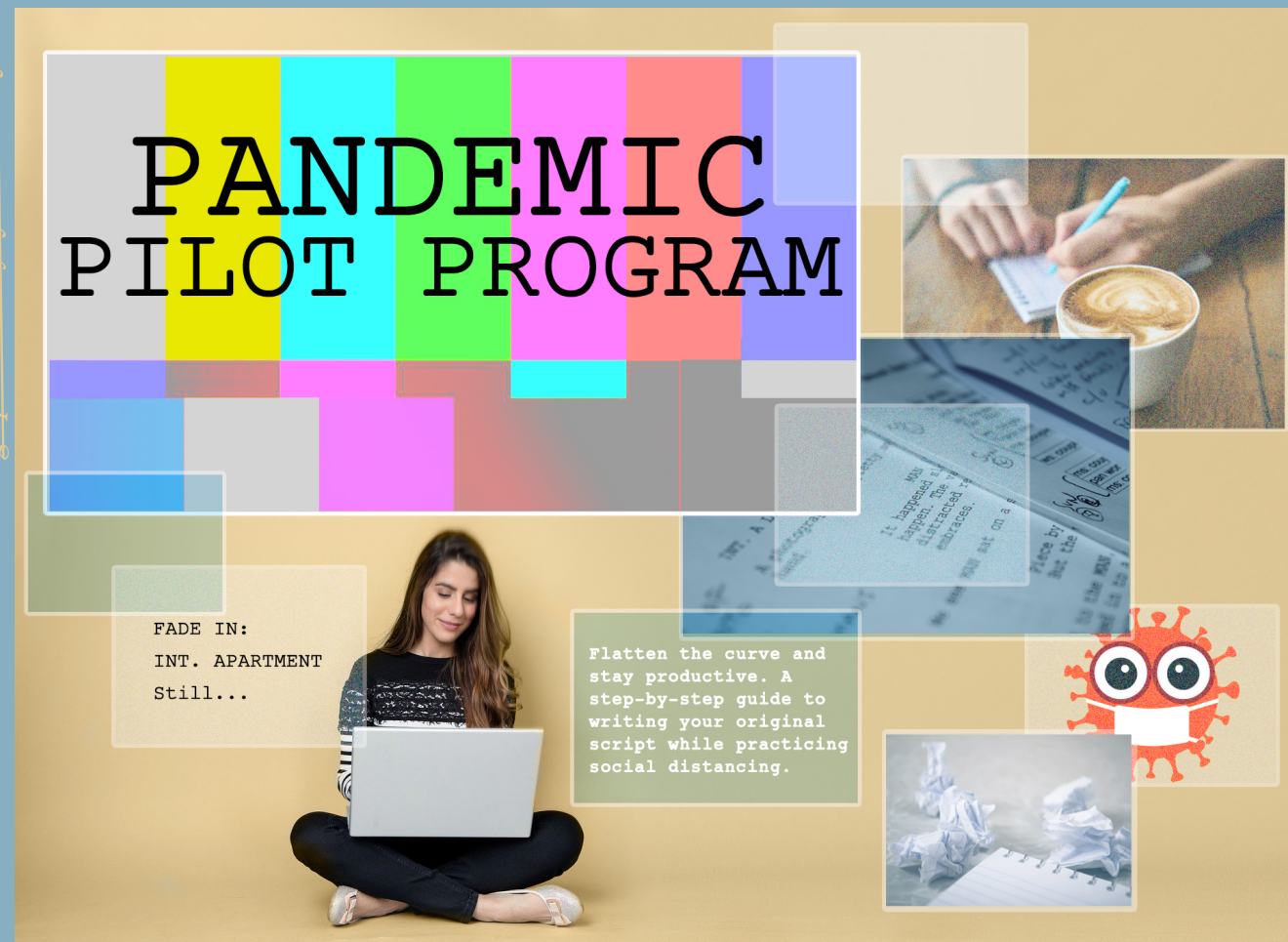


graphic courtesy of Carrie Cutforth



A step by step guide to writing an original script
while helping to flatten the curve.

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Things are crazy.

