

Pre shooting script / Post shooting script

A pre shooting script is like a conceptual map for your shooting journey.

- concentrates on each shot
- outlines the story
- provides a visual guide for the shoot.

Important not to confuse a script with a shot list...

- A shot list contains:
 - shot numbers
 - shot descriptions
 - set numbers

A script is about...

- being more theoretical
- descriptive but leaving room for interpretation

The finalised version of the pre-shooting script... it is created between the shooting and editing process.

- The post-shooting script contains:
 - theoretical elements
 - Audiovisual information
 - descriptions of shots
 - descriptions of action scenes

Although it contains a bit more detail than the pre-shooting script it can be confused with a paper edit...

- A paper edit contains:
 - detailed shots info
 - detailed production info
 - often used by to cut the footage.

A post-script is not as descriptive and leaves room for creative interpretation at the editing stage.

Why documentaries are different...

Documentary scripts do share common elements with scripts for films, however they also have a lot of their own specific considerations:

- Documentary deals with fact no fiction...
 - real events
 - real issues
 - real conflict
 - real emotions
- Documentary inspires, informs and educates...
 - used to inform and inspire change in their audience.
- Documentary is flexible...
 - no fixed visual or conceptual guidelines.
- Documentary involves less control...
 - Filmmakers are unable to control what is being filmed.
- Documentary subject is superior...
 - the subjects the most important aspect of a documentary.
- Credibility is key...
 - documentary must always provide credible information and sources.
- Form is more important than formula...
 - The form and layout of a script is showcased as important as they add value to the film.

Researching for a Documentary

A Documentary has a 'value' (social, political, historical, philosophical, artistic or of some other kind). The amount of research a scriptwriter puts in is directly related to the 'value'.

- Curiosity
 - what have I not been told?
 - is what I've been told true?
 - As a member of the audience what would I want to learn about this subject?
 - Find facts that are not yet known on the subject.
- Quantify Quality
 - with this information add to the overall quality of the film.
- The Strategy
 - Print research → Newspapers / books / magazines
 - Journals / reports / archives...
 - Field research → visual media / go to various locations
 - interviews / museums / art galleries
 - Interview research → speak to people directly and indirectly
 - the people to seek out are experts on the subject.

Digging Deep

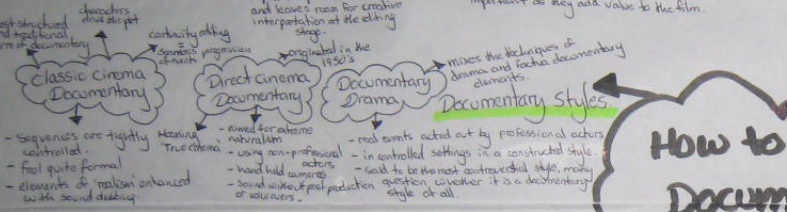
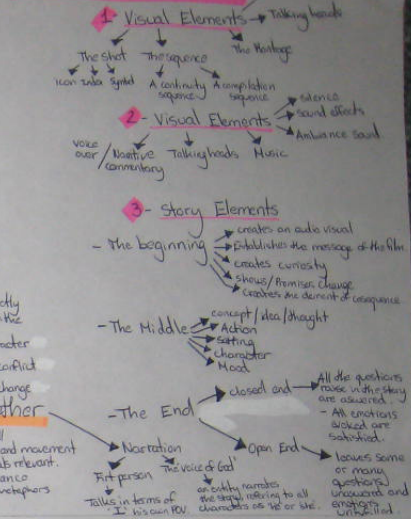
The top heart of the issue.

Putting a script together

writing visual - show don't tell

- through action and movement
- keeping the visual relevant.
- Emotional relevance
- visual needs / metaphors
- special effects

Essential Script Elements



Documentary proposal

- A proposal will usually be accompanied by a budget and a sample reel/work-in-progress edit.
- A proposal is about communicating to someone who may not know you or my work. It is usually the key element in securing resources to produce a project.

A good and effective proposal will:

- Tell a good story
- Make human truths emerge through images.
- Inform and emotionally move an audience.



Documentary treatment

- A treatment should clearly state your idea.
- clarify your point of view
- convince the reader that you are organized, professional and imaginative.
- A treatment makes sure you have access to people, places and the information needed to complete the film before proposing it.
- Be specific...
 - no may, might, possibly
 - use words like... will do
- Allow the reader to visualise what is in your mind
- Do this avoiding splashy adjective, seek ads:
 - 'this spellbinding story'
 - 'magically brought to life by remarkable camera work'

A proposal is about presenting information whereas the treatment evokes how an audience will experience one film on the screen.

When creating a treatment

- Convincing the third party your documentary is worth making
- write it in present tense
- Tell the reader what they will see and hear on screen.
- Describe the story to introduce any characters
- Keep bio of yourself and your team short
- what is the story and how do I plan to tell it?
- when making a treatment stay away from including all the research available at the subject, focus on telling the story
- Making a story clear and appealing but not overwriting in a proposal

Both treatments and proposals are used to:

- Describe a project so that people involved share an understanding of your approach.
- Both help secure funding, distribution...
- Both provide guidance in the structuring and editing of a documentary project.