

Training for Trainers  
HALLE (Germany) 30th Sept - 2nd Oct 2013

# Script Writing for Animation

[www.script-matters.com](http://www.script-matters.com)



# The Script

"All you need is a great script, a great script and a great script".

**ALFRED HITCHCOCK**



# The Script

If you're sitting in your minivan, playing your computer animated films for your children in the back seat, is it the animation that's entertaining you as you drive and listen? No, it's the storytelling. That's why we put so much importance on story. No amount of great animation will save a bad story.

**JOHN LASSETER**



# The Script

Writing for Animation is  
writing  
for  
a **Visual Medium.**



# The Script

**SHOW** not TELL



# Animation Scripts

- Animation scripts are completed at an earlier stage than live action.
- Screenplays are approx. **80 pages** in length.
- Final production scripts are locked off prior to voice recording and story boarding.



# Script: The Basics.

## CHARACTER

1. **Strong main character. Likable. One clear voice.**
  - i. WOODY, WALLACE, SPONGEBOB, BART SIMPSON
2. **One or Two strong supporting characters. Allies.**
  - i. BUZZ, GROMIT, PATRICK, HOMER
3. **The Villain or Antagonist.**
  - i A person or a situation
4. **The Human characters in animation have Identifiable, stylised characterisations.**
  - i. MR AND MRS INCREDIBLE,
  - ii. MR FREDERICKSON,
  - iii. CORALINE.
5. **Animal characters are Always anthropomorphic.**
  - i. ICE AGE, FINDING NEMO, MADAGASCAR.



# Script: The Basics.

## WORLDS

- i. The USP of animation.
- iii. Highly imaginative worlds. Worlds without restriction.
- ii. UNDER THE SEA (NEMO), IN THE BEDROOM (TOY STORY)  
BEHIND THE BEDROOM WALL, (MONSTERS INC) UP IN THE AIR (UP)
- iii. From this fantasy world comes animation magic.**





# Script: The Basics.

## **THEMES**

- i Universal moral themes.
- ii Cross cultural, social, ethnic divides.



# Script: The Basics.

## DEMOGRAPHIC

- i. Animation is truly for audiences of all ages and cultures.
- ii. Comedy is King.



# Script: The Basics.

- Screenwriting is an **Art**. Imaginative. Original. Creative.
- Screenwriting is a **Craft**. Technical. Structural.



# Script: The Basics.

**The art challenges the technology  
and the technology inspires the  
art.**

**JOHN LASSETER**



# Script: The Basics

- A screenplay is a **story**
  - told in **dialogue** and **description**
    - placed within the context of a **dramatic structure**.



# Script: The Basics

- To tell a visual story
- Through Action.
- Revealing plot.
- Developing characters.
- Examining themes.



# Script: The Basics

- Create a **compelling** story
- Through **surprising and unexpected** Action.
- Revealing plot **without foreshadowing solutions.**
- Developing **original** characters
- Examining themes **without preaching a message.**



# Script: The Craft

- A story is revealed through a series of events, known as **SCENES**.
- Scenes reveal relevant information about **plot** and **character**.
- Each scene must deliver **meaningful change**.
- Something of **value** happens to **someone** or **something**.





# Script: The Craft

"Screenplays are Structure."

**WILLIAM GOLDMAN**



# Script: The Structure

- Structure is the technical spine on which each scene hangs from.
- The Structure is a story telling format divided into 3 parts or **ACTS**.
- Based on Aristotle's dramatic theory.



# Script: The Structure

- **Act 1. Set up.** 20 pages.
- **Act II. Story Development.** 40 pages.
- **Act III. Climax & Resolution.** 20 pages.



# Script: Act 1

- Who is the main character?
- What is the story about?
- What is the conflict
  - The **Inciting Incident**.



# Script: Act 1

The **Suspension** of **Disbelief**



# Script: Act 1

Want v Need = Character Arc



# Script: Act 1

DRAMA is CONFLICT

- Conflict is an inherent incompatibility between the objectives of two or more characters or forces.



# Script: Act 2

- Developing the action (A plot)
- Developing the main character (B plot)
- Building relationships
- Exploring the theme
- Developing additional subplots





# Script: Act 2

- The **A plot** is the **action** storyline
- The **B plot** is the **emotional** storyline



# Script: Act 2

## TURNING POINTS

At beginning of Act II and Act III.

Raises the dramatic tension

Creates momentum through unexpected story development

Raises the dramatic stakes



# Script: Act 3

- The climax (of the action)
  - The resolution (of the story)
    - Fade to Black



# Script: Television

## TV script format

- **Single drama (one off)**
- **A mini series (several episodes)**
- **A returning series (multiple episodes)**



# Script: Television

Animation Series formats:-

Episode Length:- 1, 7, 11, 22 minutes

Series Batches:- 13, 26, 52 episodes



# Script: Television

**Scripts:-** 3/4 pages longer than minuted broadcast length.

**Development time:-** Limited

**Writing time per episode:-** between 2-4 months.



# Script: Television

- Development Workshop**
- Bible**
- Premise**
- Outline**
- Scene by scene**
- Drafts x 2**
- Polish**



# Script: Feedback

DEVELOPMENT BY COMMITTEE

- Broadcaster
- Co producer
- Series producer





# Script: Feedback

- An effective script producer or editor offers the writer
  - creative support
  - managerial guidance



# Final Thoughts

Every single thing you see on-screen came out of somebody's creativity. It doesn't exist. Nature didn't deliver it to us. Everything had to be dreamed.

**Jeffrey Katzenberg**

