# BBC TAPED DRAMA FORMAT

Episode number and/or "Title"

Written by

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Every script should have a title page with one contact address only in the bottom left hand corner.
Always include a phone number and an e-mail address if you have one.

If you have an agent, the address and number can go here.
A draft number or date is not required on a spec script.

## SC1.  EXT. LOCATION #1 - DAY 1  [09.20]

> [SCENE HEADINGS ARE TYPED IN BOLD CAPITALS UNDERLINED AND TAKE THE FORM OF SCENE NUMBER. EXT. OR INT. LOCATION - DAY OR NIGHT.
>
> IT IS CUSTOMARY, BUT NOT ESSENTIAL, TO INCLUDE THE DAY NUMBER AND TIME OF DAY IN THE HEADING.  AS A GENERAL RULE OF THUMB, DAY BEGINS AT 06.00 AND NIGHT BEGINS AT 20.00.
>
> SCENE ACTION APPEARS IN ALL CAPITALS ENCLOSED WITHIN SQUARE BRACKETS WITH DOUBLE-SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS.
>
> SCENE ACTION SHOULD ONLY DEAL WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE SCREEN AND MUST NEVER STRAY INTO SUPERFLUOUS NOVELISTIC TEXT RELATED TO **CHARACTER** THOUGHTS OR BACKSTORY.]

**CHARACTER #1:**
Character cues appear in bold capitals underlined with a colon.  A character is designated by either their first or last name, but a role designation may be used instead with personal titles abbreviated.  The designated character name should remain consistent throughout the entire script.

**CHARACTER #2**
Dialogue appears under the character name in normal upper and lower case text with single-line spacing.

**CHARACTER #1:**
(SMILES) Parenthetical instructions appear in capitals enclosed within round brackets in the body of the dialogue. (PAUSE) It is recommended that these are used sparingly!

> [IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO BREAK A **CHARACTER'S** SPEECH WITH PARAGRAPHS OF SCENE ACTION.]

**CHARACTER #1:**
But remember to repeat the character name and avoid breaking speeches across a page.  Paragraphs of dialogue must always be preceded by a character name and never appear on their own.

[SCENES CAN CONTINUE ACROSS PAGES LIKE THIS.  THERE'S NO NEED TO RETYPE THE SCENE NUMBER OR HEADING.  ONLY USE HEADINGS WHEN YOU START A NEW SCENE.

STUDIO-BASED TV DRAMA SCRIPTS (LIKE "DOCTORS" AND "CASUALTY") ARE TYPED WITH WIDE LEFT MARGINS FOR CAMERA AND SOUND CUES TO BE INSERTED WHEN THE SCRIPT GOES INTO THE STUDIO TO BE RECORDED.  AVOID ANY KIND OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION IN YOUR SPEC SCRIPT.

IT IS CUSTOMARY IN A TV SCRIPT TO SPECIFY A TRANSITION AT THE END OF EVERY SCENE.]

CUT TO:

## SC2. EXT./INT. LOCATION #2 - DAY 1  [09.30]

[BEGIN EACH NEW SCENE ON A NEW PAGE, HOWEVER SHORT IT IS, AND ALWAYS FOLLOW A SCENE HEADING WITH A LINE OF SCENE ACTION.

IF YOU HAVE A SCENE WHERE THE ACTION IS CONTINUOUSLY MOVING ACROSS THE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR OF THE SAME LOCATION, SUCH AS THE HALL AND DRIVEWAY OF A HOUSE, THEN USE "EXT./INT." IN THE SCENE HEADING.

IF YOU HAVE A PARTICULARLY VISUAL SCENE WITHOUT MUCH DIALOGUE, THEN SPLIT UP YOUR SCENE ACTION INTO PARAGRAPHS.

IT MAKES IT MUCH EASIER TO READ THIS WAY AS HEAVY TEXT ON A PAGE IS OFF-PUTTING.]

CUT TO:

## SC3. INT. LOCATION #3 - NIGHT 1  [20.05]

> [SOMETIMES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO HEAR **CHARACTERS** WHEN WE CAN'T ACTUALLY SEE THEM.]

**CHARACTER #1:** (O.O.V.)

Out-of-vision means the character is  physically present within the scene, but can only be heard, e.g. they are speaking from an adjoining room.

**CHARACTER #2:**  (V.O.)

Voiceover is used when the character is not present within the scene, but can be heard via a mechanical device such as a telephone or radio. It is also used when a character narrates parts of your story.

**CHARACTER #2:**

If you need to differentiate between a character's narration and their on-screen dialogue, just begin a new speech, omitting (V.O.).

**CHARACTER #2:**  (V.O.)

Reverse this process to return to narration.  As (O.O.V.) and (V.O.) are technical instructions, they appear next to the character name.

> [USE VOICEOVER WHEN YOU WANT TO SHOW ONE **CHARACTER** SPEAKING ON THE PHONE BUT ONLY HEAR ANOTHER.]

**CHARACTER #1**

(INTO PHONE) This is the character we see on the phone.

**CHARACTER #2**  (V.O.)

Whilst we hear the second character speaking at the other end.

**CHARACTER #1**

But the first character remains in-vision throughout the scene.

CUT TO:

## SC4. INT./EXT. LOCATION #1 / LOCATION #2 - NIGHT 1 [22.00]  (INTERCUT)

>[IF IT'S NECESSARY TO CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN SIMULTANEOUS ACTION IN TWO DIFFERENT LOCATIONS WITHIN THE SAME SCENE, THEN HANDLE YOUR SCENE HEADING LIKE THIS.
>
>USE THIS METHOD WHEN YOU WANT TO SHOW BOTH **CHARACTERS** DURING A PHONE CONVERSATION.]

**CHARACTER #1:**
(INTO PHONE) You can type your dialogue as normal.

**CHARACTER #2:**
(INTO PHONE) Whilst indicating that both characters are on the phone.

**CHARACTER #1:**
Although you don't need to do that for every speech.

**CHARACTER #2:**
Just make sure you indicate when the character hangs up.  (HANGS UP)  Especially if you are going to continue the dialogue and scene beyond the phone conversation.

>[THIS COUNTS AS ONE SCENE SO THERE'S NO NEED TO BEGIN A NEW PAGE EACH TIME A **CHARACTER** SPEAKS.]

MIX TO:

## SC5. EXT. LOCATION #1 - NIGHT - 1956 (FLASHBACK)

[IF YOU WANT FLASHBACKS IN YOUR SCRIPT, TREAT THEM AS SEPARATE SCENES AND TYPE "FLASHBACK" IN  THE RELEVANT SCENE HEADING.]

## YOUNG CHARACTER #1

If it's important, you can include the specific year or time period.

## YOUNG CHARACTER #2

If your flashback takes place across a number of consecutive scenes, then specify it as a flashback sequence in the heading.

[INDICATE WHEN THE FLASHBACK OR FLASHBACK SEQUENCE FINISHES AND BEGIN A NEW SCENE.

END FLASHBACK.]

MIX TO:

## SC6. EXT. LOCATION #1 - DAY 2  [10.00]

[DON'T FORGET TO NUMBER ALL OF YOUR PAGES - PAGE ONE BEGINS WITH SCENE ONE, NOT THE TITLE PAGE.

AND KEEP ALL YOUR PAGES TOGETHER WITH A SIMPLE PAPER BINDER IN THE TOP LEFT CORNER.  UNFASTENED PAGES CAN BECOME SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE SCRIPT AND GET LOST!

IT IS CUSTOMARY TO SIGN-OFF A TV SCRIPT IN THE FOLLOWING WAY.]


END OF EPISODE