

Script Werx™

How to Customize Microsoft Word™ to Write Scripts

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NOTE: Step-by-step instructions in this paper refer to menus and dialog boxes found in Microsoft Word version 6 or 7. Controls for Microsoft Word 97 will vary in some cases, although the basic principles and in most cases the dialog box and command names are the same.

Good News/Bad News About Microsoft Word

The good news is that Microsoft Word can be customized into a fine-tuned machine for writing scripts. The bad news is that accomplishing that customization can devour every discretionary moment of your life for months or even years; provided of course that you already know how to program in visual basic.

The good news about the bad news is that Parnassus software has already done this work for you and makes the resulting customizations available as a commercial product called *Script Werx*[™].

This paper introduces the basic tools for customizing Microsoft Word and demonstrates how to use them. It then demonstrates how Script Werx features build on these basic principles to provide features that go beyond what scriptwriters with a typical working knowledge of Microsoft Word could accomplish on their own.

Both screenplay and two-column video formats are addressed. The section on styles uses examples from the Script Werx screenplay format exclusively. The section on Macros and Templates reviews features offered by both screenplay and two-column formats.

Styles

A style is all formatting that is appropriate for a specific type of paragraph; such as a slug line (scene heading), action description, character cue or dialogue. Once a style is defined, it can easily be applied to any paragraph. For working in the screenplay format, a properly defined set of styles will eliminate most of the formatting drudgery that would otherwise be necessary while writing the script.

To create a new style

Format a paragraph on which the style will be based

From the Format menu, select Style. A dialog box will open

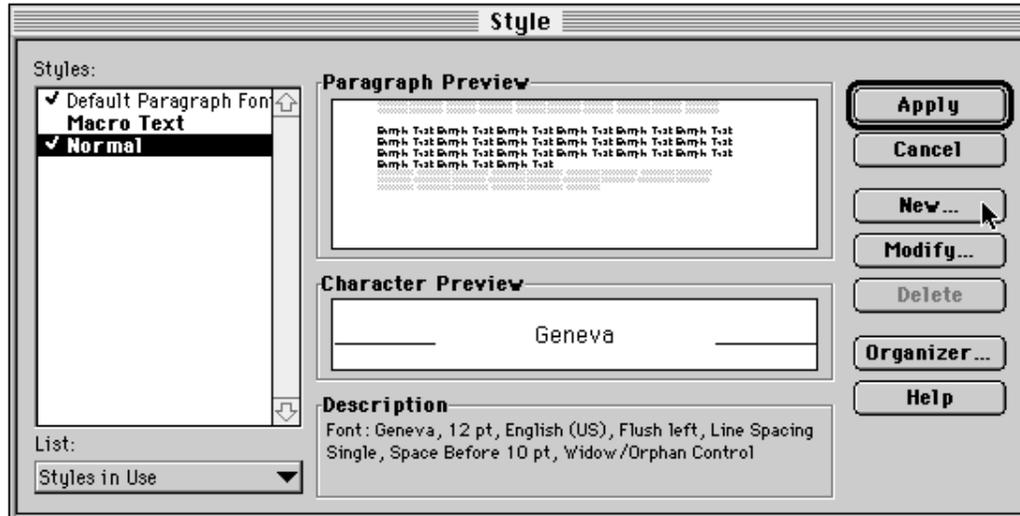


Figure 1 *Style dialog box*

Click on New, a New Style dialog box will open

Type in name for your new style and click on OK to close the New Style dialog box then click on Apply to close the Style dialog box.

To apply a style

Place your cursor anywhere in an existing paragraph (it does not have to be highlighted) or press the Return key on your keyboard to create a new paragraph

From the left end of the Formatting toolbar, click on the downward pointing arrow. A list of all styles available to you will be displayed.



Figure 2 *Formatting toolbar*

Select the appropriate style

To redefine an existing style

Modify a paragraph to which that style has already been applied

From the left end of the Formatting toolbar, select the name of the style

A dialog box will ask if you want to redefine the style, click on OK

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To move a style to another document, either

Copy and paste a paragraph to which the style has been applied; or...