We're all stuck inside practicing social distancing and worrying. That leaves plenty of time for writing. What if you could whip off a pilot script and come out of this experience with a whole new project?

That's where the Pandemic Pilot Program fits in. It's a step-be-step guide to writing an hour long pilot and helping to flatten the curve.

I'd like to claim that this is a tried and true method but it isn't. I invented it this week. In fact, when I started developing it, I thought it would be for people under a 14 day quarantine. Now, a week later the whole continent is housebound! Let me know whether it works for you (and how many typos you find.)

I am thinking about leading a television series creation workshop via group video during the pandemic. If you're interested, please let me know by filling out the form on my website.



Stay healthy, stay safe,
keep writing.

-Jill

A week ago when I first got the idea to create a pilot-writing plan to help people during the corona virus outbreak, 14 days seemed like the right amount of time. By the time I released the first draft on March 20, 2020, it seemed clear that we'd all be stuck at home for longer than 14 days.

Given the amount of anxiety I personally have been feeling, encouraging people to work so intensely just seems dumb now.

So, here's a new draft of the same material, but this version removes the pressure to finish in 14 days. Instead, I've provided instructions on 70 writing sprints to get you to the end of a first draft. I think two or three 45-minute sprints are more than enough per day. But you're a grown up and can decide for yourself.

I hope to get my head into my own pilot this week too. But if I give myself this kinder schedule I should have time to meet you on the social media and compare notes... on writing and surviving in these dangerous times.



This is Lemon helping me write.

Writing in Dangerous Times

- * Congratulations on deciding to do something productive and optimistic in this era of social distancing. Let's face it, 2, 3, even 4 weeks is a short time to write an original pilot script. In this strange and unprecedented era, the last thing any of us needs is added pressure. So let's take a kind-to-ourselves approach to this.
- * Find reasons to love the work. Try to view your working time as a sanctuary away from the craziness going on globally.
- * Consider writing toward a happy ending. We all need to believe there's a light at the end of the tunnel right now.
- * Don't let your doubts hijack the process. We're all afraid: that it's not good enough; that others won't like it; that we won't finish; that the idea is stupid; etc. etc. Your inner voice is going to chatter endlessly trying to fill you with doubt and self-loathing. Thank it for its input and then, as Carole Kirschner says, tell it to shut the fuck up.
- * Be kind to yourself. Take breaks if you need them. Remember to stretch your writer's body after a day at the desk. Listen to music you enjoy, eat delicious foods and generally treat your instrument (body, mind and soul) the way you would a Stradivarius.
- * Trust the process. Remember a first draft is supposed to be shitty. But once you have a first draft, you can rewrite and rewrite and polish and rewrite until it gets good. The only thing that a first draft must be is finished.

Daily Schedule

- * Warm up: 7 minutes of stream of consciousness writing.
- * Aim for two to three 45-minute writing sprints a day,
- * Use the rest of your day and evening for research, reading, watching and plenty of unwinding.

Plan Overview

Development: Sprints 1-30

- * Sprints 1-5: Easing In
- * Sprints 6-10: Character I
- * Sprints 11-15 Storyline
- * Sprints 16-20: Breaking story
- * Sprints 21-25: Scene by Scene Outline

Plan Overview

Writing the Draft: Sprints 31-70

- * Sprints 231-35: pages 7-17
- * Sprints 36-45: pages 18-32
- * Sprints 46-55: pages 33 -42
- * Sprints 56-66: pages 43-end
- * Sprints 66-70: Proofread, rewrite

How To Follow This Plan

- * This document contains instructions for how to spend each of seventy 45-minute sprints to complete a first draft script.
- * Each day, start with 7 minutes of train-of-thought writing. That just means spending those few minutes writing down anything that comes to mind. No pressure, no judgement, just keep the pen (or metaphorical pen) moving.
- * For each sprint, read the instructions about what you are to accomplish. Then turn off notifications, close social media apps and communication programs, set your timer and start working. Do not allow distractions to interrupt your work flow until the timer goes off.
- * Take a break at the end of each sprint. Give yourself at least 15 minutes. Consider doing one of the following during your breaks: stretching, meditating, listening to a guided relaxation, eating.
- * Repeat.
- * Be sure to take one longer meal break — about an hour.
- * For sprints 1-30, the emphasis is on thinking and developing your ideas. You'll be taking lots of notes. I find writing my ideas down is a great way to structure my thinking.
- * Starting with sprint 41, you will be writing writing writing.

