



# THE BIG OPEN:

SCREENPLAY TEASER COMPETITION

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# SCREENPLAY TEASER PROMPT

Write a 3-5 page screenplay teaser (AKA the opening scene or sequence) for your original and unique film concept.

This film opening can be written in any genre, but the scene you write must convey the *feeling* and *mood* of your selected genre and set the tone for your movie. For example, if it's a comedy, it should make us laugh. If it's a thriller, the suspense should leave us at the edge of our seats! If it's a romance, we should start to fall in love with the characters. And if it's dramatic, it might even make our eyes water. Make the reader really *feel* the story you are telling.

For a more detailed breakdown on how to construct stories, characters, and a solid three-act cinematic story, we recommend the book ***Prewriting Your Screenplay: A Step-By-Step Guide to Generating Stories*** by Michael Tabb.

**Format:** 12pt., Courier Font. Single space. Standard margins.

# GLOSSARY: FILM GENRES

- **Drama** – Stories featuring an exploration of a serious, deeply moving situation or issue
- **Comedy** – Stories centering on characters and situations designed to make people laugh
- **Adventure** – Stories of off-road, epic quests and journeys
- **Action** – Stories with constant, fast-paced physical movement and/or fighting
- **Science Fiction** – Stories involving major plot elements drawn from projected scientific or technological innovation
- **Fantasy** – Stories containing characters and plot devices that are impossible in the world as we know it, usually containing more mystical elements commonly associated with fairy tales
- **Supernatural** – Stories in which circumstances and situations cannot be explained by practical or theoretical science; these stories contain some type of paranormal or unnatural phenomena
- **Horror** – Stories about extreme physical violence, exploring a terrifying, human fear to scare audiences
- **Mystery** – Stories in which the entire outer journey and plot focus on trying to discover “Who done it and why?”
- **Thriller** – Stories that present edge-of-your-seat suspense
- **Crime/Heist** – Stories told from the point of view of investigators or criminals in which a protagonist’s outer journey in the story centers on criminal activities
- **Western** – Stories set in the Western United States before 1912 (most commonly the Wild West era between the American Civil War and the turn of the century), traditionally featuring frontiersmen, cowboys, and/or Native Americans
- **War** – Stories set during wartime in a war-torn land
- **Family** – Stories appropriate for all audiences of all ages, including small children
- **Musical** – Stories in which characters sing numerous songs as part of the tale; traditionally (but not necessarily) a musical has at least one big dance number
- **Historical** – Stories about an event that changed the course of history
- **Biopic** – Stories based on and inspired by one real person and that person’s accomplishment(s)
- **Romance** – Stories in which the main plot and protagonist’s outer journey focus on the pursuit of romantic love
- **Disaster** – Stories in which a large, catastrophic, or even cataclysmic, event threatens a large number of people
- **Sports** – Stories set in a specific sport integral to the characters, story, or plot
- **Road** – Stories in which the majority of the second act is spent traveling a great distance; an emotional, inner journey reflects a physical one
- **Coming of Age** – Stories traditionally set somewhere between middle school to college where the central characters “grow up,” with emphasis on strong inner journeys for the central character(s)

Source: *Prewriting your Screenplay: A Step-by-Step Guide to Generating Stories*, Michael Tabb, released by Routledge publishing, a subsidiary of Taylor and Francis Group.

# SCREENPLAY COVER PAGE TEMPLATE

"TITLE"

Written by

First Name, Last Name

Genre: Genre of film

Email:

