



ELA Virtual Learning

Creative Writing

May 19, 2020



Creative Writing

Lesson: Tues., May 19

Objective/Learning Target: Students will write their own spec (or original) script based on their practice.



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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. This week, we will put those ideas into practice by writing a full teleplay (or screenplay specifically for television).



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Warm-up: [Watch this clip](#) from The Office. These scenes take place early in the episode. As you watch (or afterward, as you reflect), take notes on what you understand about the characters as well as how tension or potential conflict is established in the episode.



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Lesson: Act One serves as a set up for the entire episode. These 3-5 scenes establish an inciting incident that leads to the first “turn” or major beat. In the clip you just watched, e-mail surveillance set up in the first scene leads to Michael, the office’s boss, being able to see his employees are having a barbeque without him, which is the main source of tension for the entire episode.



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Lesson (cont'd): As you work toward the major beat of the first act (think of it as a kind of cliffhanger that leads into the second act), remember to have your characters *react* to the situation. Here, we see Michael attempting to justify his employee's actions with a logical explanation about boss-employee dynamics. Will this mend his hurt feelings about being left out? Well, if you know anything about Michael (or sitcom writing!), the answer is clearly *no!*



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Practice: Today, ensure you have included the inciting incident (the moment that propels the story into action and provides the main source of conflict or tension in the episode) *within the first 2-3 pages of the script*. Next, write 2-3 scenes to round out the first act, which culminates in the first “turn” (another incident that complicates the conflict and leads into the next act)! Don’t worry about the details; focus on finishing the first draft. It won’t be perfect!



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Model: [Modern Family pilot](#)



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Additional Practice/Resources:

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

[Screenwriting Glossary](#)

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

[Act One: The Set-Up from *The Script Lab*](#)