

## Online Appendix A: An Example of Standard Script Formatting

The following is a selection from my play *Summer's Way*. The format follows the standard script format preferred by most play publishers. I need to offer a disclaimer, though: some slight variation exists with these rules, depending on the specific publisher. For instance, the model Samuel French offers includes no terminal punctuation in actor directions:

(She lifts the hat from her messy hair and presents it  
with flourish to McCREARY)

Other authorities advocate including a period after McCreary's name. For your purposes, submissions should at least bear a significant, if not exact, resemblance to the formatting example. Knowledge of the format shows a familiarity with basic playwriting conventions; a lack of knowledge therefore implies. . . .

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NOTE: The examples are not drawn to actual size, so some of the measurements may look slightly off.

Page headers are a must. They should include the title and page number. For one-acts, standard pagination is fine. For full-length plays, page numbers should be Act #-scene #-overall page # (i.e. II-2-45). Pagination should start on the first page of the story and should not include preliminary pages like title page, cast list, etc.

Summer's Way -- 1

Summer's Way

Scene 1

SETTING: The play takes place in the first-floor common room/parlor area of the inn. Although not luxurious, it is homey and well-kept. The room sports a large couch, several chairs, a coffee table, a coat tree, a check-in counter, and a fireplace with knickknacks on its mantle.

AT RISE: ABIGAIL SUMMERS is pounding in the last nail on a sheet of plywood that covers a window. She finishes, steps back from her work to inspect it, then nods, satisfied. Then she is distracted by something—a poem she has been writing in her head while working. She begins to verbalize the lines.

ABIGAIL

Clicking my panes like drumming fingers...Drumming fingers, clicking my panes, impatient for the storm that follows to come. To arrive. ...the storm that follows to arrive.

(Thumping footsteps on the porch startle ABIGAIL from her reverie. An old man, McCREARY, enters, accompanied by SOUND OF: pounding surf outside. McCREARY carries a transistor radio under his arm.)

McCREARY

Lost my hat.

(Lowering himself into one of the armchairs, he sets the radio on the floor beside him.)

Character names are in ALL CAPS and are indented two and three quarters inches from the margin along an invisible vertical line that divides the page in half. NOTE: This is different than mere "centered" alignment.

Character names mentioned in stage directions are also in ALL CAPS.

Technical effects, such as SOUND or LIGHTS, that are called for in stage directions appear in ALL CAPS.

The format works as a convenient, albeit approximate, way to estimate a play's time: one page roughly equals one minute.

Online Appendix A: An Example of Standard Script Formatting (cont.)

A speech that carries over from one page to the next should clearly indicate it is continued from the previous page.

The margin is an inch along the top, right, and bottom and an inch and a half along the left (to allow for binding).

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McCREARY (con't.)  
Wasn't expecting the wind to be so high so soon.

(ABIGAIL looks again toward the window with worry. McCREARY, meanwhile, peels off one of his dark blue aqua-sox, then the other.)

McCREARY (con't.)  
Radio said storm's still not changing directions.

ABIGAIL  
And you wonder why you lost your hat?

McCREARY  
(With a friendly grunt:)  
Abbey, that hat's been on my head through more hurricanes than I can remember. And then this hurricane comes along and it makes me lose my hat. Carelessness is all it was. Carelessness.

(McCREARY shakes his head, pauses.)

McCREARY (con't.)  
Truth is, I'm gettin' old, Abbey. Making me careless.

ABIGAIL  
The truth, Mr. McCreary, is what you make it.

(McCREARY inspects the boarded-up window.)

McCREARY  
Where's Kayla? Should she be in here helping you with that?

Notice all the white space? It makes it easy on the eye for reading. It also provides plenty of space for actors, technicians, and directors to write notes.

The dialogue stretches all the way across from the left to right margins.

Stage directions are indented an inch and a half from the margin. They are sometimes (in parentheses), although this is a common point of variation.

There shouldn't be any space between the character's name and the first line of dialogue.

However, there should be a single line of space between one character's dialogue and the next character's name.

The same holds true between a line of dialogue and a stage direction.

The typeface is 14-point Times New Roman, although Times or any other straightforward serif font will also work. (The larger typeface makes it easier for actors to read if they're holding the script in their hands.)