Development

Sprints 1-30

Sprints 1-5: Easing into the Story World

- * Even if you haven't written anything down, you may have been thinking about this series concept for a while. Today we'll start by getting those ideas on paper.
- * Later we'll begin thinking about the world, tone and even what platform the show is ultimately destined for.
- * There's a lot of thinking to do Don't worry about prose. You can just jot down notes or use train of thought writing.

Sprint 1

- * Write down everything you already know about the story you'll be telling.
- * Include anything that comes to mind about your characters, genre, story, world, theme, tone, audience etc.
- * Don't worry about writing in prose, this is a mind dump. Notes, sentence fragments and doodles — even voice notes — are all welcome.
- * There's no right and wrong. Just do it.
- * When the timer goes off, reward yourself for getting through.
- * The first break of the day is a great time for some yoga stretches.

Sprint 2: Platform

- * Great work on completing your first sprint.
- * For Sprint 2, let's think about the final platform for your show. Is it destined for a network? Subscription cable? A streamer? Is it a web series? The platform dictates the kind of show to some extent.
- * If you're aiming for a network sale, then you'll want to write include act breaks and maybe a teaser and/or tag. You'll also need a story engine to ensure your premise can generate infinite episodes (case of the week, monster of the week etc). Your pilot episode will likely resolve but may also include a cliffhanger (mystery solved but the hero is now joining an investigation team, for example).
- * If you're aiming for a subscription cable channel or a streamer, you don't need act breaks because those platforms don't interrupt their shows for ads. Your season will likely be arced. Your pilot episode will probably end with a major cliffhanger.
- * For this work sprint:
 - * think about and make notes on the kind of platform you are aiming for.
 - * list comparable series in terms of genre and story; note what platform they are on.

Sprint 3: Voice/Tone/Mood

- * What's the feel of your story? Is it optimistic and funny? Tense and cerebral? Fast-paced? Dialogue heavy or almost silent? Is it sexy? Relationship-y? Action packed? Does it twist and turn?
- * Spend this sprint:
 - * thinking about and making notes on mood and tone;
 - * make a list of series with similar moods, voices and tones.

Sprint 4 - Mind Dump Polish

- * As we hit the fourth sprint, you have a better idea of the kind of show you're writing in terms of tone and structure. Let's marry that up with your initial ideas about the story.
- * Spend this sprint:
 - * reworking Sprint 1's Mind Dump and adding any new ideas you've had since.
 - * reorganize it to give it some coherence, perhaps by grouping ideas together (a section on characters and another on story, etc.).
 - * think about the story in terms of the platform you're aiming for and how that effects how you will shape the pilot episode.
 - * begin to turn it into prose and try to inject that prose with the voice or mood you're aiming for.
 - * don't worry about turning out a finished polished document! This sprint is all about ideas.

Sprint 5: Your Connection to the Story

- * This is an era in which authenticity of voice is important to audiences. We see this reflected in the trend of pitching a series by talking about three things: why this story? why now? why me?
- * Spend this session:
 - * thinking and writing notes on your connection to this story and story world
 - * what draws you to this story?
 - * do you have personal connections to it? (about your uncle or grandmother? does it involve a hobby or passion of yours? etc.)
 - * what themes that are meaningful to you will you explore?
 - * why do you believe in this story and story world; why are you spending 14 days of isolation living it?
 - * this last work sprint is personal; get passionate, go deep, fall in love with the work to come.