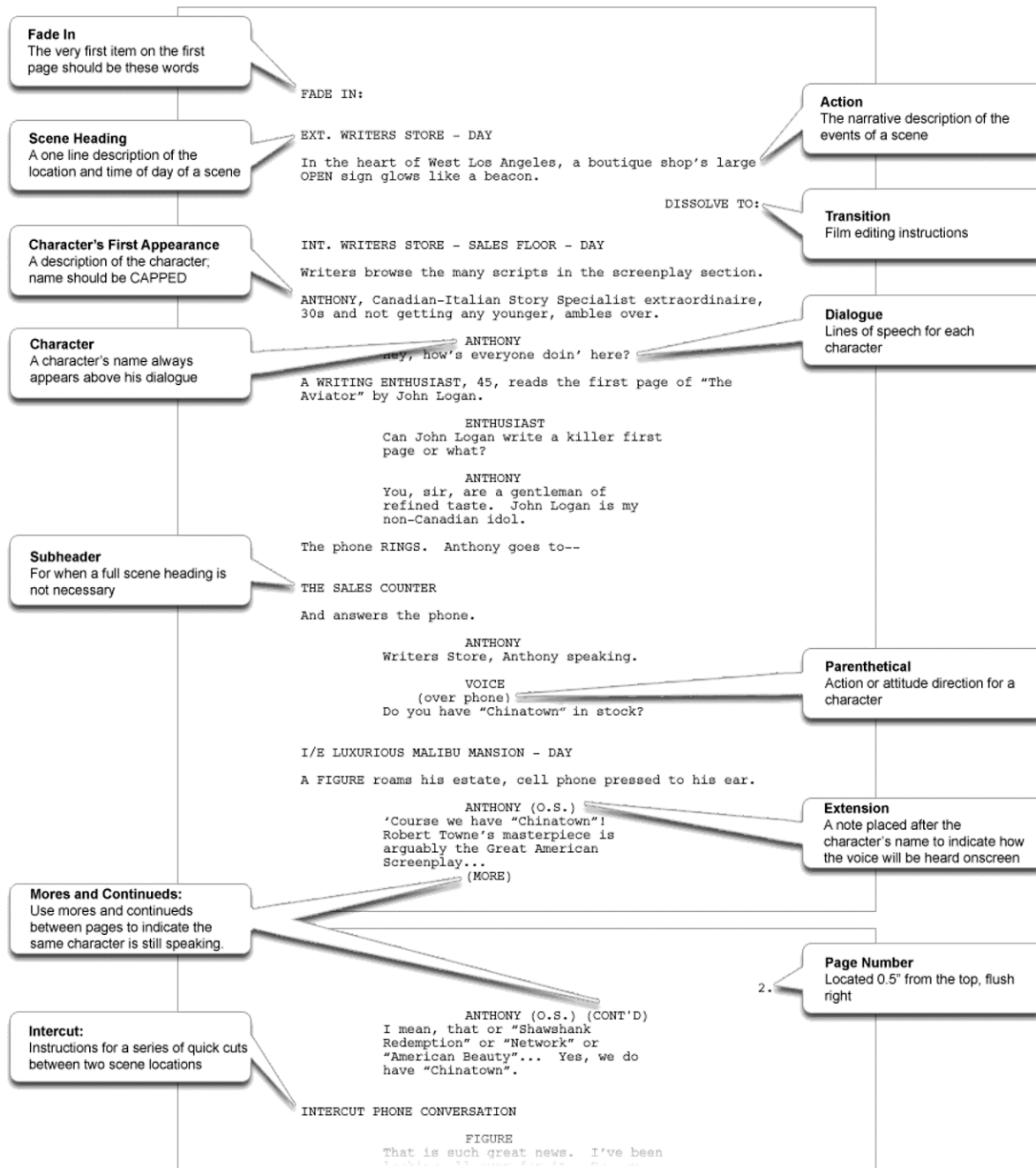
Tel:

# GLOSSARY: SCREENPLAY ELEMENTS

- **Fade In:** The very first item on the first page should read FADE IN:
- **Scene Heading:** A One line description of the location and time of day of a scene. Scene headings begin with INT. (for interior scenes) or EXT. (for exterior or outside scenes) and should be written in ALL CAPS
- **Action:** The narrative description of the events of a scene that can be seen and heard. Sound effects that are important to the story but heard off screen should be in ALL CAPS
- **Character's First Appearance:** Name and description of a character with their name in ALL CAPS
- **Dialogue:** Lines of speech for each character with the character. The speaking character's name must appear above the dialogue in ALL CAPS
- **Extension:** A character who is speaking offscreen should have the extension (O.S.) after their name and a character who is doing voiceover should have the extension (V.O) after their name
- **Parenthetical:** Action (ex. Laughing hysterically) or attitude direction for dialogue (ex. Sarcastically)
- **Subheader:** Use a subheader when a full scene heading isn't necessary (ex. If you're shooting in a house, a subheader would indicate a change in rooms. Within a room, a subheader would indicate a detail within the room)
- **Transition:** Description of how one scene transitions to another that also serves as film editing instructions. Transitions are right-justified, written in ALL CAPS, and end in TO: (ex. CUT TO:)
- **Intercut:** Instructions for a series of quick cuts between two scene locations, written in ALL CAPS
- **Mores and Continueds:** Use (MORE) and (CONT'D) between pages to indicate the same character is still speaking
- **Page Number:** Located on the upper right corner of each page

See these screenplay elements in action on the next page!

