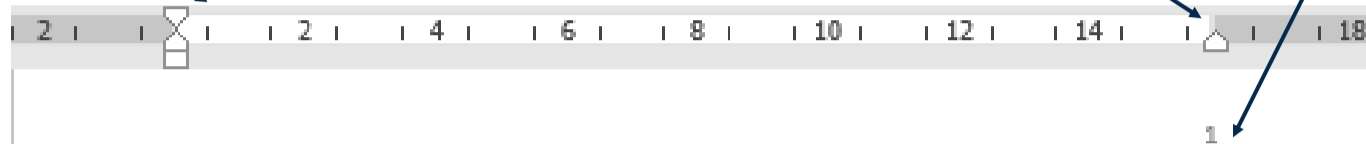


Annotated screenplay—how to format correctly

EDUQAS new spec

Page numbers top right. No page numbers on the title page. The first page of your script is page 1. Go to the insert tab in Word to add page numbers.

To ensure the margins are correct keep these pegs at 0—15 respectively. If you are having a problem with tabbing the dialogue, check they've not moved.



Slugline is always in CAPITAL LETTERS. An abbreviation of exterior or interior followed by a full stop. A brief description of the location and then a dash (-) followed by the time of day. Some writers like to put the slugline in bold, but I prefer not to.

FADE IN:
EXT. EDGE OF PLAYGROUND - DAY
We are at the edge of an empty school playing field, presumably after school. Next to a chain-link fence is NICK, a scowling 10-year-old boy, who wears a school uniform. He appears to have wooden legs. From his hinged knees are some protruding strings leading to traditional crosses of wood, similar to those found on marionettes. These crosses and strings have been tangled around the fence and NICK is stuck. Every so often a ball flies into frame, hitting the fence perilously close to NICK. We soon see who is kicking the ball. It is ROB, also 10, dressed in the same school uniform. He wears Reebok Classics with foil spurs, a large cowboy hat and is looking down, so the brim hides his face. His friends stand behind him in V-formation, all laughing at NICK. He kicks the ball at NICK again, missing by a little. Over this scene, we hear NICK talking to his THERAPIST. ROB slowly lifts his head and we see his face. He is staring evilly at NICK and appears to be chewing tobacco, or maybe gum.

After a slugline there is almost always a concentrated block of **stage directions**. They are written in the present tense. Stage directions set the scene and introduce characters. Character's names are always in capital letters. Some writers like stage directions to be in *italics*, but it is a personal preference.

Characters' names are always in CAPITAL LETTERS and centre aligned.

Dialogue is always left aligned and then tabbed (pressing the tab key) x3 or x4.

Use the cursor at the beginning of your sentence to do this.

NICK
(O.S.)
His name's Rob Forrest. It's nothing I can't handle.
THERAPIST
(O.S.)
You say that Nick, but it's obviously having an effect on you...
During this exchange ROB has been lining up the ball as though he is about to take an important penalty. With a particular malicious look at NICK he kicks the ball hard and with accuracy. The CAMERA focus in tight on a CLOSE UP of NICK. At the moment of impact, we snap to the next scene...

Parenthesis or brackets can be used to either tell the reader / actor that it is voice over (V.O.) or off screen (O.S.).

It can also be used to add emotion or emphasis—(Sad) or (Angry) etc.

INT THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY
...Where the THERAPIST sits behind a desk.
THERAPIST
...After all, you are awfully jaded for a ten-year-old.

Editing cues are right aligned, in capital letters, with a colon:

Unless you are writing a shooting script, most writers don't reference the camera. The new EDUQAS spec ask students **NOT** to refer to the camera in their screenplay. If you wish to refer to sound / sound effects, make it clear in the stage directions, by using capital letters and 'inverted commas' for song titles.

A good rule for a writer to consider is "show, don't tell". If you have a character that is sad or upset— don't tell the reader / actor in the stage directions— show that the character is sad / upset in the stage directions. Show it cinematically using the mise en scene.

Line spacing should be consistent throughout. Don't over use the enter / return key. Line spacing should be 1.15 or 1.5. 2.0 is too far apart.

Font is always Courier New, size 12. An A4 page with correct font and font size roughly equals a minute of screen time.

Left, centre, right and justify alignment options.

