

## Notes for Hastings Writers Group

### Script Formats

There follows some (simplified) examples of a play script, a screenplay and a radio play.

If you'd like to see the complete script formats from The BBC, I've put links at the end of this document.

I prefer to use a simple approach to a script for the early draft so I don't have to worry about technical details. Computers allow non-linear editing, so if I'm stuck on a scene I make a note, move on and come back to it later.

I then format the script when I think I've got a draft that's working.

This works for me, but if you have one of the apps designed for script formatting, then you may want to use the format of choice as you write.

#### Scene 1

Action description...

Character 1

Character 1 speech in an indented paragraph here...

Character 2

If there is a Character 2 there speech goes here

Broken with a description of action ...

**I write highlighted notes or reminders to come back to fix or add something.**

Scene 2

And so on...

## Simple Versions Of BBC Script Formats

There follows a (simplified) example of a play script, a screenplay and a radio play.

This is approximately how you would format if submitting to the BBC and most other companies.

**If you'd like to see the complete script formats from The BBC, I've put links at the end of this document.**

**I can't say what your judge is expecting. He may have his own ideas.**

Asking you to say if you're writing for a **proscenium, thrust, in-the-round or outdoor** may imply he's expecting more direction in the script than is usual...

Those theatre locations may not lend themselves to a particularly intimate performance. Television and Radio would suit a more intimate atmosphere.

Film scripts are written in Courier 12pt (No exceptions)

When published in books they are reformatted in more usual typefaces.

If you have a script formatting app it should be automatic.

Your office app will probably have Courier New, which is usually an acceptable substitute.

The average timing for a screenplay in this format is one minute per page. This probably won't hold true for a monologue.

The theatre script example from the BBC is also in Courier 12pt.

Your judge may be used to seeing plays in another typeface.

And the BBC radio format uses Arial 12pt.

The title page is not numbered, so numbering begins on the first page of the script.

A THEATRE PLAY  
by  
Hastings Writers

A script will have  
a title page with your  
address, contact number,  
and email.

If submitting a spec  
script to a production  
company and you have an  
agent, their contact  
details go here.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

A THEATRE PLAY

THE SCENE ACTION IS IN CAPITALS WITH  
PARAGRAPHS DOUBLE SPACED.

SMITH IS SITTING IN THE CONTROL ROOM OF  
A SPACESHIP THAT APPEARS TO BE BUILT OF  
MECCANO.

THIS SHOULD DESCRIBE THE SET OR THE  
NECESSARY ACTION. DON'T DESCRIBE  
CHARACTERS' THOUGHTS OR TALK ABOUT  
THEIR FEELINGS OR HISTORY (BACKSTORY).

CHARACTER NAME Hello Earth, Smith calling..  
Your character's speech is written here. As this  
is a monologue, you won't be switching between  
characters.

YOUR CHARACTER'S SPEECH CAN BE  
INTERRUPTED BY ACTION.

You don't need to repeat the character's name  
when the speech continues...

As you will have noticed the script is written in  
the monospace typeface Courier 12pt.  
Actually Courier New, which should be close  
enough.

This typeface is an absolutely rigid requirement  
for a professional (industry) film script and is  
also used for scripts by BBC.

Your script should have a title page which is not  
numbered. So the script starts at page 1.

Page numbers(-n-)in the centre of the footer...

A FILM SCREENPLAY

by

Hastings Writers

A script will have  
a title page with your  
address, contact number,  
and email.

If submitting a spec  
script to a production  
company and you have an  
agent, their contact  
details go here.

"SCREENPLAY TITLE"

FADE IN:

INT LOCATION #1 - NIGHT

In a screenplay...

Scene headings are typed in capitals and must indicate: interior or exterior, the location, and day or night.

Scene action is double-spaced under the heading in sentence case text with double-spacing between paragraphs.

Smith is sitting in the control room of a spaceship that appears to be built of Meccano.

This should describe the set or the necessary action. Don't describe characters' thoughts or talk about their feelings or history (backstory).

EXT LOCATION #2 - DAY

A new scene with the heading triple-spaced from the preceding scene. Always follow a scene heading with a line of scene action.

CHARACTER NAME

(Pause)

Character names appear in capitals indented to around the middle of the page, but not centred.

The first letter of each name is always in alignment.

If you are at the bottom of the page and your character continues speaking, indicate it thus.

(MORE)

CHARACTER NAME (CONT'D)

Split the page only after a sentence.

(Beat)

As you will have noticed the script is written in the monospace typeface Courier 12pt. Actually Courier New, which should be close enough.

This typeface is an absolutely rigid requirement for a professional (Hollywood style) script and also used for by BBC.

Your script should have a title page which is not numbered. So the script starts at page 1.

Page numbers(n.)at the right of the header...

INT LOCATION #1 - NIGHT

It is standard practice to sign-off a film script with THE END centred on the page, preceded by FADE OUT.

FADE OUT:

THE END

A RADIO PLAY  
by  
Hastings Writers

A script will have  
a title page with your address,  
contact number, and email.

If submitting a spec script to a  
production company and you have  
an agent, their contact details go  
here.



SCENE 1.

RADIO SCRIPT

SCENE STYLE IS THE BBC'S HOUSE  
FORMAT GENERALLY USED FOR  
DRAMA, PLAYS AND NON-AUDIENCE  
COMEDY. TECHNICAL DIRECTIONS FOR  
SOUND AND MUSIC APPEAR IN  
CAPITALS UNDERLINED

OPTIONAL SCENE NUMBERS AND  
HEADINGS INDICATE THE START OF A  
NEW SEQUENCE.

A SEQUENCE IN A RADIO PLAY COULD  
BE ONE LINE LONG OR LAST FOR MANY  
PAGES, AND CAN BE ANYTHING FROM A  
MONOLOGUE TO A COLLECTION OF  
BRIEF SCENES OR SOUND EFFECTS.

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CHARACTER NAME:

Your character's speech starts on the same line as the character name.

As this is a monologue, you won't be switching between characters.

The dialogue is double spaced from the scene description.

(BEAT) Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the dialogue. (PAUSE) It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

THERE IS AN ELECTRONIC BEEPING  
SOUND.

If you are at the bottom of a page and a character is still speaking, indicate that it continues with the

CHARACTER'S NAME/ CONT'D OVER'.

Split the page only after a sentence.

(CHARACTER /CONT'D OVER)

CHARACTER NAME (CONT'D):

The BBC weren't too fussy about typefaces in the past. The radio department seem to have settled on Arial 12pt...

Pages are numbered (-n-) in the centre of the footer.

The traditional sign off for a BBC radio script is...

END

The full BBC format guides are:

[Theatre Stage Play](#)

[Screenplay \(Film\)](#)

[Radio Play](#)