Use Organizer (from Format menu, select Style)

The definition of a style can also include the style to apply to the following paragraph. This is very handy when writing in the screenplay format, since this format incorporates several predictable patterns: the Action style typically follows a slug line and dialogue follows a character cue.

To Define a Style for the Following Paragraph

From the Format menu, select Style.

Within the Style dialog box, select the style for which you want to define the style to be automatically applied to the following paragraph

Click the Modify button. A Modify dialog box will open

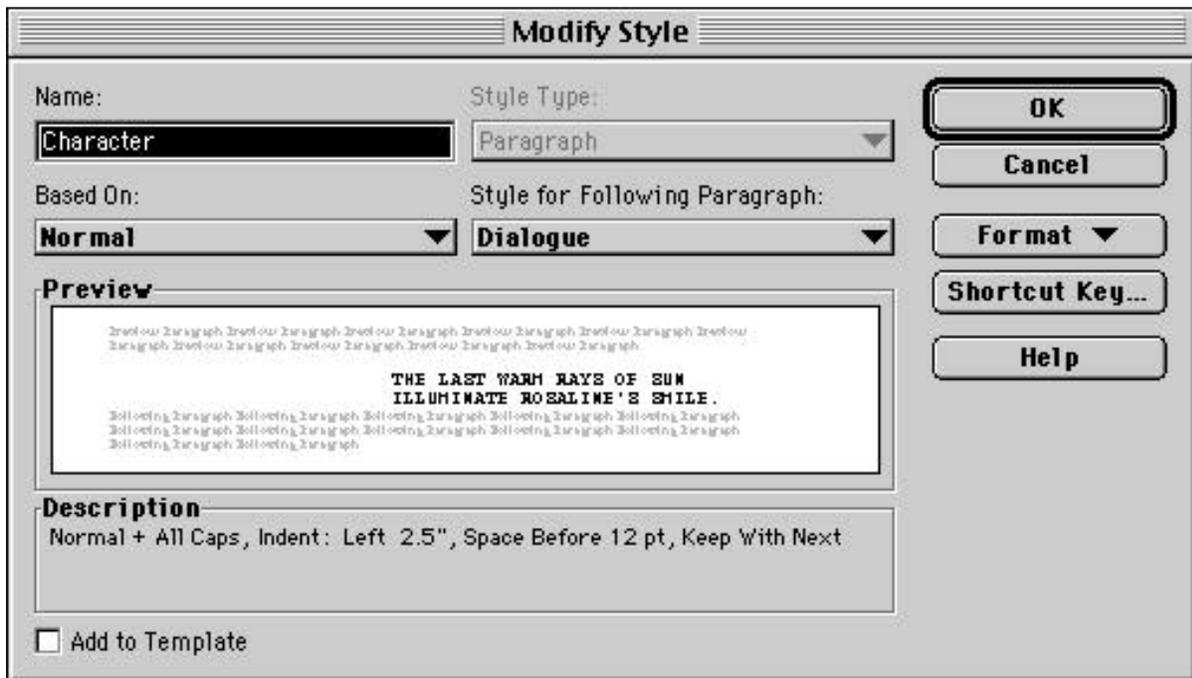


Figure 3 *Modify Style dialog box*

In the field labeled Style for Following Paragraph, use the popdown menu to select the style that should automatically follow the style you are modifying (its name will be displayed in the Name field of this Modify Style dialog box)

The styles provided by Script Werx screenplay templates automate the bulk of formatting required when writing a screenplay: pressing the Return key on your keyboard at the end of a slug line will create a new paragraph formatted for action description. Pressing Return at the end of action description creates a new line for writing a character cue. Pressing Return at the end of a character cue starts a paragraph for dialogue. Choosing what should happen when pressing Return at the end of a dialogue paragraph creates a dilemma.

The dilemma is that some writers prefer to automatically rock back and forth between character cue and dialogue, while others prefer going to action description after writing dialogue. Using a standard version of Microsoft Word, this would require first training the writer to redefine a style, and would then require the writer to take the several steps needed to redefine the style.