Sprints 6-10: Character

Part I

- * Before you set the timer for your first character sprint, make a list of the main characters who will appear in the pilot.
- * I'm guessing you'll have five major characters and we'll devote one sprint to each to them.
- * What if I don't have 5 main characters? Here are some ideas:
- * Shows with 2 leads: devote sprints 6 & 7 each to one lead, 8 & 9 to the other and spend sprint 10 thinking and writing about the setting of your series.
- * Shows with 3 leads: devote sprints 6 & 7 to your protagonist, 8 to the second major character, 9 to third. Spend sprint 10 thinking and writing about the setting of your series.
- * Shows with 4 leads: devote 1 sprint to each of your four characters, skip sprint 10 and go directly to sprint 11.
- * If you're writing a sci fi or fantasy, you should probably devote one of this block of sprints to world building; thinking and writing about setting and history of your story universe.

Sprints 1-5

- * Devote the next five sprints to initial character work.
- * Spend the 45 minutes thinking and writing about the following information about this character:
- * name, age, role in the story;
- * personality traits. This is where adverbs and adjectives come in: is the character optimistic? witty? amoral? egocentric? stoic? etc.;
- * do not forget flaws; great characters have flaws;
- * back story. while you're figuring out what the character is like, you may as well think about how he/she/they got that way. What major incidents in early life shaped your character?
- * voice. is there something particular about the way this character delivers lines? deadpan, sarcastic, quick talking, formal etc. If you're writing a comedy it might be good to note what styles of comedy will be part of this character's dialogue — e.g. puns, self-effacing or observational humour.
- * Character charts (next page) can be useful.

Character Charts

- * Character charts can be used to ensure that each of your characters are distinct.
- * The included charts are samples. You can use any headings on yours that make sense to you.

| | World view | Sexuality | Voice | Archetype |
|----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| Alana | optimist despite a lifetime of experience to the contrary | bi | lots of accidental sexual innuendos | Caregiver |
| Picolini | knows everything will go wrong eventually | ace | almost monosyllabic, uses as few words as possible | Fool |
| Lulu | queen of logic. you'll have to prove it to her | fluid | talks like she's writing a university paper | Tyrant |
| Rejean | magical thinker who thinks if he wishes hard enough it will happen | straight | hip slang master | Innocent |

Sprints 11-15: Character

Part II

- * This is phase two of character work. Again, devote a sprint to each of your main characters.
- * If you don't have that many important characters use the extra sprints to work on setting, world, tone and/or theme.
- * If you are writing a sci fi or fantasy pilot, definitely spend a sprint or two on world building. Focus on the rules of magic (if there is any), unique customs, language, organizations within the world.

Sprints 11-15

- * During each sprint you'll think and write about the same things, but for a different character each time.
- * What does your character want? What drives him/her/them through the episode? What is he/she/they trying to achieve?
- * What does your character need? This is usually different than what he/she/they want. For example a character who is driven to find a mate and marry; may actually need to learn to be alone. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy wanted to get to that place over the rainbow but what she needed was to learn that there's no place like home.
- * KM Welland in Creating Character Arcs talks about the lie characters tell themselves. e.g. I don't need anyone, money will solve everything, if I don't do anything things will get better. Figuring out what lies your characters tell themselves may help you figure out what they want and what they actually need.
- * What is the arc your character travels through the pilot episode (see next slide for an overview of a character arc)? What is their goal and the flaw or belief that prevents them from achieving it? What will compel them to let go of the belief? Will they ultimately achieve the goal? What lessons will they learn from their experiences during the pilot?
- * Here's where the thinking gets complicated. You are writing a pilot for a series. So you really need to think about both a season arc and a pilot arc for your characters. What will they learn and achieve during the pilot and what is left for them to learn and achieve through the series?

Day 3 - Backgrounder: Character Arcs

- * Your characters' arcs will go something like this:
 - * character has a goal;
 - * character is unfulfilled or can't achieve the goal because of beliefs/ flaw/ lie they tell self;
 - * those beliefs are challenged;
 - * character learns there is another way;
 - * the character lets go of the wrong beliefs;
 - * the character adopts new beliefs and strategies;
 - * the character achieves the goal.

