

Some general reminders...

1) Screenwriting is different than most writing you're used to: **you don't have the luxury of giving background and explanations.**

-- You cannot write in a script what the audience can't see or hear
you can't write: "He thinks about his girlfriend..." in an ACTION line or "(thinking of wife)" in a PARENTHETICAL because we can't see or hear that

-- SHOW what you mean, don't explain it

2) You are used to writing very formally. This is fine in the "action" line but work on writing more **authentic dialog** – write how people actually talk.

-- Many of our sentences are not complete or we have a certain way of talking/certain repeat phrases...

3) Your "**scene heading**" line (it will be gray when you are writing in the program) is just for **location and time** (and is all caps)

-- should begin with INT (for interior) or EXT. (for exterior) then location - time of day.

-- example: INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY – NIGHT

4) Break-up dialog with "action" lines...

-- action lines are not necessarily for just action – they can describe the location/room, what your characters are physically doing, etc.

- this makes for better reading and with lets you give characteristics to your characters, it helps you tell your story even more through what is in the room, what the characters are physically like, the habits they may have, etc.

5) Unless it is very essential, **do NOT include camera angle or shot types**. So you may want to include an occasional "action" line indicating an ECU (extreme close-up), but do not continually dictate where the camera is/should be – that's the director's job.

6) And to repeat #1 above – **only include in your script what the audience can see or hear** – avoid all else. Indeed, it's a whole different kind of storytelling.

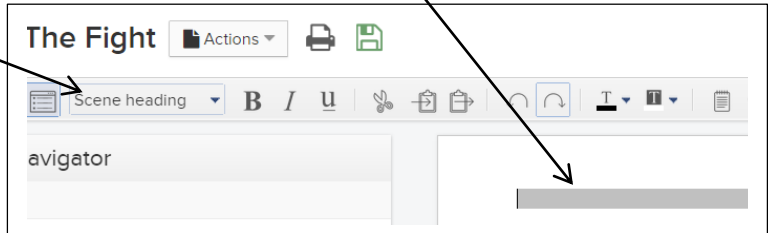
End note: You are the screenwriter and you shape the narrative structure and create every character, action, line of dialogue and the setting... **with the fewest lines possible**. It's difficult, but the more you do it, the better you will get – the more you will be able to visualize and put into words what you want (ie: keep working!).

Creating a Scene in Celtx

Look at screenplays online for guidance. There are many, many sites you can go to – [here is a good one](#) with the Writers' Guild top 100, or [this list](#) of a ton of different ones available, or here is the [Lego Movie](#).

1) Once you've created a screenplay and opened it online...

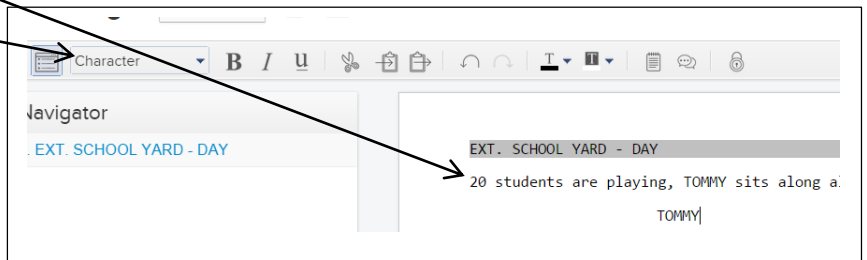
2) You will start with a "Scene Heading" (it will automatically be typed in caps in the gray bar).



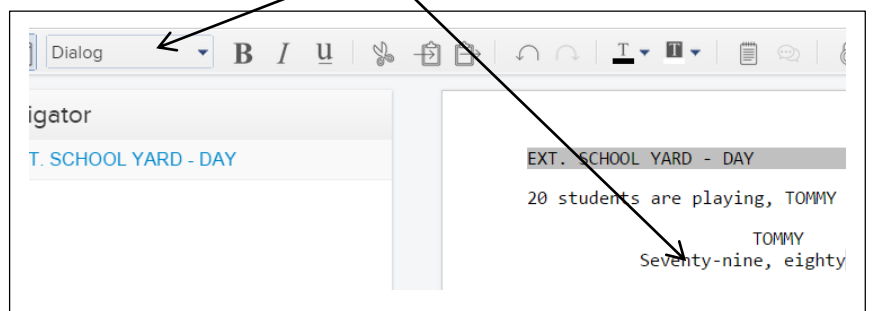
- this is a very brief notation of the physical scene, usually starting with **EXT.** (for exterior/outside) or **INT.** (for interior/inside)

3) Once you hit return, it leaves the "scene heading" box where you can type a description/explanation/set the scene (it is called the "Action" line – and it essentially writes like a paragraph/prose). Be brief here – try to avoid screen direction/camera angles/shots (that's for the director/cinematographer) and avoid giving background.

4) Then choose "character" in the choice box



5) Write a character's name, hit return and then it will automatically become "dialog".



6) Add another character and then dialog (automatic/default), or add more description (choose "Action" in the choice box), or change the scene (choose "Scene Heading").

7) You can see how long your scene is by choosing the "Print/PDF..." icon. This is also when you can print your screenplay to turn it in (it will automatically turn it in to a PDF). Beware – sometimes the Print/PDF window takes literally a minute to load, be patient)

