at the same time, learn the basics of writing a scene in a screenplay format.



THE FRAME

THE FRAME we are going to use goes like this.

A person starts on **one side** of the street and **ends up** on the other side. You are going to help the person **cross** the street. You will create the character, the surroundings, the action, and so on.

Every film, every story, has three acts. And with this frame, we have created an extremely simple form of three acts. It's neutral but has the power to lure your creativity out of the cave.



FIRST TRY

In this section, we want you to create your FIRST VERSION out of this frame, we want you to help the person across the street.

This is your first attempt and we'll do several. For this round we will not be using the screenplay format. We are still developing the same. And we'll only use the screenplay format when we worked through it several times. And as always, I suggest that you use a timer. How would you let a person across the street, who is that person? How does the person walk? What we see around them?

TRY AGAIN?

How did it go?

Maybe it didn't go at all, but I do suspect that you quickly created a character who could cross the street.

If you didn't, then try it again until you found the right approach.



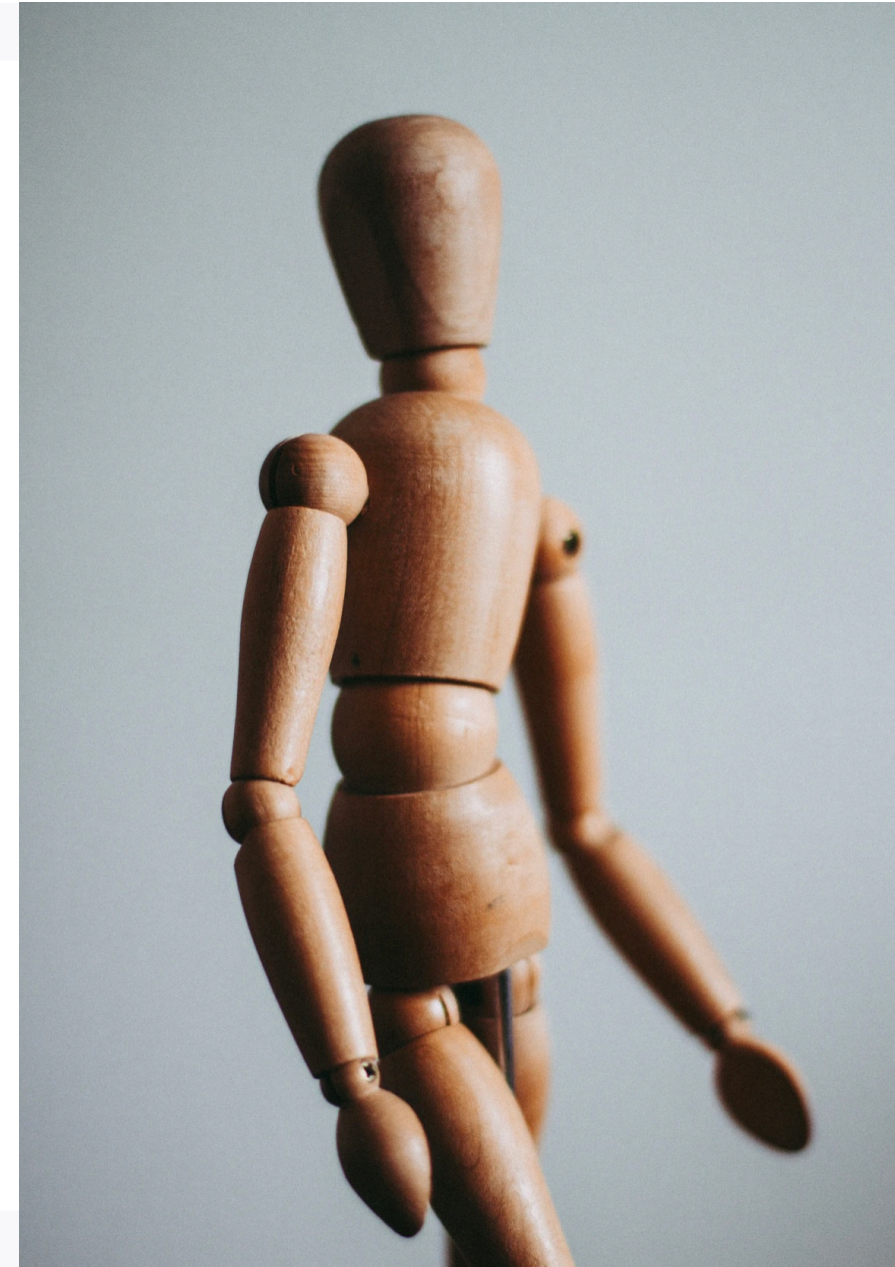
PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

When a character feels a certain way, we have several options in conveying it. The main one is how their feelings translate into physical expression. How do our characters move? Check the micro muscles in the face, the tone of their voice, and so on.

Another way to express feelings can of course be through dialogue, or even what is not being said. Or we can see how they feel by looking at what kind of car do they drive, the decoration of their home, clothes and so on.

