AESTHETICS OF SCREEN

Jinsa K Joy

Department of Multimedia

What is a screenplay?

A screenplay (or script) is a complete description of an entire movie. It is the basic plan that everyone follows to make a movie from start to finish.

What is in a screenplay?

- Information about the characters
- Dialogue and actions of the characters
- Locations
- Props
- Camera angles

A screenplay is an example of creative writing. Choose a topic that really interests you. Write about what you know and use people you know as a way to start writing. You could chose your uncle as the basis of a character even if your story takes place 100 years ago.

Ways to find Inspiration

- Look in a newspaper for current stories
- Ask yourself, "what if…"
- Listen to people talk

Types of Stories

- ## Character driven
  - Focuses on people and what happens to them

- ## Plot driven
  - Focuses on events

Conflicts

- You need conflict to make a story interesting.

- Conflicts can be internal (inside the character's head) or external. It's good to use both.

Character Growth

- The character has a goal
- The character overcomes obstacles
- The character reaches the goal (or does not). That part is up to you.

Remember…

- Even the villain has a goal!

Does your character seem real?

- What makes your character get up in the morning? Motivation?

- What makes your character happy?

- What makes your character upset?

- Does your character have unusual habits or characteristics?

Building Your Story

- Each character needs to seem real
- They all need goals, clear backgrounds, relationships to each other
- Build up each character until you have created a separate world: your screenplay

What is your genre?

- Western
- Horror
- Love Story
- Thriller
- Science Fiction
- Comedy
- Etc.

Audience Expectations

- Western
  - The loner with a moral code
- Horror
  - Conflict between good and evil
- Comedy
  - Ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances or extraordinary people in ordinary circumstances

Things to consider about the protagonist (main character)

- Are they dull at the start and then become interesting?

- Are they smart or a little stupid?

- Are they rich or poor?

- Do they get along with people or are they more difficult?

- Are they shy or outgoing?

The Catalytic Event: In the beginning of a film there is usually some event that changes everything

- A body is discovered

- A woman leaves her husband

- The child discovers a magical box

Narrative Shape

- Does the movie happen over years?
- Does the movie flash back and forth (Pulp Fiction)?
- Does the movie start at the end and work backwards (Momento)?

Dramatic Shape

- The rise and fall of a gangster
- Action concentrated at end? Middle?
- Action packed?
- Sad ending?
- Everyday pace focusing on the lives of the characters

The Three Acts

- Act 1
  - Introduces characters and establishes the conflict that makes up the story. Act 1 ends with the catalytic moment.

Act 2

– Explores the consequences of the catalytic moment. What happens to everyone as a result? Complications?

Act 3

– Tells what finally happens. Resolves any loose ends. We understand what the movie is about.

Telling the story

- Films tell stories in pictures and dialogue
- Screenplays are dramatic
  - Conflict equals drama
  - Lack of conflict equals boring story
- We like to see challenge
- We like to see despair defeated
- We like to see integrity tested

Make sure the story is well structured

- Main story needs to start in the beginning and end at the ending
- Don't make it too complex
- Make sure it is complex enough!
- If there are subplots, do they resolve?

Characters

- Aim to know everything about their backgrounds…even if you don't end up using all that information.

- Avoid lengthy descriptions. Let the story speak for itself.

- Dialogue must sound natural. Read it outloud.

Dialogue

- Avoid long speeches
- Make characters say only what they need to get their idea across
- Keep it short. Write your dialogue and then cut it even shorter. Short and sweet.

Location

- What will the camera show?
- Small details can show a lot about the character

Other things to consider about the character

- Name. The name is important. It can convey a great deal about the character.

- Costume. Consider what everyone is or should be wearing.

- Voice. What does your character sound like? Accent?