

LEARNING *from* the WINNERS



In the first three activities, we learned that a good screenplay is a story told with pictures—we see more of the story than we are told in words. We learned that a screenplay has three acts—a beginning, a middle and an end. And, we learned that screenplays can be original works or they can be adapted from previously published material. Now it's time to look at this year's nominees. They will be announced on February 9. List the nominees for each category in the space below.

**THE NOMINEES FOR BEST SCREENPLAY
BASED ON MATERIAL PREVIOUSLY
PRODUCED OR PUBLISHED ARE:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**THE NOMINEES FOR BEST SCREENPLAY
WRITTEN DIRECTLY FOR THE SCREEN ARE:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Pick one film that you would like to see from the list of nominees for best adapted screenplay. After viewing the film, read the book or other source material upon which it is based. Then, in the space below, tell whether you agree or disagree with the nomination. (Keep in mind that the nomination is based on the screenplay, not the source.) How does the screenplay compare to the source? Why do you think the screenwriter made the changes that he or she did? Do you agree with the changes? Would you have made other changes? Which version of the story did you prefer—the film or the source material?



Now, pick one film from the list of nominees for best original screenplay. After viewing the film, describe why you think the nomination was given. How well did the writer set up the story? Did the writer maintain the tension as the story unfolded? Did you like the way the story was resolved? If not, how would you have resolved it differently?

Now, you be the judge. Using what you know about each of the nominated films—either from seeing them or reading about them—predict the winners. Draw a star by the film in each category that you think will win for best screenwriting. Then, watch the Academy Awards on March 21 or read the paper the following day to see how you did!

**For more information about the
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and
Sciences, visit these Web sites:**

- <http://www.oscars.org>
- <http://www.oscar.com>

Additional Resources

- American Cinema: One Hundred Years of Filmmaking*, Vol. 1, by Jeanine Basinger. Rizzoli, 1994.
- From Script to Screen: Collaborative Art of Filmmaking*, by Linda Seger and Edward Jay Whitmore. H. Holt & Co., 1994.
- Movie Magic: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Filmmaking*, by Robin Cross. Sterling, 1996.
- Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, by Syd Field. Dell Publishing, 1994.
- Writing for Film and Television*, by Stewart Bronfeld. Touchstone, 1986.