

FORMATTING *the* SCRIPT



CUT TO:

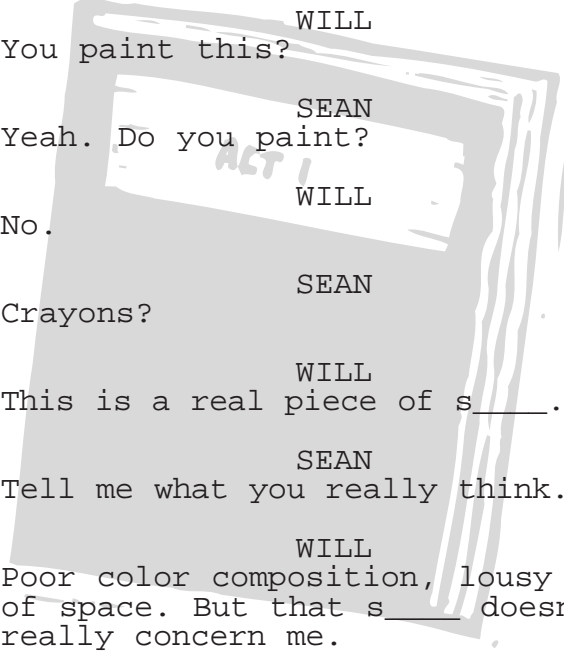
There are two kinds of screenplays—those that are developed specifically for film, and those that are adapted for film from another published work. Both use the same standard format, typed in 12-pt. Courier.

Dialog is centered on the page in lines of about 3 inches. The characters' names are typed in capital letters. Descriptions of how a character is to speak the lines and what he or she does as they speak are enclosed in parentheses. Scene headings ("slug lines") appear in capital letters. Descriptions of settings and the action that takes place are typed in lines of about 6 inches long.

This section of the script for the film, *Good Will Hunting*, at right, shows the correct format (*Good Will Hunting* won the 1997 Academy Award for original screenplay). Notice how little dialog each character has at one time, and how much the characters convey by *how* they say their lines and what they do. Some dialog and description of the setting has been omitted where the ** appears.

INT. SEAN'S OFFICE-DAY

Sean's office is comfortable.** There is a PAINTING on the wall behind Sean. Sean is seated behind a desk.** It is a picture of an old sailboat in a tremendous storm—by no means a masterpiece. Will studies it.



WILL
You paint this?

SEAN
Yeah. Do you paint?

WILL
No.

SEAN
Crayons?

WILL
This is a real piece of s_____.

SEAN
Tell me what you really think.

WILL
Poor color composition, lousy use of space. But that s_____ doesn't really concern me.

SEAN
What does?

WILL
The color here, see how dark it is? It's interesting.

SEAN
What is?

WILL
I think you're one step away from cutting your ear off. You ever hear the saying "Any port in a storm"?

Now, watch another film that you would like to see. Concentrate on the visual elements of the story. How much do you learn about the story from what the characters *do*? How much do you learn from what they *say*?

Title of film: _____
On the back of this sheet, briefly explain what the story was

about, describe one or two scenes that you thought were especially effective and explain why.

Now it's your turn to become a screenwriter. Working from the treatment you developed in Activity 1, develop the script for the first 10 minutes of your story. Keep in mind that a film is a visual story and that it isn't necessary to have lots of dialog. Each page of your script should equal about one minute of screen time.