17 Tips for First Time Writers

Try to stick to these important rules. They'll not only help you as a writer, but help me as an editor when you send your work in for editing

1. Number every page

2. Number every scene

3. Every time you change location OR time – create a new scene

4. The first time you introduce a main character CAPLITALIZE their name

5. The first time you introduce a main character, give them a brief description

6. Try to avoid calling people MAN 1, MAN 2, LADY – if possible. Better to go for CLEANER, MRS LUCAS etc

7. Never **bold** anything

8. Never *italic* anything

9. Never <u>underline</u> anything

10. Try to write your script in Final Draft or another script writing program, not Word

11. Always write in `12 Courier`

12. A good tip to help you make sure you have written what you intended to, is to write the scene and then ask a friend to read it. Then, have the friend tell you what they think happened in the scene

13. Don't be a lazy writer and write "`they talk briefly`" always write the dialogue

14. Same goes for montage sequences – write everything. Do not write "`Series of shots as Dawn gets up and goes out.`" Lazy writing!

15. Action writing tip - you are not writing a novel, you don't need to describe smells or taste or the intricate detail of the location unless very necessary

16. Can you see what's wrong with this? "`Gina enters. She's nervous as she failed the exam last week`". Can you spot the error? Okay, question – how can you film that Gina's nervous because she failed last week? Do we see a flashback? If so, say so. If not, just write, "`A nervous Gina enters.`" This is a very common mistake that first time writers make and it's very important to get into the habit of NOT doing this

17. Don't write the camera moves in and pans left – you are not the DOP or Director – just write what's seen

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