Sprints 16-20 - Storyline

- * Fifteen sprints in! You've spent more than 11 hours working on this. You're fantastic.
- * Time to start the deep dive into story.
- * Recognize that with this compressed timeline you will have to make a lot of decisions quickly. There's no right or wrong, so no need to agonize over story and plot choices. Get in the groove. Trust your instincts. Do it.
- * By the end of this block of sprints, your pilot will have a beginning, middle and end.
- * We are working in broad strokes. You don't need to have all the logic, you just need a vague sketch of where you're starting and where you hope to end. If scenes, bits of dialogue and other details come to you, jot them down, but otherwise **focus on the big picture**.
- * Your instinct is going to be to save certain story ideas for episodes 2 and 3. Don't! For this to be a killer pilot, stuff it with all the story you can. Take us deep into the world and series arc.
- * We're devoting a sprint each to the A- and B- stories. We'll devote the other sprints to thinking about character arcs and introductions, the opening and closing of the pilot script. If you have major C- and D- stories you may want to steal one of this block's other sprints to think them through.

Sprint 16: A-Story

Mind Dump

- * Focus on your A-story.
- * Divide your page in three sections: beginning, middle and end. Start making notes in each section. Write down everything you know about the beginning, middle and end of your A-story.
- * Consider:
 - * At what point to bring the audience into the story world. Where does the story begin?
 - * What are the big moments of excitement or emotion that will keep the audience interested? (Chases, sex scenes, moments of hilarity, arguments etc).
 - * What information/story points can be revealed to turn the story and surprise the audience?
 - * Which characters will we meet in the A-story?
 - * How does the story end? Is there a resolution at some point? Is there a cliffhanger?
- * Don't worry if you don't know all the answers yet. But you're starting the thinking. When you're away from the keyboard, have a way to keep notes in case ideas come to you in your sleep or while you're washing your hands.

Sprint 17: B-Story Mind Dump

- * Follow the instructions for Sprint 16 but this time focusing on your B-story.

Sprint 18: Character Intros and Arcs

- * Spend this time thinking and writing about your protagonist or protagonists.
- * Each character's introductory scene is very important. You want to use it to reveal the essence of that character and launch him/her/them into their arc. A couple of great character introductions to look at for inspiration are: Kendall Roy in Succession and Tony Stonem in Skins (British). Begin to mull over how you can construct a scene that will bring your lead(s) to life.
- * You've spent some time in the last two sprints thinking about story. Now consider how you will map your characters arc onto that storyline.
- * Check out the next page which shows an example of how a character arc can be mapped onto a 3 act structure.

Sprint 4.3 Backgrounder: Character Arc Act by Act

- * This relates to protagonists and heroes not to antagonists. I highly recommend taking a look at KM Welland's [Creating Character Arcs](#) to learn more about the different kinds of arcs and how to build them.
- * Act One
 - * Character wants something but can't get it because of flawed belief
 - * First hint that the belief is wrong
 - * Using the wrong belief has negative consequences for character
- * Act Two
 - * Belief leads to more problems for character
 - * Character sees a flash of the truth/a better way
 - * A reward/good thing is associated with the truth
- * Act Three
 - * Character lets go of the old belief
 - * Character adopts the truth
 - * Character achieves the goal or rejects the original goal in favour of something better

Sprint 19: Beginnings

- * The opening 5 minutes of a pilot have been increasingly important over the last few years. You have only a few minutes to hook your audience. Use them wisely.
- * Get to the premise of your story and establish your lead characters as quickly as possible. Check out the opening scenes of Fleabag, End of the F***ing World and Atypical for inspiration. Note how efficiently the creators have introduced both story and character in just a few pages.
- * Spend the next 45 minutes thinking and writing about the opening moments of your pilot.
- * If it's a comedy, make sure you include humour. If it's thriller, squeeze in some action. If there are zombies or magicians or cool special effects, let's see them!

Sprint 20: Endings

- * The end of a pilot has to leave the reader wanting more.
- * Are you planning to end with a cliffhanger? One way of achieving that is with a startling new reveal. Or plot twist you have a plot twist up your sleeve.
- * Just because drama rolls out in three acts, doesn't mean we have to end the pilot at the end of Act 3. You could put your ending a little earlier so the story isn't entirely resolved.
- * Or you can end it later. The HBO series True Blood always ended after what seemed like the opening moments of next episode. As a viewer, you got to see this week's storyline resolve but then were immediately drawn into the action of next week's episode. And that's when the credits rolled. You were left at the end of your seat till next week.
- * In the era of streaming and bingeing, you want that ending to propel audiences toward the next episode.