In Script Werx, this option is presented as a clickable option in a Preferences dialog box that can be selected from the Script Werx menu.

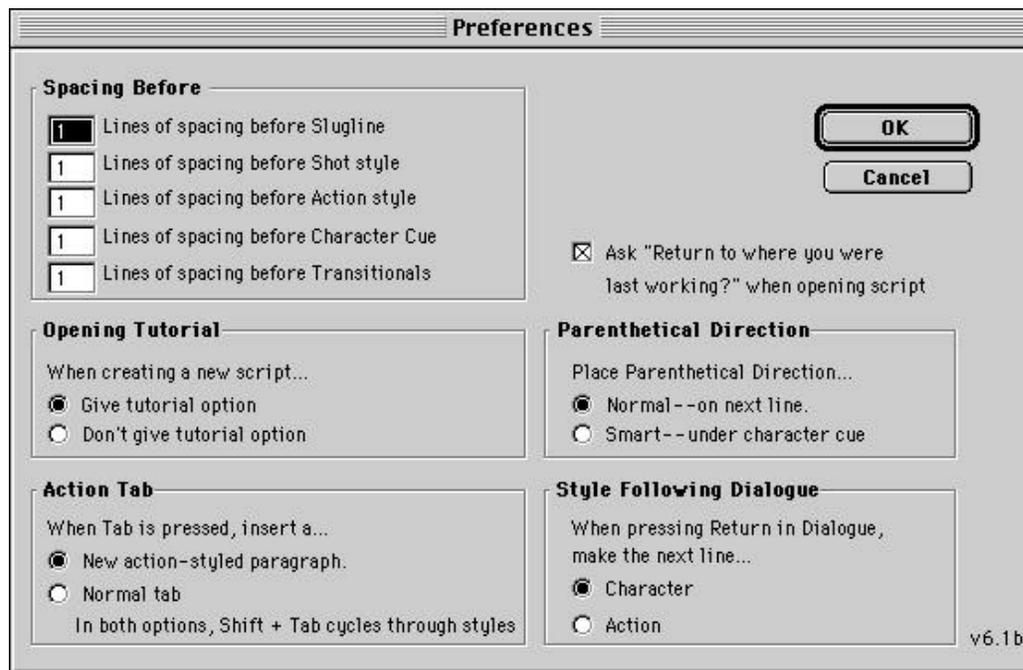


Figure 4 Preferences dialog box for Script Werx screenplay-format templates

In the lower right corner of this dialog box (Figure 4) the choice of following dialogue with either a character cue or action description can easily be made without having any knowledge of styles or how styles are defined or modified.

In the lower left corner of the Preferences dialog box (Figure 4) can be seen the control for a somewhat related feature, **Action Tab**. By default, pressing the Tab key when using a Script Werx screenplay template creates a new Action description paragraph. This means that you can format an entire screenplay using only the Return and Tab keys. Clicking **Normal Tab** in this section of the Preferences dialog box returns the Tab key to its normal function.

In either option, holding down the Shift key while pressing Tab cycles through all available screenplay styles. This lets you use this single key combination to apply any style to a paragraph. In addition, each style also has its own unique key combination as well as a button on the Script Werx Shortcuts toolbar. Whether you prefer using the keyboard or the mouse, Script Werx lets you apply styles the way you prefer.

Microsoft Word's Built-In Heading Styles

An outline feature resident within Microsoft Word can be used to easily collapse a script down to slug lines or to slug lines and action descriptions. These slug lines or action description paragraphs can then be clicked and dragged to shuffle the order of script elements.

To do this, you must first apply Microsoft Word's built-in Heading 1 style to slug lines and apply the Heading 2 style to action descriptions; which is done automatically by Script Werx.

To Shuffle Scenes

On the View menu, select Outline

On the numbered buttons that will appear at the top of the screen, click 1. The script will collapse down to slug lines only. By clicking and dragging any of these slug lines, all elements within that scene will be moved.

