

Grades: **6th-12th**

*Adaptation: **3rd-5th**

Screenwriting

Common Core Standard(s): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7 (especially synthesizing information) and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.10

Materials Needed: Two to Three copies of the 'Screenplay Graphic Organizer' (included below) for each student (this can either be printed or shared digitally)

Class Objective: I can write an effective and succinct screenplay.

Lesson Plan

Day 1

1. Watch **Jo Schaffer Layton's** class "**Screenwriting**"
2. Pause at minute 25:45 and write a scene from a book. Turn one page of a book into one page of screenplay using the 'Screenplay Graphic Organizer' included below. Do this as a class to model how to create a screenplay using the graphic organizer. You could also have them just partner with someone else or do it on their own and share.
3. Finish watching the class.

NOTEBefore teaching the rest of the lessons, choose a screenplay project you would like students to create. Some options could be:

Informational Writing

Write a 2-5 minute documentary piece about something you have researched or already written an essay about.

Write a commercial to visit a place you have researched.

Create a talk show script about a famous person from history



Argumentative

Write a commercial for a product or service you feel everyone should use

Write a PSA for a topic you feel everyone should be passionate about

Write a speech for a famous person from history where they convince others to do something important from history.

Narrative

Write a play that is a spin off of a fairy tale

Write an episode for your favorite show

Write a new level for a video game you like to play

Write the opening scene for the movie that is based on the last story you wrote or on something that happened to you in your life.

Day 2-4

1. Begin by introducing the project they will be working on. Review and either share or pass out a new copy of the graphic organizer they used yesterday—because they will use this same organizer to write their screenplay for this project. Also review that they need to write in present tense, and the first time a character is introduced their name should be in ALL CAPS. Review the need to only write what you can physically see and hear.
2. Review the time frame rules Jo Schaffer Layton gave. (ie., 30 seconds is a 60 word script, 1 minute is a 120 word script, One page equals about one minute of screen time) This will give students the approximate length of what they will be writing.
3. Give students time to create their screenplay.

Day 5



1. Once they have completed their screenplay, students will go back in and revise for the NOPES that Jo gave in her class. The nopes were:
 - a. Too many words (you want to say as much as you can in as few words as possible—so word choice is key here) Use this as guide:
 - b. What can I delete that doesn't affect the point of the scene?
 - c. Does this NEED to be here?
 - d. Can I communicate this visual with one or two words instead of one or two sentences?
 - e. What is the literal way to describe this vs. the articulate way?
 - f. Does the character NEED to say this?

Day 6-7 (*OPTIONAL)

Have students actually create the play, commercial, scene, etc. and act it out for each other or create a video of it to share with everyone else.

TO CHALLENGE: Purchase one of the software options Jo suggests at minute 2:05. Make sure your screenplay is edited and follows the screenwriting formatting guidelines.

Printable worksheet on next page



screenPLAY GRAPHIC organizer

SCENE #	VISUAL / VIDEO	DIALOGUE/ DIRECTION /NARRATION



TO SIMPLIFY:

***ALTERNATE ADAPTATION for younger audience:**

Tweens (ages 9-12):

Common Core Standard(s): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7 and

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.10

Materials Needed: Two copies of the 'Screenplay Graphic Organizer' for each student.

Class Objective: I can write a screenplay and create a visual experience using that screenplay.

ADAPTED LESSON PLAN

1. Watch **Jo Schaffer Layton's** class "**Screenwriting.**"
2. **Follow the lesson above but have students write something shorter. For example, a commercial or a short PSA (public service announcement).**
3. **On one of the first days, follow one or some of the lesson ideas below to help students solidify what is meant by writing in present tense.**
[Option 1](#)
[Other possible worksheets to help teach past, present, future](#)
4. **Have students also act out what they have created. Students this age love to have a chance to shine. :-)**



EXTRA WRITING PRACTICE: All ages (optional)

For extra writing practice and to reinforce today's topic, assign a [writing prompt](#), or have them continue working on a page/chapter of their own novel or short story, applying the key techniques learned today. Set a timer for at least 15–30 minutes & have students do a nonstop writing sprint in class or assign for homework.

Editing Skills:

Manuscripts may then be exchanged with other students for peer review, with specific attention focused on how the topic of the day was applied. This will enhance editing skills, while simultaneously further ingraining the lesson at hand and the added benefit of “fresh eyes” giving input on their work.

Revising Skills:

When the papers are returned, students have the opportunity of fine tuning the skill of taking feedback and applying it to revision and rewrite of their manuscript.

Group Discussion/Reflection:

After rough draft & final draft are returned it may be valuable to share what was most helpful or difficult about the feedback and how it may have improved their writing. (Writing clubs can meet online or in person for group discussions)

Extra Credit Opportunities:

Submitting work can be a scary/rewarding experience, no matter the outcome. Offer extra credit incentive for students who create & submit entries at storycon.org/contests for the chance to be recognized, awarded & potentially published. in the [TwEEN 1st Paragraph, Teen 1st Line, 1st Chapter, Teen Anthology, Poetry & Photography Cover Contests](#).

ATTEND WRITING WORKSHOP: Offer make up credits to students who attend live [StoryCon](#) writing conferences. The largest teen writing conference in the nation, with master writing classes for Teens, Tweens & Educators taught by award winning authors.

Educators: Earn relicensure & up to 5 hours graduate credits from SUU by attending Educator Base Camp. Bring a group for a free Educator Pass.*



CHALLENGE:

- ☐ Encourage students to continue writing on weekends, holiday breaks and over the summer.
- ☐ *Join or Start a school Writing Club* that meets at lunch or after school*
- ☐ *Better Together! Create or join writing clubs online or in person, to watch & work through TABCClassroom.com together! (invite friends from school, StoryCon or our moderated TABC discord/other safe writing discussion board)*

*extracurricular writing classes may involve school licensed students or those with an annual personal subscription. If they need a subscription, have them visit TABCClassroom.com

- ☐ **FOLLOW UP!** Send feedback!. I'd love to hear how you use Classroom, suggest edits, what you like most, classes, contests, conference experiences & creative ways you incorporate it all into your curriculum. sarah-noel@operationliteracy.org
- ☐ **SHARE TABCClassroom.com** with a friend or school. Invite them to StoryCon.org & "tell the teacher" ([email me](#))



*If they subscribe to StoryCon's TABC CLASSROOM™ Vault or Register to attend StoryCon, **we like to thank "BOOK HEROES!" with a \$6 StoryCon Promo Codes for registration/the merch store.***

THANKS

Visit OperationLiteracy.org, to find out more about our next **StoryCon™ with **Educator Base Camp™**, **Teen Author Boot Camp™** & **Tween Author Boot Camp™**. Attend our intensive writing conferences in person to learn from the masters, meet favorite authors and to be a part of a supportive writing community that will help students hone their writing skills, get published & boost their confidence. Join the discord server or start your own writing group to do TABC Classroom with friends.*



