

## Screenplay Printing Guide

Use a plain cover. White or pastel card stock, not leatherette. Avoid using screw posts or plastic-comb binding. **Bind your script with sturdy, brass fasteners**, such as those made by ACCO®. The ones Staples sells are too flimsy. Readers hate it when a script falls apart in their hands. You can order professional-quality script supplies online from WritersStore.com.

Although **scripts are printed on three-hole-punched paper**, there's an unwritten rule that speculative scripts are bound with two fasteners, not three. Why this tends to be common practice is unclear. Perhaps it's because submissions often get copied by the studio's story department, and it's easier (and cheaper) if there are only two brads. It's an indication of how petty some readers can be that they judge your professionalism by the number of brads you use. However, to avoid this pitfall it's a good idea to **use only two brass fasteners to bind your script - using the top and bottom holes only**.

Kill the graphics. No pictures on the cover or within the script. This is a dead give-away that the writer is an amateur. Use a basic fly page with the script's title, the writer's name, and contact information. No more, no less. The title should appear on line 25, centered, in quotes, and in ALL CAPS. There should be four blank lines between it and "Written by" (also centered), and one blank line above the writer's name, which should be centered on line 32. The contact information should appear at the left margin, its last line being an inch from the bottom of the page (i.e. line 60). The draft date is not needed on a speculative script (as opposed to a shooting script), and may be left off the fly page.

**Print your script on only one side of the page.** Double-sided printing may save paper and make your script appear slimmer, but readers tend to find it awkward and annoying. It takes twice as long to turn a page, which may result in the perception your script reads slow.

Try to keep it under 120 pages, but no shorter than 100 pages. Longer screenplays used to be more acceptable. (The final draft of Chinatown, for example, was 145 pages.) However, the trend is toward shorter, punchier scripts. The rule is a page per minute. Comedies tend to be shorter than dramas. Don't cheat by narrowing your margins to shorten the page count. The standard width for a dialogue element, for example, is 33 characters. Narrower margins make it more difficult to estimate the running time. Even worse, a wide swath of dialogue forces the reader to spend more time on each page.

**Page numbers go at the top**, aligned with the right margin, and followed by a period. There is no need to preface the number with the word "Page." The page numbers should be in the same typeface (12-point Bitstream® Courier 10 Pitch) as the text. The page count begins with the first page of the script, not including the fly page. No page number should appear on the first page. There's no need to put the title, draft information, and date in the header. It's only required for "A" and "B" pages when a film is going into production. For spec scripts, the page header should have only the page number. It's customary to place the title at the top of the first page, centered, underscored, and in ALL CAPS.

**Do not send your screenplay as a PDF or any other file unless requested.**

**Need more help? A good source of information is the Story Sense's Screenplay Format Guide by Michael Ray Brown which you can find at <http://www.storysense.com/docs/SPFormat.pdf>.**