Clicking the 2 button will make both slug lines and action descriptions visible. Action descriptions, along with its associated dialogue, can then be clicked and dragged independently of a slug line.

Macros

Another powerful tool for customizing MS Word is the macro. A macro is in essence a small computer program that automates a procedure. You say you're not a programmer, no problem. MS Word lets you record macros.

To Record Macros

From the Tools menu, select Macro

On the dialog box that opens, click on record

If desired, choose to assign the macro to a menu or toolbar or give it a keyboard combination

Perform the procedure you would like recorded as a macro (using the keyboard and menus, mouse actions within the document window are not recorded)



Figure 5 *Macro Record toolbar*

To stop recording, click on the square icon on the floating Macro Record toolbar (figure 5, the macro recording can be paused by clicking on the Pause button, to the right of the stop button)

All of the tools and shortcuts available within Script Werx are macros, most of which include dialog boxes, input boxes or some other functionality that requires programming in addition to what is possible by using the Macro Recorder.

The Parenthetical Direction Tool

The Parenthetical Direction tool is a good example of this. A macro could be easily recorded to create a new line under a character cue, apply the style for a parenthetical direction, enter a direction, create a new line and apply the Dialogue style. However, a different macro would have to be created for each parenthetical direction and the writer would be limited to using the parenthetical directions for which macros were pre-recorded.

To overcome this limitation, Script Werx adds an input box. As part of the normal operation of the Script Werx Parenthetical Direction tool, this input box opens to accept any direction that the writer wishes to use. On clicking OK, whatever was entered becomes properly formatted as a parenthetical direction. An option controlled in the Preferences dialog box (Figure 4) lets the writer choose whether parenthetical directions are placed on the line below the cursor's current position or are always placed on the line directly below the character cue (without moving the cursor from its current position). Similar macro-based tools make it easier to designate dialogue as voiceover, off-camera or continuing.

Pagination with MOREs and CONTINUEDs

Another good use for macros is formatting page breaks for a shooting script with the appropriate MOREs or CONTINUEDs. A "Formatting for Shooting Scripts" toolbar makes these tools available.



Figure 6 *Formatting for Shooting Scripts toolbar*

Clicking CONT'D on this toolbar (figure 6) inserts a properly formatted CONTINUED on either side of a page break.

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A substantially more comprehensive macro is invoked by clicking the Repag button on this same toolbar. This starts the **Repagination tool**, which properly formats page breaks on every single page throughout a shooting script. Similarly comprehensive macro-based tools are available from this toolbar to control scene numbering and to create **A-B pages** (which preserve existing page numbering by designating new pages with alpha-character suffixes e.g. 3A, 3B, 3C.).

Character Cues

The way Script Werx handles character cues (for both screenplay and video-format scripts) exemplifies even more sophisticated macros. These macros are controlled from a special Character toolbar. When first creating a script, these buttons are blank. The first time a button is clicked, an Add Character Cue dialog box opens.

