



ELA Virtual Learning

Creative Writing

May 22, 2020



Creative Writing

Lesson: Fri., May 22

Objective/Learning Target: Students will finish their own spec (or original) script.



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Review: Students following along the past couple of weeks have studied existing sitcoms, created outlines, brainstormed ideas, and familiarized themselves in general with writing stories for the screen. Today's lesson should culminate all the work you've put in. You'll have written an entire script for a TV show!



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Warm-up/Review: Over the past couple of days, we have considered the issues with a story's second act, which is notoriously problematic to write. However, through obstacles and subplots, we can work toward the second turning point, which leads into the Act Three, or the resolution of your main plot.



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Lesson: In an article for *The Atlantic*, Noah Charney describes Act Three as “The Triumph/Failure” and “The Kicker.” This is where the protagonist either gets what he wants or goes down in a ball of flames. In [the episode of *The Office*](#) we’ve been referencing, the subplot of Michael’s improv class ends the same way as the main plot began--he’s not invited to a gathering (see page 41). This leads to Michael’s last-ditch attempt for acceptance.



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Lesson (cont'd): If you take a look at the script, the episode ends with Michael's acceptance, which ties together a couple of subplots as well. Michael goes to the office party without an invite and starts to sing a duet...by himself. After an uncomfortable beat, Jim saves him from a public shaming by singing with him, which forwards his romance subplot with Pam (he gets to show he's sensitive and empathetic).



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Lesson (cont'd): The script ends there without what Charney calls “The Kicker,” but if you watch the actual show (available on Netflix), you’ll see that there is a final “gag” that’s not in the script! They go back to the improv class (a well of hilarity) for one final joke.



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Practice: Finish the script! The good news is that Act Three is typically the shortest, and the closer you can make the climax to the end, the better. This episode's climax, for example, is on the last page! (There's no need, essentially, in such a short format, for falling action.)



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Model: [The Office \(“Email Surveillance”\) script](#)

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Additional Practice/Resources:

[How to Become a Television Comedy Writer](#)

[Screenwriting Glossary](#)

[Screenplay Formatter Add-On for Google Docs](#)