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# SCREENPLAYS 101 - PART 2: BASIC FORMATTING

## Instructor

NICHOLAS PAPPAS

## Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

## Course length

9 modules

1 hours, 34 minutes of video

3 credit hours

## Course Description

This course is a Part 2. In a Screenplays 101 course, screenwriter Nick Pappas covers both Structure and Formatting. Here in Part 2 we'll cover Basic Formatting. If you have not already watched Screenplays 101 – Part 1: Basic Structure, I highly recommend you go back and do so now. Having that knowledge under your belt will help you navigate Part 2 of this course.

The goal is that, by the end of this course, your students have a basic understanding of how a screenplay is formatted and why it is formatted that way, all with an eye toward developing their own screenplay.

## About the Instructor

Nicholas C. Pappas is a director, playwright, and dramaturge. His plays include The Ballad of 423 and 424 (Heideman Award; Actors Theatre of Louisville), Fatty (Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor), Including Shooter (called "best play of the season" by critic Peter Filichia), and The Dreams in Which I'm Dying (Deb Aquila reading series with the American Theater Group). He has been published by Dramatics Magazine and Playscripts. Nicholas has done dramaturgical work at The Center Theatre Group, San Francisco Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, TheatreFolk, and for several college programs. He has directed for San Francisco Playhouse, Moorpark College, San Francisco State University, and others. A graduate of San Francisco State University's MFA program, he teaches at Moorpark College and is currently in development on several television and film projects. Keep up to date at [nicholascpappas.com](http://nicholascpappas.com).

## Course Curriculum

### Module 0: Introduction 7:25

This module introduces Part 2 of the Screenplays course, and outlines what will be covered in the material

### Module 1A: Basic Screenplay Formatting: Writing Programs and Title Pages 12:04

This is Module 1A: The Basics of Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover writing programs and title pages.

### Module 1B: Basic Screenplay Formatting: Scene Headings, Character Tags, and Parentheticals 13:38

This is Module 1B: The Basics of Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover scene headers, action lines, character tags, dialogue, and parentheticals.

### Module 1C: Basic Screenplay Formatting: Transitions and Shots 9:25

This is Module 1C: The Basics of Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover transitions and shots.

### Module 2A: Advanced Screenplay Formatting: Extensions and Subheaders 14:17

This is Module 2A: Advanced Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover extensions and subheaders.

### Module 2B: Advanced Screenplay Formatting: Highlighting Important Moments 14:02

This is Module 2B: Advanced Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover character introductions, montages, flashbacks, supers, sound, and how to highlight important moments within a script.

### Module 2C: Advanced Screenplay Formatting: Dialogue other than English 4:57

This is Module 2C: Advanced Screenplay Formatting, where we'll cover dialogue other than English in an English language screenplay.

### Module 3: White Space 12:58

This is Module 3: White Space. In this module we're going to take a quick look at the aesthetics of the words on the page and how we can give a reader a positive reading experience.

### Module 4: Wrap-Up 5:48

This module wraps up both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Screenplays 101 courses.

# Standards Connections

## National Core Arts Standards

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr1.1.6.c - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

## California VAPA Standards (2019)

### 6.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

6.TH:Cr1.b - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

### 7.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

7.TH:Cr1.b - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Prof.TH:Cr1.a - Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

### Acc.TH:Re7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Acc.TH:Re7 - Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.

### 6.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

6.TH:Cr2.b - Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

### 6.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

6.TH:Cr3.a - Receive and incorporate feedback to refine a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Prof.TH:Cn11.2.a - Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using research methods.

### Prof.TH:Re9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Prof.TH:Re9.b - Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/ theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

### Acc.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Acc.TH:Cn11.2.a - Formulate creative choices for a devised or scripted drama/theatre work based on research about the selected topic.

## Colorado Academic Standards - Drama and Theatre Arts

### Sixth Grade

DT.6.1.1.c - Students Can: Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

## Florida Sunshine State Standards

### Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.68.C.1.5 - Describe how a theatrical activity can

entertain or instruct an audience.

TH.912.C.2.2 - Construct imaginative, complex scripts and revise them in collaboration with actors to convey story and meaning to an audience.

