

Online Appendix B: An Example of a Script Formatted for a Reading

The following selection from *Summer's Way* comes from a version invited as a readers theatre showcase at the 1999 Theatre Association of New York State festival. Notice the overall format follows the rules for standard formatting, although this modified script does not follow any "industry standard," per se. The format is tried and true, though, and it should work for you.

Keep in mind, most plays are not written to merely be read, they're meant to be acted. As a result, the stage directions can sometimes be confusing when read aloud. You can see where I've struck some words out. When reformatting the script for actual use, I would simply delete those words, but I've left them in here, struck out, so you can see the types of tweaks that might be necessary.

Again, let me caution that *any and all changes need to be made in consultation with the playwright*. Some playwrights may say "No." Respect their wishes.

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The overall format should follow that of a regular script. See Appendix E.

Stage directions for the actor to perform should be in italics.

Summer's Way -- 1

McCREARY

I don't even want to be in the middle of this. One storm's bad enough, but when the two of you get goin' at it....
(He chuckles.)

So long as you haven't started lunch, Kayla, I'll go try to round up some grub for m'self.

(McCREARY grabs his radio and exits into the kitchen.)

KAYLA

Mom, it was all right. I was being careful.

ABIGAIL

Careful?

(KAYLA walks over to hug her mother.)

KAYLA

These storm winds make the most incredible erosion patterns in the sand dunes. You should see them! Whew! I had my goggles, so I wouldn't get any sand in my eyes. Don't worry, the waves down there are not as bad as they sound.

~~*(She pulls away with a wild grin.)*~~

KAYLA (con't.)

Not quite, anyway. But Mom, the life that's down there. ~~The life!~~ All that energy! Imagine the ocean roaring at you—at you! The spray showering you ... and you're just a tiny speck on the beach, dancing, twirling, feeling alive!

(KAYLA giggles with exuberance.)

(KAYLA whirls like a dervish across the room then stops in mid-whirl, facing her mother.)

Since there's no set for an audience to refer to, it can get confusing if they have to visualize the specific layout of a room. The audience should know where he's going without having to worry about the specific route required to get him there.

Stage directions to be read aloud should be underlined.

Stage directions that are not to be read aloud should be stricken out. Do it neatly, however. A messy script gets hard to read.

This provides a visual cue to the actor that her speech continues.

This particular stage direction has nothing wrong with it, but it isn't essential to the play. Since reading it there aloud would disrupt the flow of the dialogue too much, I would make the choice to strike it. It's essential to keep in mind that a reading **MUST** cater to listeners. One way to do that is to let the flow of the dialogue speak for itself. Nonessential stage directions should be trimmed from the reading, if possible—but **NOT** from the play (unless the playwright decides otherwise). Consult the playwright on all such choices.