Sprints 21- 25: Breaking Story

- * Next step: start breaking story. Get out your index cards or post-its. If you don't have those supplies, use pieces of paper, an app like Index Cards or the index card function in Scrivener.
- * Tackle each storyline separately, starting with your A-story. Use a unique card or ink colour for each storyline. This will help you keep them separate later on and once you marry all the storylines you'll be able to see at a glance whether you've dispersed the beats evenly through the show.
- * When we're breaking story, we're dealing with beats and not necessarily scenes. These are the essential moments that tell your story, propel the action forward and turn the plot. See the following page for an example of how to use beats to tell a story.

Sample Beat Sheet for Little Red Riding Hood

- * Granny is sick.
- * Mom tells Little Red Riding Hood to take a basket of goodies to granny and warns her not to talk to strangers on the way.
- * LRRH sets off.
- * Wolf lurks and watches LRRH.
- * Wolf approaches LRRH and gets her to tell him where she's going.
- * LRRH continues happily on her way.
- * Wolf takes a short cut and gets to Granny's first.
- * Wolf eats Granny.
- * LRRH arrives at Granny's bedside — only it's not Granny. It's the wolf!
- * A beat of tension as LRRH grapples with the change in granny and the wolf toys with her.
- * Wolf attacks LRRH.
- * Woodcutter shows up and takes on the wolf.
- * Woodcutter saves LRRH and granny.
- * Everyone lives happily ever after.

Sprint 21 - Break the A-Story

- * Start with your A-Story. Choose a unique card or ink colour that's reserved for this storyline.
- * Think through the action. What happens first? Describe the beat in a few phrases on a card.
- * What happens next? Write that on another card.
- * Continue jotting down beats till you reach the end of the story.
- * Feel free to re-order and insert new cards between beats as you go along.

Sprint 22: Break the B-Story

- * Same as the last sprint only this time for the B-Story. Remember to use a different colour.

Sprint 23 - Make a Choice

- * For sprint 23, you have options.
- * You break your C- & D-stories.
- * Or you can break the arcs of your lead characters.
- * Use distinct colours for each.

Sprint 24 - Marry the Broken Storylines

- * Now you have all your stories broken out separately. It's time to interlace them.
- * It seems likely that you'll start the pilot with the A-Story. You may move through a few beats before you introduce the first beat of the B-.
- * Look for natural moments when you can align and move between the different storylines.

Sprint 25 - Refine the Order of the Beats

- * You pretty much have a beat sheet for your pilot by now — even if the beats are still on cards. Congrats!
- * Spend the last sprint of the day reviewing, refining and numbering the cards/beats.
- * Before you wrap up for the day, photograph or otherwise document the order of the cards! It's super important not to lose today's work.

Sprints 26-30 - Outline

- * Time to move your beat sheet into your word processor or screenwriting program and turn it into a working outline.
- * Don't agonize over prose. No one's going to read this outline except you. It's just the last step in development before you start drafting the script itself.
- * Continue to rely on your instincts to make quick creative choices. If you hit a road block, just move past it and work on the next thing. You can come back to the trouble area later and in the meantime, your brain might work out the solution in background.

Sprints 26 & 27

- * Take two sprints to get the story beats set up in your word processor or scripting program.
- * Going card by card, set up an appropriate scene header (e.g. INT. LITTLE RED'S HOUSE — DAY). Underneath the header, type in a few phrases about the action to take place in the scene. (e.g. Granny is sick. Mom Mom tells LRRH to take a basket of goodies to her. Mom warns her not to talk to strangers on the way.)
- * Not every card will relate to a new scene, sometimes you can include two or three beats/scene.
- * Try to get through all the cards in the two sprints.

Sprints 28 & 29

- * If you didn't get through all your cards in the last two sprints, keep at it for another one.
- * If you got through all the cards, you now have a rough outline! Way to go!
- * Spend sprints 28 & 29 going through the outline, beefing it up and reorganizing it as needed.
- * Think about each scene. Where does it start? Where does it end? What is the conflict in it. Note all thoughts you have including any dialogue or action.
- * Devote 28 to the first half of the outline and 29 to the second half.

