

How to write a movie script

Lesson Objective: To introduce the students to movie script writing and enable them to make a first attempt at writing a Hollywood style script. This is achieved by using snippets of a *Batman Begins* script to make the students familiar with the function and formatting of script elements.

Skill Level: Upper-intermediate and up

Preparation Time: About 20 minutes (assuming you have a laser printer)

Lesson Duration: 1 hour

Fair use:

Within this lesson are some small snippets of a draft *Batman Begins* script (written by David Goyer) and also some screen shots from the *Batman Begins* movie (directed by Christopher Nolan). As this lesson is educational in nature and is free of charge, the inclusion of the above is considered to be *educational fair use*.

To learn more about *fair use*, visit <http://ogc.harvard.edu/pages/copyright-and-fair-use>.

Preparation advice

- Print out one copy of the handouts for each group that you will teach.
- Print out one copy of the answers for each student, plus one copy for you to use in class.
 - To save paper, print the answers double sided, two pages per side. It should be possible to change the print settings in *File* → *Print* → *Properties*.
- Prepare one copy of the script jigsaw for each group. The script segments have to be printed, cut out separately and then mixed up.

Teacher's guide

Note: If there is more than one student, put the students into pairs or groups.

Page 1: Have the students guess the movie titles by looking at associated words / phrases. They should write their answer in the central box, as shown in the example.

When they are done, go over the answers.

Page 2: First, fold the paper to hide part 2. In part 1 the students have to write the names of the script elements next to their description. The labelled script elements shown in scene 298 should help with this. When the students are done, give them feedback and clarify the use of the script elements if necessary.

The student can now unfold the paper, revealing part 2. Here, the students have to look at scene 299 and then, in their groups, identify the 5 different script elements that were introduced in part 1. They don't need to write down their answers.

Review the answers for part 2 when they are done. Next is the *script jigsaw*.

Please turn over...

- Script jigsaw: Tell the students that they will be given strips of paper (the script jigsaw) that together form part of the *Batman Begins* script (scenes 3 to 6). Inform them that the strips are out of order and that they need to be put back in order. Give each group a stack of strips.
- Once they are done, give them feedback.
- Page 3: Have the students read scenes 3 to 6 and then answer the questions about them. As well as writing the answer, they have to note the scene number and script element which provided the answer.
- Review their answers when they are finished.
- Page 4: This page features scene 9 from the script. Questions 1 and 2 enquire about the use of INT. and EXT. in the scene.
- Question 3 requires the students to analyse the formatting of each script element and then tick the boxes in the table which accurately describe the alignment and case of that element. "Scene number" has been done as an example but note that the "case" boxes have been blacked out, since numbers have no case.
- After they complete the questions, review the answers.
- Pages 5: Scenes 11 to 13 are shown in comic book format on page 5. The students have to use and 6: the comic to write these scenes in script format on page 6. The vertical lines on page 6 are there to help the students align the script elements correctly and consistently (as covered on page 4).
- Give the students support while they perform the task and when they finish, give them feedback.
- It may be a good idea (if there is time) to have the groups swap scripts so they can give each other feedback.