# Scriptwriting

## Start With an Outline

When creating a script for your project, it might be helpful to start with an outline. An outline is simply a tool to organize your video chronologically so that you can have an idea of how the video will flow and what elements are necessary to capture your vision. The outline helps you visualize the pace, segments, and estimated length of the video, and it is much easier to move sections around in an outline than it is within a script.

A few tips in writing your outline are:

1. Start general then get specific. First, generate your main segment or topic headers then fill in specific points underneath each afterwards.
2. Write for the ear, not the eye; that is, pay more attention to what is said over what  
   is seen.
3. Remember the public speaking rule: tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them.
4. Don’t worry about specific narration or dialog, just describe what is happening.
5. Concentrate on content.
6. Use bullet points.
7. If your video will need approval from someone else, start by getting approval of the outline. It is much easier to make changes at this stage than later on in the process.

Remember that we’re here to support you during every stage of the video-making process, and we’d be happy to help you develop an outline that sets a strong foundation for your project!

## Writing The Script

Once the outline is approved, it is time to move on to developing the script. The scripts we use most often are “two-column scripts”. The rules of two-column scriptwriting are quite simple; everything seen is entered in the left column and everything heard is entered in the right column. Visuals might include someone speaking on camera, graphics and titles, supporting video (known as “b-roll”), photographs, and animation. Audio might include someone speaking, music, or sound effects. The point is to write exactly what is seen and exactly what is heard chronologically in the appropriate areas. Though this can’t always be accomplished, just do the best you can with what you know. For instance, if an interview is to be conducted and you don’t know the exact words spoken, you can just write “Jane Doe speaks about enrollment numbers.”

Also, placement within the columns is important. Visuals that are seen at a specific time in the script need to line up directly next to what is being heard at that moment in the script. That way, someone reading the script should be able to visualize your entire video by imagining what is being described in the video column happening at the same time as what we hear in the audio column. On the next page, you’ll see an example of a script. See if you can visualize what the video will look like.

Again, if you’d like assistance writing your script, we’d be happy to help! We could meet for a writing session, or we could collaborate via Google Docs—whatever works best for you.

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| Video | Audio |
| ANIMATION: Title Animation “Media Services: Video Production” | MUSIC: Upbeat music up and under. |
| WS DAVID: Seated In front of video editing computer. | David: Media Services has all the capabilities of a professional production house. And we’re able to produce virtually any project that you can think of. But the vast majority of the requests we receive fall within two primary categories. |
| FULL SCREEN GRAPHIC: “Event Coverage” “Professionally Crafted Videos” | David VO: Event Coverage and Professionally crafted videos. |
| B-ROLL: Video clip types as they are referenced (lecture, dance, commencement, mediasite live) | David VO: Event coverage includes everything from recording lecture style presentations, performances, ceremonies, and live streaming events. |
| B-ROLL: Video clip types as they are referenced (football commercial, CHHS promo video, University Studies, Spanish Department documentary, GIS Roleplay) | David VO: Professionally crafted videos can include commercials, promotional videos, informational videos, documentaries, dramatizations, or any video that requires detailed planning and professional editing. |
| WS zoom to MCU DAVID: Seated In front of video editor. | David: It might help if you’ve done a bit of thinking, and maybe a bit of planning on your end before we meet. But first you’ll have to decide if your project falls within “event coverage,” “professionally crafted videos,” or something else altogether. Once you’ve determined which type of video you’d like us to create, give us a call to set up a meeting. Thanks for watching and we look forward to working with you soon. |
| FULL SCREEN: Animated “W” transition to Contact information (phone & website) | MUSIC: Up and out |

*There are a few shorthand tips that might help you understand script lingo:*

LS = Long Shot  
WS = Waist Shot  
MCU = Medium Close Up (or head and shoulders shot)