# SCREENPLAY TEMPLATE



# SCREENPLAY SYNOPSIS INSTRUCTIONS

It's important that the writing for your story synopsis is very visual, because film is a visual medium, and that it lives up to the promises of your selected genre throughout the rising action. For example, in a fantasy film you may constantly involve magical creatures or wizards. In a science-fiction story, the majority of the film may be set in outer space or involve technology our world has yet to invent. In a traditional western, the film should take place between the American Civil War and the turn of the century, west of the Mississippi River. A comedy should be full of humorous and whacky situations and developments.

**Format:** 12pt., Courier Font. Single space. Standard margins.

**Length:** 1 page

**What to include:**

- Title of your screenplay
- Genre of your screenplay
- ACT 1 (1 paragraph)
- ACT 2 (2 paragraphs)
- ACT 3 (1 paragraph)



# SYNOPSIS TEMPLATE & PROMPT

## SYNOPSIS

"Screenplay title"

Genre

### ACT 1 Summary:

The first act (the beginning) is the first quarter of your story and should take up 25% of the synopsis. Act one reveals the protagonist (AKA the most important character in the story) who will learn something throughout the film. Illustrate how the protagonist must change and grow (their "inner journey") by revealing what they need to learn through a stressful conflict. Once that character flaw is revealed, something big and shocking happens (AKA the "inciting incident") about 10% of the way into the story. When this monumental event happens, it triggers the protagonist to respond by making a bold decision to go after something that this character sets out to accomplish by the end of the film (known as the "outer journey").

### ACT 2 Summary:

The second act (the middle) is the pursuit of the protagonist's mission (the outer journey) which comprises 50% of the story. Act two focuses on the escalations and obstacles the protagonist faces in attempting to accomplish their physical goal. The first half of the second act often includes the hardships of training and taking the first bold steps to accomplish the goal. At the end of the first half of act two, the protagonist should be made fully aware of the stakes of the mission he or she has set out upon.

The second half of the second act illustrates the danger and horrible consequences the characters must face to achieve their goals, pushing the protagonist to his or her limits. The film should deal with bigger, scarier, and more daring situations as it goes along, forcing the tension and conflict to constantly reach for new heights. This builds excitement and momentum in the story, twisting and turning in ways the reader should not easily predict but make perfect sense given the protagonist, the lesson they must learn, and the antagonistic force trying to accomplish something that, if accomplished, would keep the protagonist from succeeding.

### ACT 3 Summary:

Act three (the ending) is the last quarter (25%) of the script in which the protagonist either loses it all or rises from the ashes of failure like a reborn phoenix having learned what they needed to learn. He or she takes that knowledge with them into a climactic showdown with the antagonistic force and uses it to succeed in accomplishing the mission while overcoming the antagonist. This is the final confrontation of the story, and it should be a powerful one that feels and is worthy of a cinematic expression. After that, a script ends by illustrating how the world is different for the protagonist in the wake of this story, and how the character arc (inner journey) changes the normal life of that character from then on by wielding the wisdom of the lesson they learned in his or her new everyday life.

# PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

## The Big Open: Screenplay Teaser Competition 2021

I, as parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ ("Minor"), in consideration for Minor being permitted to enter and participate in the Competition described below, hereby consent to Minor's entry and participation in "The Big Open: Screenplay Teaser Competition" (the "Competition") sponsored by EEI Creative Arts and the Center for Future Global Leaders ("Sponsors"). I understand and agree that Minor will be submitting his/her name, age, school, location, and contact information as part of his/her entry, a Submission (consisting of a Cover Page, Screenplay Teaser, and Screenplay Synopsis as described in the Official Terms and Conditions) and if Minor is selected as a Winner, their information will be made public in accordance with the Official Terms and Conditions.

I sign this document to signify my agreement and that of Minor to the terms of the Official Terms and Conditions, located at <https://ecayouthshorts.us.launchpad6.com/thebigopen/terms-and-conditions>. I will accept, as applicable, any award attributable to Minor's entry and I hereby agree to execute any additional form(s) that may be required with regard to Minor's participation in the Competition and understand and agree that any failure to do so will result in disqualification of Minor in the Competition.

I have read this entire Parental Consent and fully understand its contents.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_