

Unit 27: Script Writing

Unit code:	K/502/5364
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' understanding of the process of researching and writing scripts suitable for performance. Learners will explore the features of different mediums and research suitable topics. They will produce scripts and evaluate their effectiveness.

● Unit introduction

Understanding the process involved in developing a script for performance is important for learners who wish to pursue a career in writing or to develop their writing through higher qualifications. It is also a useful tool to accomplish to aid the creative process of devising original dramatic work. This unit will provide valuable opportunities for learners to experience some of the pre-production creative processes that take place in the performing arts industries.

Learners will develop scripts for performance, starting from initial concepts and rough drafts, through a process of editing, revising and refining to produce completed scripts. They will explore different kinds of scripts used in radio, film and television and stage. The focus of the work will be to consider the importance and methods of delivering meaning to an audience.

Learners will cover a wide range of writing forms and styles, giving an overview of the sector so that they have a clear idea of how their work fits in with that of the professional world of script writing.

Writing that is produced for this unit should be performed or presented in a workshop setting or to an audience. This will help learners to gain a better understanding of just how good their writing is, allowing the learner to evaluate the success of their scripts making suggestions and recommendations for future developments.

Learners should produce two scripts each totalling 10 minutes when performed; the scripts should be written for two different performance mediums.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand styles and forms of writing for performance
- 2 Be able to research and explore different writing forms and topics
- 3 Be able to present ideas in a written format appropriate to performance medium that can be interpreted by others
- 4 Understand the effectiveness of script writing.

Unit content

1 Understand styles and forms of writing for performance

Style: stylistic differences between differing stylistic conventions eg naturalism, realism, symbolism, epic drama, comedy, tragedy

Form: eg plot, sub-plot, action, narrative, sub-text, scenic structure, episodic structure, monologue, soliloquy

2 Be able to research and explore different writing forms and topics

Research: eg social, historical and cultural backgrounds, popular culture, documentaries, relevant documents and artefacts

Explore: source and stimulus for ideas; exploration strategies and a variety of recording methods eg bubble and flow charts, story boards, rough drafts, outline, plot synopsis, scenarios, forms and styles of writing; experimenting with character; drafting and redrafting; editing

3 Be able to present ideas in a written format appropriate to performance medium that can be interpreted by others

Written form: eg radio plays, stage plays, film and television scripts, stage directions, actor intentions or actions, action scenes; effects (LX, FX); script layouts

Presentation: communication of ideas and of meaning through clarity; effectiveness; use of appropriate conventions and effective use of dialogue/monologue; testing with performers

4 Understand the effectiveness of script writing

Evaluation: response by self and others as to the effectiveness of the script; the meaning of the writing; the appropriate use of form and style; impact and response from audience; relevance to audience; truthfulness to original ideas; practicalities of producing the script; future development ideas

Learners should produce two scripts each totalling 10 minutes when performed; the scripts should be written for two different performance mediums.

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 discuss the key features and characteristics of different styles of writing	M1 explain the key features and characteristics of different styles of writing using some detailed examples	D1 analyse the key features and characteristics of different styles of writing using detailed examples with insightfulness
P2 research and explore ideas and topics for scripts [IE]	M2 research and explore ideas and topics for scripts using a variety of imaginative approaches	D2 research and explore ideas and topics for scripts using imaginative and highly creative analytical approaches
P3 revise ideas to form a working script using script writing skills [CT, SM]	M3 revise ideas with creativity to form a working script using script writing skills	D3 continually revise ideas with creativity and independence to form a working script using script writing skills
P4 present a script that is appropriate to the medium	M4 present a script that is sensitive to the medium and communicates meaning	D4 present an original script that is highly appropriate to the medium and effectively communicates meaning
P5 evaluate the success of script writing making some recommendation for development. [RL]	M5 evaluate the success of script writing making detailed recommendations for development.	D5 evaluate the success of script writing making detailed, considered and feasible recommendations for development.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery of this unit should essentially be through workshops and discussion. Practical exploration and a range of group and individual activities should be embraced. There should be clear tutor-led activities and learner lead discussions and exploration. The use of peer feedback and sharing of creative ideas should be encouraged as should small group or individual tutorials and reviewing sessions.