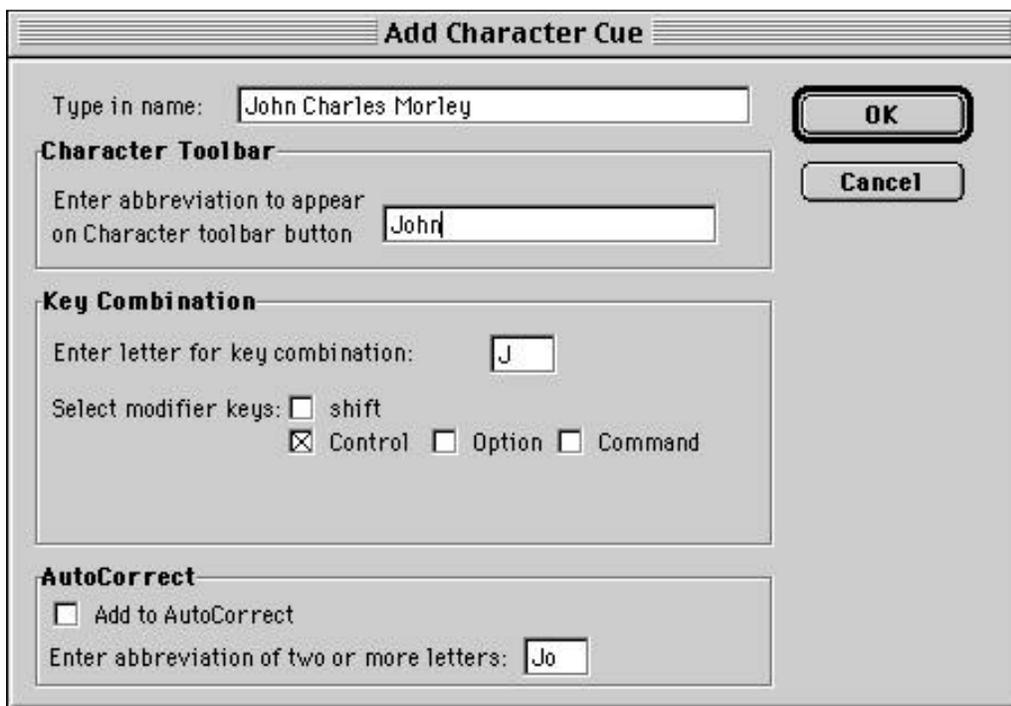


Figure 7 *Add Character Cue dialog box*

If a character name is entered and the OK button is clicked:

- The entire name entered appears on the toolbar button that was clicked to open the Add Character Cue dialog box

- A key combination is created using the first letter of the character's name in combination with the indicated modifier key

- A warning will be displayed if the key combination conflicts with an existing key combination

When that same button—now labeled with the character’s name—is clicked again, a new line will be created, the character’s name will be entered and properly formatted as a character cue and new line will be created below that and properly formatted to begin accepting dialogue. Pressing the key combination would have the same affect as clicking the toolbar button.

The Add Character Cue dialog box (Figure 7) provides several options. To cut down on the size of buttons on the character toolbar, a shortened name can be entered which will then be used as the button’s label (the full name will still be entered as a character cue). A different key combination can be entered, using any combination of modifier keys and keyboard keys. And the name can be added as an AutoCorrect entry, so when the writer types the chosen initials and presses the space bar, those initials are expanded into the complete character name. This makes it easy to use the character’s name in dialogue or action description. Adding AutoCorrect entries without the help of this Script Werx dialog box would require finding and opening the AutoCorrect dialog box, retyping the name and entering the initials to use.

Templates

The macros and styles mentioned so far are great for screenwriting, but irrelevant for writing other types of documents. So wouldn’t it be nice if there was some sort of container that would make them available while working on a screenplay then hide them at all other times. There is. It’s called a template.

In addition to providing a container for styles and macros, templates can include cover sheets, headers and footers, and any type of additional pro-forma material. They will even let you create customized menus and toolbars available only when working on a document that is attached to a specific template.

Each Script Werx template has a unique Script Werx menu and up to 3 Script Werx toolbars that provide access to the tools and shortcuts that are of value when writing in that particular format. The twelve templates included with Script Werx are:

Screenplay Format Templates for...

- Feature Films
- Corporate and Informational Videos
- Live-Tape TV Scripts
- 3-Camera TV Scripts

Combination Template

Two-Column Template

Four-Column Template

Storyboard Template

Creative Treatment Template

Research Questions Template

On-Camera Questions Template

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A behind-the-scenes template used for creating scene lists, shot lists and teleprompter files

The Script Werx installer places all of these templates into the Templates folder used by Microsoft Word.