Sprint 30

- * Put yourself in your lead's shoes and go through the entire outline thinking about him/her/them. What are they thinking or feeling in each scene? Do their thoughts and emotions track between scenes? Does each moment push them logically to the next moment? Are there opportunities to heighten their emotions, reveal character and propel them along their arc?
- * Before you knock off for the day, set up a title page and header for your script.
- * Rest and relax. Starting with the next sprint, we write.

Writing the Draft

Sprints 31 - 70

Sprints 31-65: Writing the Draft

- * On the following pages, I set out goals for the number of pages to write during each block of 5 sprints. I've also included some thoughts on areas of focus for different parts of the script.
- * It's easy to lose faith. Don't. You are doing something amazing. Keep at it.
- * If you feel your resolve fading, reread your notes from Sprint 5 (Your connection to the story), reread "Writing in Dangerous Times" or best yet, check in with your support community. If you send me an email at pandemicpilot@gmail.com, I'll send you some positive vibes.
- * I've suggested page counts to keep you on track, but hell, we're in a global pandemic and the least important thing in your life is the number of pages I think you should write. Feel free to spread the work out as much as feels right for you. Or speed it up and write all night. You've already made a huge dent in this project so celebrate the victory.
- * Keep moving forward. Don't keep going back to rewrite pages you've already drafted. The most important thing about a first draft is getting it finished. Making it good is a job for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th drafts.
- * If you have trouble with a scene, don't agonize over it, just move onto the next scene and come back to the difficult one mid-way through your next sprint.
- * The more you write, the more things will flow. You'll get better and faster every day.
- * Away you go. Start writing.

Sprints 31-35: Pages 1-6

- * All you have to accomplish in your next 5 sprints is write the first 6 pages. Nothing to it.
- * Until you remember how important the opening is (see Sprint 19). Eventually, you'll want them to be the best 6 pages you've ever written. For now, an approximation of good is good enough.
- * You are establishing character voices. What does each character speak like? You gave this matter some thought on during sprints 11-15. Check your notes if you need to.
- * Think about bringing conflict into each scene.
- * What does each character in the scene want? What's driving them?

Sprints 36-40: Pages 7-17

- * In these next few pages, you may still be introducing characters and visiting locations for the first time. Take your time figuring out how the settings look and establishing the voices of the characters.
- * The first 5-6 pages were uber emotional or exciting or funny to draw the reader in. As you move through pages 7-17 you are firmly establishing the tone and pacing of the episode and the whole series. When writing you may notice that you've found the tone you're looking for. Mark the scene so you can reread it whenever you're flailing to find that tone again.
- * Act 1 is all about motivating your lead character to take action. Your character may have been refusing the call to action, cosy in the "normal" world. By the end of sprint 40's pages, you will have kicked their ass into action. They will have committed and be stepping through the door to the new world. In other words, by the end of the day you will have completed Act 1.

Sprints 41-45: Pages 18-24

- * Into Act 2, we go.
- * Structurally the section you're writing next might be the first third of the act.
- * At this point in the story, your character is probably committed to taking action (no longer rejecting the call). But because they're flawed and believe the lie they've been telling themselves, your character's actions are going to be the wrong ones. Followed by a moment when your character crashes and burns. Have fun writing that scene!
- * You may also write a scene today in which you offer your character a better way of approaching the problem. Unfortunately they won't be ready to embrace it quite yet.

Sprints 46-50: Pages 25-32

- * You're still in Act 2 and chugging along.
- * Way back when you were working on sprints 11-15, you thought about what your characters want and need. In the middle of Act 2, your characters may actually be moving closer to what they want than to what they need. It's time to open their eyes to the truth about their want: it's the wrong thing for them.
- * How's your character going to deal with the failure? Who or what will provide some hints about what they really need?
- * Mid-way through Act 2 is a great place for a big scene: some action, comedy, drama or sex.
- * Enjoy this block of writing! At the end of it, you'll be halfway through the draft!