The source material should expose learners to a range of stylistic approaches to writing, such as naturalism, realism, epic, thrillers, science fiction, westerns, documentary, historical, fantasy, musical, verse drama and lyrics. Material should allow learners to experiment with contrasting styles and forms. Use should be made of the technical language of writing so that the terminology of plot, sub-plot, narrative, monologue, soliloquy and metaphor form part of the working ethos.

Learners should be encouraged to explore and develop their own interests and to focus these interests to the needs of a particular media and audience. The use of structured devices such as writing frames would assist those learners who find the written form challenging. Research should include aural and visual sources as well as written material.

Learners' written material should be tested and refined in a practical setting so that they are encouraged to value their work as performance rather than as text. Links with writers' organisations, both locally and nationally, would assist learners to understand the wider professional context of writing for performance.

Learners must be introduced to the use of dialogue to inform character and how other forms such as visual elements, sound effects, lighting effects and audience reaction can be incorporated. Where film and television scripts are being worked on, an understanding of location, camera angles and editing should be evident.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme – whole class.
Workshop about styles and forms – whole class.
Assignment 1: 'Styles of Writing' presentation (P1, M1, D1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research of key features.• Research of exemplar material.• Analysis of features and characteristics.• Writes presentation.• Gives presentation.
Introduction to Assignment 2: 'Creative Researcher' (P2, M2, D2)
Workshop on style, ideas and topics – whole class.
Workshop on development, storyboarding, bubble charts, etc.
Assignment 2: 'Creative Researcher' portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research.• Creative thought process.• Justification and analysis.• Tutorials to determine next process.
Assignment 3: 'The Writer' – completed script (P3, M3, D3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of first draft.• Revising second, third and subsequent drafts.• Writing of final draft.• Guidance tutorials throughout process.
Assignment 4: 'Selling Your Script' – presentation and evaluation (P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearsal time or preparation of script presentation – group work.• Personal presentation prep.• Presentations and group/tutor feedback.• Collating of evaluative feedback and thoughts.• Writing of evaluation.

Assessment

Assessment should focus on the creative process and production of two scripts each totalling 10 minutes when performed; the scripts should be written for two different performance mediums.

Learning outcome 1 could be evidenced through a written report or a presentation by one learner or a small group. Presentations should be recorded for internal and external verification purposes. Learners could also hand in an investigatory portfolio, a written formal essay with suitable title as set by the assessor or through a recorded interview or question and answer session.

Learning outcome 2 can be evidenced through various forms of recording of brainstorming exercises or group development activities. Notes, ideas boards and spidergrams are all acceptable forms of evidence, which can also be supported by tutor observation. It could also be evidenced through a portfolio of investigation or formal written documents.

Learning outcome 3 can be evidenced by the completion of several drafts of script that have been annotated and altered. Records of tutorials can also evidence the revising process. Whatever the evidence for the revising section whether it be copies of re-written scripts or an annotated script accompanied by a working log of the changes being made, a final completed script should be presented. This should be used in the preparation of the presentation of the script. This can be evidence through a rehearsed reading or audio recorded or filmed script. The purpose of this is to allow learners to test out the script and to discover how successful they have been in creating a product that can be interpreted by others. Peer assessment and feedback would be a good way of evidencing the success of the script.

Evidence for learning outcome 4 can be in the form of a presentation, a written report, or a structured statement in an audio or visual medium. For some learners a *viva voce* type assessment might be appropriate for this learning outcome. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked the same lead questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Presentations and *vivas* must be recorded for internal and external verification purposes.

NB: When applying the grading criteria tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that the examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not inclusive and the examples need not be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

To achieve P1, learners must be able to describe what they would consider to be the key features of different types of script. They will provide a correct but unelaborated outline of what scripts from a given medium contain and look like, and offer some basic observations from exemplar material which accurately identifies the style or form being employed. For example, 'the text *The Dumb Waiter* by Harold Pinter has comic elements. The use of sub-text is important in explaining the narrative to the audience.'