TH.912.C.3.1 - Explore commonalities between works of theatre and other performance media.

### Historical & Global Connections

TH.68.H.3.1 - Identify principles and techniques that are shared between the arts and other content areas.

TH.912.H.3.3 - Apply knowledge of non-theatre content areas to enhance presentations of characters, environments, and actions in performance.

### Innovation, Technology & the Future

TH.68.F.1.4 - Survey an aspect of theatre to understand the ways in which technology has affected it over time.

TH.68.F.3.1 - Practice safe, legal, and responsible use of copyrighted, published plays to show respect for intellectual property and the playwright.

### Organizational Structure

TH.68.O.3.1 - Compare theatre and its elements and vocabulary to other art forms.

TH.912.O.1.1 - Research and analyze a dramatic text by breaking it down into its basic, structural elements to support development of a directorial concept, characterization, and design.

### Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.5 - Write monologues, scenes, and/or short plays using principles and elements of writing found in dramatic literature.

TH.912.S.3.9 - Research, analyze, and explain the processes that playwrights, directors, designers, and performers use when developing a work that conveys artistic intent.

## Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts

### Grade 6 - Responding

TA6.RE.2 - Critique various aspects of theatre and other media., a. Identify the purpose of a critique., b. Evaluate a theatre production using an assessment instrument.

### Grade 6 - Connecting

TA6.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Identify similarities between theatre and other art forms., b. Draw conclusions about the relationships between theatre and life., c. Define tasks associated with a theatre production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

### Grade 7 - Creating

TA7.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Create ideas for stories., b. Analyze the theme and structure of a play., c. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., d. Utilize dramatic conventions in the scriptwriting process (e.g. stage directions, dialogue, scenes).

### Grade 8 - Creating

TA8.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Classify different points of view in a story., b. Identify, analyze, and articulate the structure of a script., c. Utilize improvisation techniques to generate script ideas., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script.

### Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSA.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.,

a. Use script analysis in the development and presentation of formal and informal theatre performances., b. Examine various theories of dramatic structure., c. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to create acting choices or directorial concepts.

TAHSA.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Examine theatre practices regarding the development, structure, layout, and format of scripts., b. Use improvisation, personal experiences, heritage, imagination, literature, and history to develop scripts., c. Perform formal and informal monologues and scenes based on published and original scripts.

#### **Grades 9-12 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Creating**

TAHSAD.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Examine various theories of dramatic structure., b. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to create acting choices or directorial concepts.

#### **Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating**

TAHSFT.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process., b. Assess the need for script analysis, concept development, and directorial and technical concerns of a theatrical script., c. Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue., d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

#### **Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Responding**

TAHSTL.RE.1 - Evaluate various aspects of theatre literature using appropriate supporting evidence., a. Develop and apply a set of comprehensive criteria for theatre text analysis., b. Compare and contrast theatre texts to live/film performance.

## **North Carolina Essential Standards 2024**

### **Sixth Grade Connect**

6.CN.2.1 - Describe creative, technical, and business careers in theatre.

### **Sixth Grade Respond**

6.RE.1.1 - Analyze dramatic elements in theatrical works.

### **Seventh Grade Respond**

7.RE.1.1 - Compare dramatic structures in various genres and styles.

### **Eighth Grade Present**

8.PR.2.1 - Develop various styles of literature into formal or informal presentations.

### **Beginning High School Connect**

B.CN.2.1 - Identify the various roles that contribute to the creation, production, design, and marketing of theatre.

### **Beginning High School Respond**

B.RE.1.1 - Analyze the dramatic structure of written and presented theatrical works.

B.RE.1.2 - Interpret how theatre artists use dramatic structure to convey meaning.

B.RE.2.2 - Generate verbal or written critique of theatrical works.

### **Intermediate High School Present**

I.PR.1.1 - Identify areas for improvement based on specific objective feedback and criteria.

### **Intermediate High School Respond**

I.RE.1.1 - Compare the structure, style and genre of various written and presented theatrical works.

### **Accomplished High School Connect**

AC.CN.1.2 - Evaluate how skills honed in theatre strengthen work in other academic or professional domains.

### **Advanced High School Connect**

AD.CN.2.1 - Identify the training, education, skills, and plan of action necessary for success in a selected career in theatre arts.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts**

### **MS 117.211 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.F - identify the structure and form in examples of dramatic literature.

### **MS 117.211 LI - Historical and cultural relevance**

C.4.B - explore the influences of theatre, film, television, and electronic media such as key developments, figures, and works in society.

### **MS 117.211 LI - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.C - identify production elements of theatre, film, television, and other media.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

B.1.F - analyze and evaluate the structure and form of dramatic literature.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Historical and cultural relevance**

B.4.C - explore the roles of theatre, film, television, and electronic media such as key developments, figures, and works on American society.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Critical evaluation and response**

B.5.C - demonstrate knowledge of production elements in theatre, film, television, and other media.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

B.1.F - explore and evaluate the structure and form of dramatic literature.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Critical evaluation and response**

B.5.C - demonstrate knowledge of production elements in theatre, film, television, and other media.

### **HS 117.315 LI - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.E - evaluate film, television, or other media in written or oral form with precise and specific observations using appropriate evaluative theatre vocabulary such as intent, structure, effectiveness, and value.

### **HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.E - identify examples of theatrical conventions in theatre, film, television, and electronic media.

### **HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.E - distinguish between the theatrical conventions of theatre, film, television, and other media.

### **HS 117.317 LIII - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.E - make judgments about selected career and avocational opportunities such as theatre education, arts

administration, performance, design, management, and playwriting in theatre, film, television, and other media and analyze the training, skills, self-discipline, and artistic discipline needed to pursue such opportunities.

#### **HS 117.318 LIV - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.D - compare the structure of theatre to that of film, television, and other media.

#### **HS 117.318 LIV - Critical evaluation and response**

C.5.E - evaluate selected career and avocational opportunities such as theatre education, arts administration, performance, design, management, playwriting, and dramatic criticism in theatre, film, television, and other media and analyze the training, skills, self-discipline, and artistic discipline needed to pursue such opportunities.

### **Alberta, Canada**

#### **Playwriting - Drama 20**

1 - demonstrate understanding of the basic structure of a play

3 - demonstrate understanding of script format

#### **Junior Goal II Objectives**

become familiar with dramatic terminology and script format

#### **Senior Goal II Objectives**

explore various approaches to analyzing a script for purposes of study and/or presentation

#### **Orientation Drama 10**

work with abstract concepts

### **British Columbia (2018)**

#### **GRADE 6 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting**

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions

#### **GRADE 6 - ARTS - Communicating and documenting**

Experience, document and present creative works in a variety of ways

#### **GRADE 7 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting**

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions

#### **GRADE 8 - ARTS - Reasoning and reflecting**

Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists motivations and meanings

#### **GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Reasoning and reflecting**

Describe, interpret, and evaluate how performers and playwrights use dramatic structures, elements, and techniques to create and communicate ideas

Develop and refine ideas and technical skills to improve the quality of performance pieces

#### **GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Create dramatic works with an intended audience in mind

Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas and emotions

#### **GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Create dramatic works for an intended audience

#### **GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand**

Explore educational, personal, and professional

opportunities in the performing arts

#### **GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Explore and Create**

Develop dramatic works for an intended audience

### **Ontario, Canada**

#### **Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Connections Beyond the Classroom**

B.3.3 - identify connections between their learning in drama and possible employment opportunities in the broader educational and arts sectors (e.g., production and/or performance roles in community theatre, television/radio broadcasting, filmmaking)

#### **Grade 11 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process**

B.1.2 - analyse drama works to determine how they communicate ideas about issues, culture, and society

#### **Grade 12 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process**

B.1.3 - analyse and evaluate the aesthetic and technical aspects of a variety of drama works and/or theatrical productions

### **Virginia Standards Of Learning (2020)**

#### **Grade Eight**

8.9 - The student will examine a selected career in theatre, television, film, or contemporary media.

#### **Theatre Arts III: Intermediate Acting & Playwriting**

TIII.10 - The student will investigate tools and techniques for contemporary media production, including camera techniques, film terminology, acting for the camera, creating screenplays, and the editing process.