Screenplay format

A one-page reference for a U.S. spec script

Page settings used by this formatter

US Letter (8.5 × 11 in) and 12 pt Courier-style type.
1.5 in left margin, 1 in at the top, bottom and right.
Start page numbers at 2, at the top right.
Leave the title page out of the script page count.
Scene numbers are usually omitted on spec scripts.

Write the scene

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A bench lamp lights two wooden birds.

JULES
(holding up a brush)
Which one should we paint first?

A heading sets the place and time. