Cheat Sheet - Writing a Screenplay

(with Celtcx)

Content

1. Transitions

Describes how each scelch ne leads into next scene
Normally, "directing from the page" should be reserved for production drafts with input from the director→ The only time to use a Transition in a spec script is if it's integral to telling the story.

SMASH CUT:	one scene abruptly cuts to another for aesthetic, narrative, or emotional purpose (f.ex. Waking up from nightmare, or used in montages)
TIME CUT:	to indicate passage of time
DISSOLVE TO (more commonly used than time cut):	When one scene "dissolves" into another scene, almost transforming into that scene. This is primarily used to indicate that time has passed.
MATCH CUT:	to show correlation between something we just saw and something in the new scene - the last shot in the previous scene (say, a hand reaching for a knife) matches the first shot in the new scene (a hand reaching for an apple) → connect scenes on a deeper level - using similar colors, shapes, actions or even dialogue, match cuts add that extra level of meaning to create a more cohesive and seamless narrative.
INTERCUT:	(or cross-cutting) is where you bounce back and forth between two different scenes. It's usually used for phone calls, but not always.
CUT TO:	used rarely, because cut is obvious due to change of scenery

FADE IN/FADE OUT:	Teilweise heißt es, dass vor jedem screenplay, also quasi direkt vor der ersten szene "FADE IN" und ganz zum schluss "FADE OUT" geschrieben wird, wobei bei celtx sagt, dass das heute eigentlich nicht mehr üblich ist und bei black swan haben sie es zb. Auch nicht gemacht, also scheiß drauf? Oder nicht? Kein plan.

2. Shots

The best professional screenwriters know how to suggest shots without actually writing in shots, but if you really insist on describing a particular shot in your screenplay you can format it like a subheading.

```
INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

A RECEPTIONIST sits behind the front desk, typing at a
computer. She looks up as the DOOR CHIMES.

RECEPTIONIST'S POV

Our Hero walks through the door. It swings shut behind him.

OUR HERO

Pauses, observes his surroundings, then approaches the
desk.
```

Helpful Links:
15 Simple Screenplay Rules You Need to Know - The Script Lab
How to Write a Movie Script Like Professional Screenwriters (studiobinder.com)

3. Characters

The character element proceeds **any dialog** spoken by that **character**.

Notation

- The **characters name** should always be **capitalized**.
- If the dialog spoken by a character is **OFF SCREEN**, you must specify it as follows

```
                  JOHN (O.S.)
          Hey! Let me in!
```

- If the character is not on screen but the source of the dialog is, you specify it as **VOICE OVER**
```
                  HENRY (V.O.)
          As far back as I can remember, I
          always wanted to be a gangster.
```
- **All New Notable Character** Names Need to be in **CAPS the First Time** They Appear

- The **first name** you use for one character has to be the name you use throughout the **whole script**.
  - **exception** would be if you had **different versions of your characters** from different time periods — or any equivalent

Introducing a character in a screenplay

- all-capital letters for the name of the character
- Reference to their age
- some information about their traits and personality.
  ```
  FILBERT (9), wiry, lost in his own imaginary world.
  Dressed as a Knight. A toy sword in his other hand.
  ```

4. Dialogue

A special way to break dialogue and still keep the Dialog element format.

how to use
Shift & enter 2x

DUAL DIALOGUE
definition
Portraying **two characters** that speak at once.
Their **lines display next to each other in the script**.

how to use

- Write both characters and their dialogue
- highlight both
- Click the dual dialogue button in the toolbar

Notation

- make sure all minor characters with numbers instead of names stick to the same format
- The **characters name** should always be **capitalized**.

5. Parenthetical

Inserted to **describe what a character is doing while they speak**, or how they are speaking.

Notation

- do **not** include **punctuation**
- are **not capitalized**
- try to keep them **short**, **telegraphically written**
- if you are describing **multiple actions** you should link them together with **semicolons**
- **Never** end a piece of dialog with parenthetical