At M1 learners would be able to explain in more detail these key styles and forms and be able to offer suggestions of what techniques make the writing of the play comic and how sub-text is used to explain the narrative to the audience. There would be some direct discussion and links comparing and contrasting the styles and forms of two or more scripts.

At D1 learners would be able to demonstrate high levels of analysis drawing conclusions and reasoning from a range of scripts, from different mediums and being able to make comparisons between them. For example discussing how the use of sub-text may differ in a visual stage play than it would in a radio play and what forms and conventions would be used for the given medium. As well as identifying a range of key features learners at this level will show creativity and opinions about the scripts. For example, why a monologue may be an appropriate choice of style rather than dialogue or movement sequence.

For criterion 2 learners will use research and information gathering sessions to explore suitable topics that have the potential to be used as stimulus for script writing activities. At a pass level learners will go through quite a narrow process using rather obvious research choices and basic thought processes to make decisions about the nature of their scripts. As the grades progress there should be increased creativity employed to the research and a clear investigatory process being followed. Increasingly learners will use a larger variety of imaginative methods (as detailed in unit content) showing analysis and justification for the selecting or rejecting of ideas. At D2 learners will show good levels of independence in their research and increasing depth of analysis so the final decisions about their script have been developed from a solid base.

For criterion 3 at all levels there will be some evidence of the revision of the script. This should be a supported process by the tutor and evidence of the tutor's feedback should be recorded. Whatever level of revising takes place there should be a clear distinction between the first draft of the script and a separate final draft. At the higher levels the script should have detailed evidence of where and why changes have been made. For D3, it would be anticipated that learners will have a sense of continually revising and an understanding that the only reason revision stops is because of given deadlines. At lower levels revision may not be so obvious and only key features may be revised. There may also be a shorter, less detailed approach to development.

The purpose of criterion 4 is to allow the script to 'come to life' and for learners to be able to explore the 'testing' of the script and to gauge a reaction from an audience. This leads directly into the assessment of criterion 5. Any appropriate medium can be used for learners to present their final script but the emphasis should ideally reflect the style of the writing. At a pass level the script will demonstrate that it works in function and that there is a secure element of style and form about it. The creative content will have rudiments of deeper thought but generally there would be room for further creative development. As the grades develop the presentation of the script will be more imaginative and throughout the 'production or rehearsal process' the writer may well have continued to revise the script as it come to life, resulting in an original text, with many insightful moments and highlights. The success of the presentation of the script will probably have resulted from detailed revision in the previous criteria. At D4 there should be clear evidence that learners have really considered a 'visualisation' of the script with the use of camera angles or editing decisions, stage directions and sound and lighting cues. These need not be evidenced practically if resources restrict but should be read out loud in situ to enhance the work. Opportunities should be given for peer assessment where possible and for class discussion and tutor feedback about the effectiveness and suitability of the scripts, this will allow the writer of the script to draw reasoned conclusions to take forward into criterion 5.

