

# Julia's Half-Hour Pilot Process Worksheet

Make a copy of this document in order to edit it :)

## Introductory Journal Prompts

*So, to get started - some journal prompts. Be brutally honest and refer back to your answers as you go through this process.*

1. Why do you want to write a pilot? If you have a specific idea already, why do you want to write THIS pilot?
2. Think about other things you've written. What are you most proud of about them - both about the product and the process? If you've never written anything, what is something you've made that you're proud of and how did you make it?
3. How important is it to you that this pilot be "good"? Why? Imagine this pilot turns out garbage. In that scenario, what are you afraid of?

*Try to release the need for this to be "good." Think about shifting your mindset to "does this do what I want it to do?" rather than "is this good?"*

## A TV Show You Love

*Something I love about helping people write their pilots is that a lot of people watch a lot of TV! You probably already have your 10,000 hours of expertise in TV comedy - I'm just going to show you that you do.*

*So, answer the following questions about **any half-hour TV show you love**:*

## Characters

Who is the protagonist? *Or are there 2 or 3 protagonists? Maybe it's more of an ensemble? (If you had to pick one character to be THE protagonist, which would it be?)*

Which characters appear in every episode?

Which of those characters get their own storylines/scenes? Which only appear in stories/scenes with other main characters?

Which characters are most challenged/affected by the episodes' stories?

## World

Where does the show take place? *What planet, country, town, neighborhood? Economic class? Industry? Generation? In our universe or some parallel one?*

What are the most frequently seen locations? *Whose homes, workplaces, hangouts? What rooms? What types of locations?*

## Vibe

Does the show have a hook? If so, what is it? *(A hook can be thought of as a central irony or defining funny idea.)*

Is the show episodic or serialized – meaning, do stories wrap up every episode (episodic) or continue over the course of the season or series (serialized)?

What is the show's point of view? Meaning - what is it saying? What questions is it asking and answering? What does it want a viewer to take away? When critics review this show, what do they say it's ~about~?

# Your TV Show

*Now, answer these same questions about YOUR idea for a TV show! You don't need to know much to get started. If you're not clear on these answers yet, just journal out what you're thinking. Getting clarity on one part can make the other parts become clearer.*

## Your Characters

*Who is the protagonist of your show? Or are there 2 or 3 protagonists? Maybe it's more of an ensemble? (If you had to pick one character to be THE protagonist, which would it be?)*

*Which characters appear in every episode of your show?*

*Which of those characters get their own storylines/scenes? Which only appear in stories/scenes with other main characters?*

*Which characters are most challenged/affected by the episodes' stories?*

## Your World

*Where does your show take place? What planet, country, town, neighborhood? Economic class? Industry? Generation? In our universe or some parallel one?*

*What are the most frequently seen locations on your show? Whose homes, workplaces, hangouts? What rooms? What types of locations?*

## Your Vibe

*Does your show have a hook? If so, what is it? (A hook can be thought of as a central irony or defining funny idea.)*

Is your show episodic or serialized – meaning, do stories wrap up every episode (episodic) or continue over the course of the season or series (serialized)?

What is your show's point of view? Meaning - what is it saying? What questions is it asking and answering? What does it want a viewer to take away? When critics review this show, what do they say it's ~about~?

## Intuitive Pilot Structure Intro

*Okay, now we put our thinking caps on. This next part is a big decision, but figuring it out makes everything you do after this sooooo much easier.*

*I think **a strong TV pilot has 2 changes**. The first is probably the bigger or more momentous of the two - it happens before the first scene of the first act of pilot - sometimes it happens in the cold open. It's why the TV show is starting now. (If there's a hook, it's often the event that sets up that central irony).*

*The second change is smaller - depending on the TV show, it could be miniscule. In a **premise pilot**, this happens over the course of the pilot, in response to the big change, and it sets up a status quo that will carry the show into series. In a pilot that is more of a "sample episode," it might be a less drastic change that conveys something about character, tone, or point of view (you made decisions about character, tone, and point of view above).*

*So - **watch the pilot for that half-hour show you love** and answered all those questions about above. Then answer these questions:*

## 2 Changes - A Show You Love

What is the **big change** that happened before the start of the pilot (or in the cold open)? **Why is the show starting now?**

*\*note: in a mockumentary, it may only be "the documentary crew has arrived"*

And **what is the smaller change that happens over the course of the pilot?** Who or what is changed? What becomes permanent, defining the show for all the other episodes to come?

## 2 Changes - Your Pilot

*Now, think about what those 2 changes could be for your pilot.*

What could the big change be - the event that will happen before the start of the pilot (or in the cold open)? Why is the show starting now?

And what are some options for this smaller change that will happen over the course of the pilot? Who or what could be changed? What could go from temporary or suggested to permanent or integral, defining the show for all the other episodes to come?

Ready to jump into **Your Amazing Half Hour Sample**? Learn more [HERE](#).