To create a new script based on a Script Werx template

From File menu, select New. A dialog box will open showing all templates available

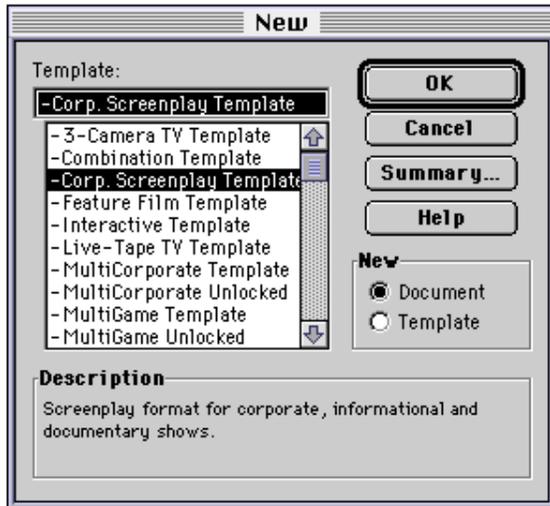


Figure 8 *New dialog box*

Double click to select a template. A new, un-named document will be created, based on the template you selected

To create a new template

Modify any Word document or template, changing styles, headers, footers, cover sheet and/or styles

From the File menu, select Save As

Name the template in the box for Save Current Document As:

On the scrolling list of files and folders, locate and open the folder for Templates (within the folder for either MSOffice, Microsoft Word 6 or WinWord)

On the dialog box that appears, in the lower left corner, under Save File As Type:, use the popdown menu beneath to select Document Template

Attaching to a Template

Any word document can be attached to any existing template

With the document active on the screen, from the File menu (Tools menu in Word 97), select Templates

On the dialog box that opens, click on Attach (center top)

Use the scrolling list of templates that opens to select a template

Click OK in each of the dialog boxes to close them

Two-Column Video format

Script Werx uses Microsoft Word's table feature to create multi-column formats (two-column, four-column and storyboard templates). A two-column script is simply a two-column table with each visual description on its own row. This locks the audio with its respective visual description, regardless of how much longer one may be than the other.

Pressing the Tab key moves you through this format: Press the Tab key when your cursor is in the visual column to move into the audio column and press Tab again to move into the following visual description. To add rows (new visual descriptions) simply continue pressing the Tab key, new rows will be added at the bottom of the script.

Character Toolbar

A character toolbar is provided with the multi-column script formats as well as with the screenplay formats. The only difference is that in the multi-column formats, character cues are automatically placed in the upper right corner of the audio cell, regardless of where the cursor is when a character cue tool is invoked. Even if you decide to enter a character cue after having already begun writing the voiceover or dialogue, the character cue will be properly placed, without disturbing what has already been written.

Importing text

Some of the biggest time and frustration savers in the two-column template are found on the Import Text toolbar.



Figure 9 *Import Text floating toolbar*

They help you quickly import and format existing text or files, which fills a common need since this format is often used for projects that begin with client-supplied voiceover or some other type of existing text.

To Import And Format Existing Text or Files

Place your cursor in the audio column where you want to insert the text or file.

Either paste in the text or Click the Import File button on the floating Import Text toolbar. A browser dialog box will appear to let you select the file to import.

After the file imports, apply shot breaks. The Shot Break tool lets you individually place each shot break (placing each segment of text on a separate row corresponding to its visual description). The Break All tool creates a shot break after every paragraph (hard return).

Shot Numbering

Script Werx provides a number of options specialized for multi-column script writing.