For grading criterion 5 there should be some direct relationship between the presentation of the script (grading criterion 4) and the evaluation of its success. At a pass level learners would be able to offer suggestions for the strengths and weaknesses of the script and be able to highlight key elements and ideas for future progression. As the grades progress there should be more evidence of detailed evaluation, making clear decisions about the strengths and weaknesses and offering creative and considered ideas of how the script could be developed further, ie plans to lengthen the piece into a feature film length or to include additional characters or to explore the sub-plots further or even to change the medium it was originally written for. At distinction level these ideas should derive from discussion and feedback from the presentation of the script and learners' own personal thoughts. Their use of technical language will be correct, as well as consistently appropriate and accurate.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1: 'Styles of Writing' (tutor-led workshops on key features and styles)	Working as an artistic director for a theatre or film company learners will brief a group of new writers in preparing them for creating scripts for future production.	Formal presentation to peer group that identifies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> key features and characteristics of different styles of writing use of examples of work to use for exemplar analysis.
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2: 'Creative Researcher' (independent research exercise on topics and formats for a new drama series)	You are employed as a script writer for a new and exciting theatre or film or radio production company. You have been asked to investigate hot topics that could become the next big drama series.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of investigation into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> styles, ideas, topics and exploration story boards, bubble charts, flow charts, extracts of dialogue, character outlines analysis of the hot topics and justification of final style and topic decisions.
P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3: 'The Writer' (creative development and revising of drafts of script to completed working script)	The artistic director has been so impressed with your choice of hot topic they have asked you to write a script for your selected topic.	Portfolio of evidence showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> final completed script evidence of first, second and third drafts of script as appropriate tutor feedback of individual tutorials making suggestions for development.
P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5	Assignment 4: 'Selling Your Script' (presentation of script to peer group and tutor and evaluation of success)	The artistic director would like to give your script an initial try out or read through and would then like to know how you propose to develop the script future into production.	Presentation of script to peers and tutor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rehearsed reading of the script or a audio recording evaluative discussion and feedback from peers written evaluation of success of script with suggestions for future developments.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Exploring Acting Skills	Performing Scripted Plays	Devising Plays
	Acting Skills and Techniques	Historical Context of Performance
	Devising Plays	Drama Improvisation
		Audio Performance Acting
		Film and TV Acting
		Storytelling as Performance

Essential resources

Learners will require suitable spaces for contemplative private writing and for group activities, and a rehearsal area for testing written material. They should have access to a wide range of texts from plays to short stories, documentary evidence, artefacts and diary accounts. Access to video/DVD and audio equipment will be required as will the provision of ICT equipment and the internet for research purposes.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local writers and theatres. There is opportunity for developing links with media related companies such as local radio stations and television production companies. Links with writers groups could be established. Playwrights or theatre devising companies may provide useful visiting speakers discussing their work and the process of writing for performance. Links with publishers and writers agencies would also be beneficial for research and investigatory purposes.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Davis R – *Writing Dialogue for Scripts: Effective Dialogue for Film, TV, Radio and Stage (Writing Handbooks)*, 3rd edition (A & C Black, 2008) ISBN 9781408101346

Greig N – *Playwriting: A Practical Guide* (Routledge, 2004) ISBN 9780415310444

Smethurst W – *How to Write for Television: A Guide to Writing and Selling Successful TV Scripts* (How to Books, 2005) ISBN 9781845281816

Websites

www.stageplays.com

internet theatre bookshop

www.writewords.org.uk

online writers community

www.writing.co.uk

online literary consultants

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	generating ideas and exploring possibilities for scripts
Reflective learners	reviewing and reflecting on their script writing and research work and acting on the outcomes to modify and improve their work
Team workers	collaborating with others to produce a rehearsed reading or recording of a peer's script
Self-managers	organising time and resources and prioritising actions when researching and exploring and writing and revising their script.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research into styles and forms to develop their understanding of its techniques carrying out research to develop ideas for their own scripts
Creative thinkers	trying out alternative ways of revising drafts, following ideas through to complete a script adapting their ideas as circumstances change
Reflective learners	setting goals with success criteria for their script writing inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress
Team workers	if working in a group to produce a presentation, taking responsibility for their own role managing discussions to reach agreements and achieve results
Self-managers	seeking out challenges or new responsibilities and showing flexibility when priorities change dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching advertisements
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning for the production of an advertisement
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	creating and finding illustrative materials for a printed advertisement, and adapting them for use
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring, extracting and assessing the relevance of information from advertising-related websites
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	building an advertising website, bringing together a variety of materials gathered through research
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	communicating with other members of a production group

Skill	When learners are ...
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	using estimation and calculation to plan the layout of flyers or website pages using estimation and calculation to work out timings for editing a television advertisement
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	doing pair work on the analysis of advertisement and giving presentations on conclusions attending production meetings
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading commentaries on individual advertisements reading regulator's reports on advertisements that have been the subject of complaints
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reports on research into advertisements writing copy for advertisements.