TASK

How you can express ON
THE PAGE how your
character feels by using
'physical expression'



BACKGROUND CHANGES

We all know that when telling a story, CHANGE is the most fundamental element. Because change will help the audience sense that the story is moving forward. If something is a certain way at the beginning of the scene, and another at the end of it, change has occurred.

An example of a background change can be as simple as, the scene starts with a red traffic light, in the middle it turns green, then at the end of it, it is turned red again. Another general example, would be to write a scene, and in the beginning, there is an empty cup, coffee is poured into the cup in the middle, at the end of the scene the cup is empty. A surprise twist there could be to have the cup broken at the end.



TASK

work on background changes. What can change between the beginning, and the end of the scene?



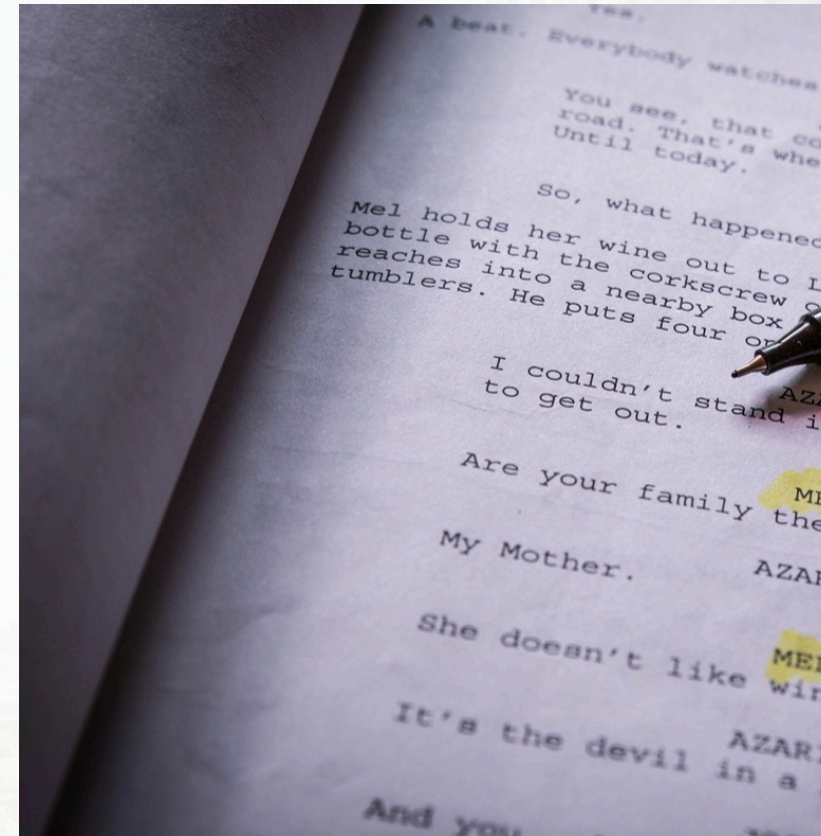
SCREENPLAY FORMAT

Up to this point, we've been doing all kinds of different methods in collecting data, extracting things from our ideas, shaking our idea a little bit, and grasping all this data.

It's time to move it into the SCREENPLAY FORMAT. And in case you're not familiar with the format then I've prepared a MINI-CLASS within this class.

Check out the 'Screenplay Format' section. Or, you can visit my website and read the fundamentals here:

Read: **The 8 Elements of Script Formatting**



TASK

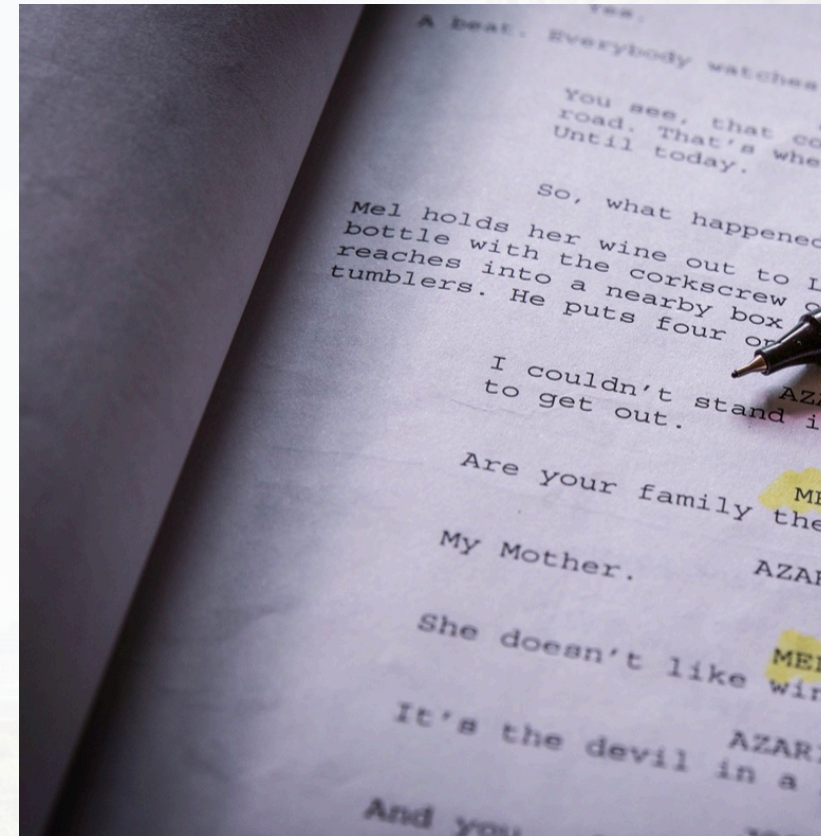
Study the screenplay format



1ST DRAFT

In this section, you're going to write the first draft of your scene in a screenplay format. To help you, I have created a blueprint template, that you can download in the class resources.

Keep in mind, that this is simply an outline, and not to be taken too seriously.



TASK

Write the 1st Draft of your scene in a screenplay format



TOOLBOX

tips & tools

WRITTEN IN STONE

When you work with the screenplay format, be mindful that it can be hard to change what you right there. This is a syndrome called "Written in stone." When you update or change text, be aware that this syndrome can get in the way.

POSTER

If your scene had a poster, all to itself, how would it look like?

SOUNDTRACK

If your scene had a soundtrack, all to itself, how would it sound like?

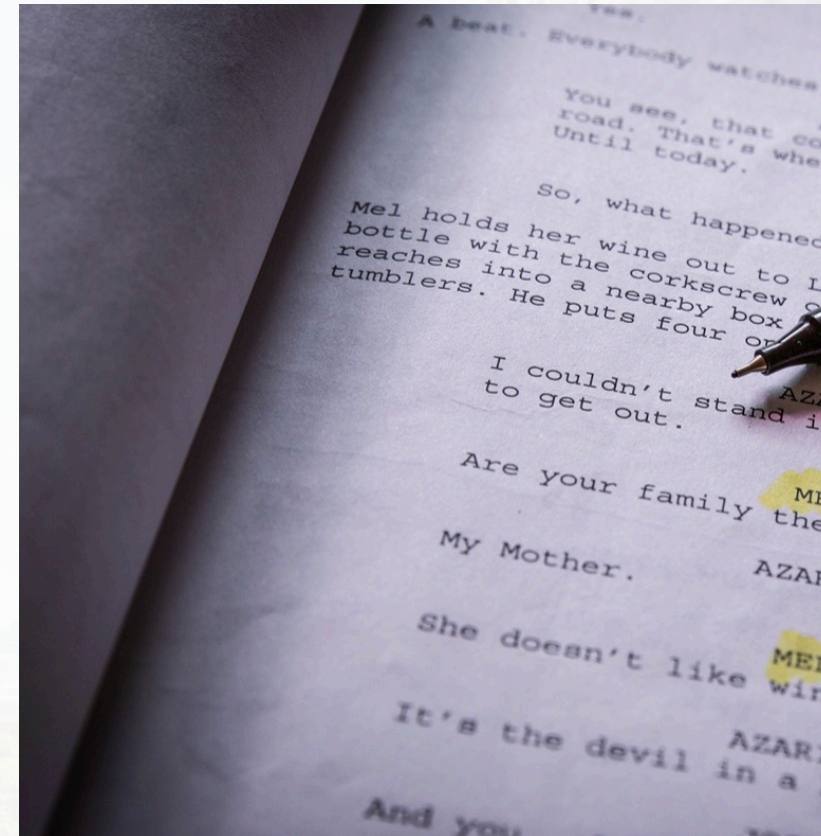


2ND DRAFT

Draft number two is all about adding meat to the bones from draft number one. It is about adding stuff, beats, texture, layers, and quirks. It is also about checking things off. How does it begin? How does it end? What is it in the middle, and so on.

For this section, I have also prepared a template, updated from the template in the first draft. And remember, this template is only for a frame of reference not to be taken too seriously.

You can download the template in the class resources.



TASK

Write the 2nd Draft of your scene in a screenplay format



3RD DRAFT

Draft number three is all about relaxing into it, and building on top of the first two drafts. This is where we relax, and enjoy the writing process.

Because in draft **number four**, we will go back to rigid note, go over the spelling, grammar, work with feedback and so on. All the more reason to enjoy this calm before the storm.

Draft number three, is what I call the jazz version, so have fun, and jazz it up!



TASK

Write the 3rd Draft of your scene in a screenplay format



4TH DRAFT

Draft number four is the master draft. This is where we finalize our scene and test it by checking it from all kinds of angles.

In this section, we talk about the importance of not overpainting it. Just like a painter, we have to know when to stop.

In this section, I also layout the **SEVEN STEP** process, that I use to finalize a scene or even a screenplay.

Please visit this link to see the [SEVEN STEP PROCESS](#)



TASK

Write the 4th Draft of your scene in a screenplay format

+ THANK YOU! FOR TAKING THIS CLASS

Congratulations on completing this class. I hope that this class will help you in your creative endeavors.

Olaf de Fleur
writer, director