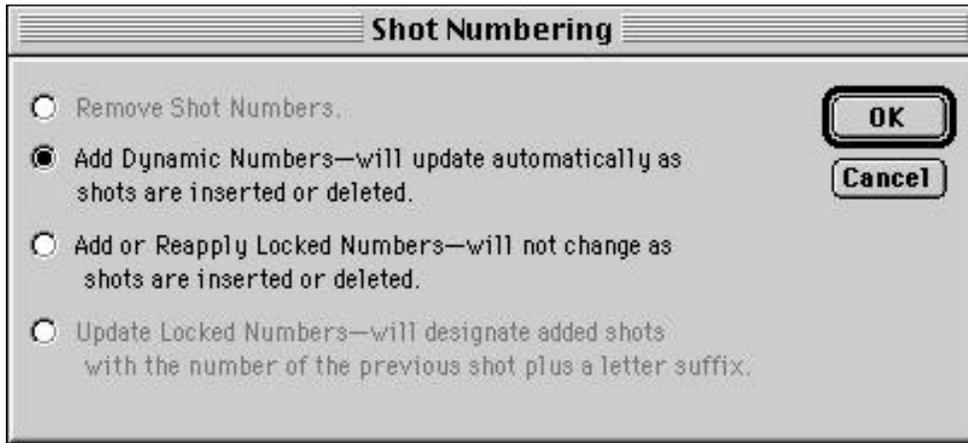


Figure 10 *Shot Numbering dialog box*

Dynamic numbers can be added that will update automatically as shots are added or deleted. Shot numbers can then be locked in place when the script goes into production, making them a reliable reference system. Added shots are then designated with alpha character suffixes (6A, 6B, etc.).

Line numbers

Line numbers can also be added. These line numbers can be placed between the two columns or in the right margin.

Lists and Storyboards

Microsoft Word makes it possible to break out elements of a script as reference documents during production. This is done by making a copy of the script and then deleting all but the elements of interest. A storyboard can be created by replacing the visual descriptions by picture frames or empty frames defined by borders.

Though easy to suggest this, it requires a working knowledge of several MS Word commands and takes several steps to complete. Using Script Werx however, several production documents can be created with single-click ease:

Shot list—creates a list of all visual descriptions from any multi-column video script

Scene list—creates a list of all slug lines (scene descriptions) from any screenplay-format script

Teleprompter file—creates a file of all spoken lines from either screenplay- or video-format scripts

Two/Four-Column Copy—creates a two-column version of a four-column script or a four-column version of a two-column script

Storyboard—provides several options depending on the format of the initial script, letting you choose to have an audio column only or both audio and action columns in addition to the column of storyboard frames

Contact Information

Script Werx is a product of Parnassus Software:

1923 Lyans Drive
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(818) 952-5210

Script Werx is available for immediate purchase and download from the Original Vision web site: <http://www.originalvision.com/> or by calling 1 (800) 464-7511.

Two-Column Example

Approved: _____

“Two-Column Example” • 15

V I S U A L

A U D I O

FADE IN :

1. This is the paragraph describing the first visual. To move into the audio for this visual, press either **Tab** or the **right arrow key**.
2. A new row appears.
3. CU: Finger pressing the Tab key.
4. Angle on using the mouse.
5. Angle on dotted boxes around the cells.
6. Show cursor in video column.

NARRATOR: This is the first audio paragraph in the script.

To move your cursor into a new row, use the **Tab** key.

The best way to move among *existing* cells and rows, is also by pressing the Tab key.

Using your mouse is another way to move your cursor around in your script.

Cell boundaries are defined by these dotted boxes you see on the computer screen, They will not appear on the printed script.

Different styles are applied to the video and audio columns. With your cursor in the video column...

Screenplay Example

EXT. LUXURIOUS MEDITERRANEAN RESORT HOTEL - MAGIC HOUR

A sumptuous lifestyle of tennis, boating and spirited thoroughbreds looks even more magnificent as the sun nestles into distant hills.

WARREN (V.O.)

A chance meeting... a lady in need... This could be the vacation of my life.

EXT. POOL-SIDE - CONTINUOUS

ROSALINE, a ripe 29, is giving a \$5 tip to a BELLBOY who has just delivered an express package. A new LAPTOP COMPUTER sits on the table beside her.

ROSALINE

You may have just saved my screenwriting career.

BELLBOY

(hurrying off)

Grazie.

As Rosaline rips open the envelope, we see...

SCRIPT WERX PACKAGE

...as Rosaline removes its contents. She tosses the user's guide aside and tries to insert the disk into her laptop backwards.

WARREN (O.C.)

The other side goes in first.

WARREN, a handsome 32, smiles down at Rosaline, as he towels himself off from a vigorous swim.

ROSALINE

(gesturing to the laptop computer)

They said this thing is supposed to *save* me time.

WARREN

It depends on how you use it.

ROSALINE

And I suppose you know all about these things?

Warren slides down into the chair next to Rosaline, as he notices the Script Werx logo on the disk.