

## Unit 19.1

### Task 2- Guidance

#### Research for part 2 of the Scriptwriting documentary; formats and conventions of scripts for media products

For the next section of the documentary you are required to present your research findings relating to the formats and conventions of scripts for **different media products**. The documentary producers want you to evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of the format and conventions used in existing scripts. You must present detailed examples from different media sectors and different genres focussing on:

- The use of different script formats including layouts, styles, mode of address, etc.
- Different considerations including information required, compliance with guidelines, branching scripts dependent on player interaction in games, support copy, ensuring scripts are readable.
- Directions to production team relating to mise-en-scène and camera directions.
- The use of different types of language to engage or persuade viewers, and imply meaning or ensure clarity
- Use of conventions to structure and develop narrative
- How scripts are produced to appeal or relate to different audiences

#### Structure:

Pick 3 different types of scripts (eg TV, film, video game, advert, radioplay, etc)

#### **For each format:**

Write at least 2 paragraphs explaining how a script in this format functions, with reference to *at least two examples*.

*Note: you may include screenshots/annotations of these scripts.*

- How is it laid out? (*use technical terms here- sluglines, V.O. etc*) How does this layout help to clarify and communicate what the end result should be? Is it effective?
- Does it have any instructions which communicate to specific departments (eg. editor, director, actor, prop and arts department, etc)
- How does it have an impact on the narrative/story? (*eg. Does it create tension, or comedy or emotion*) *Does it set up something for later in the story?* )
- How is it designed to help the final product (eg. TV) appeal to a particular audience?
- Summarise why you think this is an effective script.

(For the second/third format, make sure you outline how it is *different* to the others)

### Conclusion:

Summarise what the main differences are between different types of scripts, and what a scriptwriter needs to do in order to be successful in them.

### Example:

An example of how the conventions of a film screenplay can be used to good effect is in Aaron Sorkin's *The Social Network*, which chronicles Mark Zuckerberg's life as he invents *Facebook*. We can identify this in the opening scene.

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FROM THE BLACK WE HEAR--

      MARK (V.O.)
Did you know there are more people with
genius IQ's living in China than there
are people of any kind living in the
United States?

      ERICA (V.O.)
That can't possibly be true.

      MARK (V.O.)
It is.

      ERICA (V.O.)
What would account for that?

      MARK (V.O.)
Well, first, an awful lot of people live
in China. But here's my question:

FADE IN:

INT. CAMPUS BAR - NIGHT

MARK ZUCKERBERG is a sweet looking 19 year old whose lack of
any physically intimidating attributes masks a very
complicated and dangerous anger. He has trouble making eye
contact and sometimes it's hard to tell if he's talking to you
or to himself.

ERICA, also 19, is Mark's date. She has a girl-next-door face
that makes her easy to fall for. At this point in the
conversation she already knows that she'd rather not be there
and her politeness is about to be tested.

The scene is stark and simple.

      MARK
How do you distinguish yourself in a
population of people who all got 1600 on
their SAT's?

      ERICA
I didn't know they take SAT's in China.

      MARK
They don't. I wasn't talking about China
anymore, I was talking about me.

      ERICA
You got 1600?

      MARK
Yes. I could sing in an a Capella group,
but I can't sing.
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In this opening, we can see how Sorkin creates an engaging scene which presents the protagonist of Mark and how his personality will lead him to success in this biographical drama. We can see Sorkin utilise the conventions of a film screenplay, including some instructions to the editor, such as the fade ins, sluglines and the use of extensions which convey how we first hear the characters before we see them. This not only sets up the theme of image versus intellect, as we are first introduced to the characters through their intelligent dialogue before seeing their down-to-earth, ordinary image; it also creates a sense of anticipation in the viewer. We want to see how their voices match to their image. Here, Sorkin is communicating to the production team about how to set the tone of the film- which is fast-paced, and contains a lot of dialogue- while also communicating to the audience the main conflict of the film; about how social media can show our voice but also hide who we really are.

The script is also effective in communicating how these characters should come across. The descriptions of the characters, and specifically how the audience should feel about them, helps the directors, actors, costume and casting department establish their approach to filming this scene with clear and helpful detail. The use of dialogue is also fundamental in establishing the narrative drive of the main character, Mark Zuckerberg. Here, Sorkin uses dialogue in order to establish that he is a competitive person, as he is concerned about how to distinguish himself. However, he also gives him a clipped, antisocial, unfriendly tone when talking to his date, with short terse replies like 'it is' and 'they don't.' This matches clearly with the action lines, which instruct the actor to not make eye contact and to speak to himself as much as to others.

All in all, this script uses the conventions of film screenplays to clearly communicate to the production team and the audience how to feel about the character of the film, and what his motivations are. This is done in an engaging way, focussing on the use of action lines, extensions and dialogue.