Sprints 51-55: Pages 33-42

- * You're working toward the end of Act 2 in all likelihood. and I'm running out of advice except: KEEP GOING!

Sprints 56-60: Pages 43-50

- * Write like the wind, my friend.
- * To give the script some momentum, play with the pacing today and tomorrow.
- * You can gradually shorten the length of the scenes as you get closer and closer to the end.
- * You can use dialogue more sparingly.
- * Use the prose in your action lines to add to the pacing. Short sentences. Sentence fragments. Words of urgency. All of these can make the reader feel like they are hurtling through the story.

Sprints 61-65: Pages 50-end

- * So close. Keep it going.
- * When you get to the words “end of episode” send up a cheer and take a break.
- * I’m so proud of you for getting this far.
- * Don’t forget to come back. It ain’t over yet.

Sprints 66-70: Proof & Polish

- * Sprint 66: read through p. 1-20: Correct typos and mark scenes that could benefit from 10-15 minutes of extra attention.
- * Sprint 67: read through p. 21-40: Correct typos and mark scenes that could benefit from 10-15 minutes of extra attention
- * Sprint 68: read through p. 41-end: Correct typos and mark scenes that could benefit from 10-15 minutes of extra attention
- * Sprints 69 & 70: Go back to any marked scenes and spend 10-15 minutes rewriting or polishing.
- * Save save save. Backup to the cloud or a drive. Send a copy to yourself.
- * Rest, relax, rejoice! If you like, email me at pandemicpilot@gmail.com to let me know you've finished.
- * Take a break for a few days before tackling Draft 2.

Appendix

Resources, Breaks, etc

Research Time

- * You may be reading widely on topics and themes related to your series. In addition to that research, here are some other things you can do in your “spare” time:
- * Go back to the list of series you made during Sprint 2. See if you can find the pilot scripts for any of them. (There are many sources, here are three: Simply Scripts, TV Writing, TV Calling.)
- * Try to read at least 3 pilots/7 days (good and widely available: Breaking Bad, Stranger Things, Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Walking Dead, Handmaid’s Tale.)
- * Explore YouTube and see if you can find any channels that feature real people who are similar to your characters. Look for channels with fewer subscribers to find your characters in their natural habitat.
- * Go back to the list of series you made during Sprint 2. Start rewatching them.
- * Start making a playlist of music that conveys the tone and mood of your series. Listen to the playlist to help you get in the zone.

Break Time

- * In ordinary times, writing for hours is hard on the body. In these times, you may be extra stressed.
- * Lots of yoga teachers are teaching online. There are lots of sample practices to look at and do on your own. Look for yoga poses that target your upper back, shoulders, neck and wrists to counteract the effects of sitting at a computer.
- * Try doing a 10 minute meditation. If you don't have an established meditation practice, trying to clear your mind may be too frustrating. Plus, when doing creative work, we want to theta waves (as opposed to the alpha waves of the traditional mind-emptying meditation). A yoga nidra meditation is good for helping you get into a higher theta flow state (Insight Timer is a great source). Or lie down comfortably, close your eyes, let your mind wander as you focus on the colours and shapes moving behind your eyelids.
- * At the end of day, really relax. Listen to relaxation meditations (again, Insight Timer is a great source).
- * Eat healthy snacks if you can get them and ease up on the caffeine if you're feeling anxious.
- * Take very good care of yourself. You deserve it.

Online Writing Communities

- * Here are links to a few communities where you can connect with other writers.
- * [inkcanada \(Facebook edition\)](#)
- * Happier in Hollywood
- * [Zero Draft Thirty](#)
- * [r/Screenwriting](#)

Writing Resources

- * Some sources for help with specific screenwriting issues:
- * Entering a scene (video). Check out John August's YouTube Channel and website for lots more writing advice.
- * Got questions about how to format a phone call, indicate a character is using ASL or when to spell out numbers? Dr. Format has the answers.
- * Creating a Compelling Character. Lots more from Scott Myers on Go Into Story.
- * Cold Opens. And lots more on Carole Kirschner's site.
- * Structural Worksheet. And lots more on Lucy V. Hay's Bang2Write.

Thanks for Trying This

Reach out if you want.

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