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BBC RADIO FORMAT: SCENE STYLE

by

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Every script should have a title page with one contact address only in the bottom left hand corner.

Always include a phone number and an e-mail address if you have one.

If you have an agent, the address and number can go here.
A draft number or date is not required on a spec script.

SCENE 1.

SCENE STYLE IS THE BBC'S HOUSE FORMAT
GENERALLY USED FOR DRAMA, PLAYS AND
NON-AUDIENCE COMEDY. TECHNICAL
DIRECTIONS FOR SOUND AND MUSIC APPEAR IN
CAPITALS UNDERLINED TO DISTINGUISH THEM
FROM DIALOGUE. OPTIONAL SCENE NUMBERS
AND HEADINGS INDICATE THE START OF A NEW
SEQUENCE. A SEQUENCE IN A RADIO PLAY
MIGHT BE ONE LINE LONG OR LAST FOR 20
PAGES, AND CAN BE ANYTHING FROM A
MONOLOGUE TO A COLLECTION OF BRIEF
SCENES OR SOUND EFFECTS.

CHARACTER #1:

Character names appear in all capitals with a colon. A character is designated by either their first or last name, but a role designation may be used instead with personal titles abbreviated. The designated character name should remain consistent throughout the entire script.

CHARACTER #2:

Dialogue begins on the same line as the character name in normal upper and lower-case text with double-spacing.

IF TECHNICAL DIRECTION INTERRUPTS A
CHARACTER'S SPEECH ON THE SAME PAGE...

Then continue the dialogue without repeating the character name.

CHARACTER #1:

Split dialogue between pages only if at least two lines appear on the first page, and only after a sentence.

(CHARA #1/CONT'D OVER)

CHARA #1 (CONT'D):

Begin the following page with a new cue. The only means of establishing a character's presence is to have them speak or be referred to by name. If there are too many characters in a scene, the listener will lose track.

SCENE 2.

SPARINGLY AND WORK WITH THE DIALOGUE.
ONLY DESCRIBE THE IMMEDIATE SOUND
PATTERN AND NEVER USE SUPERFLUOUS
NOVELISTIC TEXT. AVOID PARAGRAPHING
UNLESS THERE IS A CHANGE OF LOCATION
WITHIN A SEQUENCE. MUSIC IS GENERALLY
ONLY INDICATED WHEN IT IS A SOURCE CUE OR
PERFORMS A FUNCTION SUCH AS A
TRANSITIONAL DEVICE BETWEEN SCENES.
SCENES CAN ALSO END WITH A TRANSITION.

FADE.

SCENE 3.

CHARACTER #1:

(BEAT) Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the dialogue. (PAUSE) It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COMMON TERMS
USED FOR TELESCOPING DIALOGUE.

CHARACTER #2:

(OFF) Indicates that the actor should speak away from the microphone. The audio equivalent of "off-screen".

CHARACTER #1: (V.O.) Voiceover indicates a character who is narrating over

sound, music or dialogue.

CHARACTER #2: (D) Distort indicates a character who is speaking via a

mechanical device like a telephone or radio.

CHARACTER #1: (LOW) Indicates that the actor should speak quietly, almost

in a whisper.

CHARACTER #2: (CLOSE) Indicates that the actor should be in close

proximity to their individual microphone giving an intimate

feel to the dialogue.

SCENE 4.

DON'T FORGET TO NUMBER ALL OF YOUR
PAGES - PAGE ONE BEGINS WITH SCENE ONE,
NOT THE TITLE PAGE. AND KEEP ALL YOUR
PAGES TOGETHER WITH A SIMPLE PAPER
BINDER IN THE TOP LEFT CORNER.
UNFASTENED PAGES CAN BECOME SEPARATED

UNFASTENED PAGES CAN BECOME SEPARATED
FROM THE REST OF THE SCRIPT AND GET LOST!
IT IS CUSTOMARY TO SIGN-OFF A RADIO SCRIPT

IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

END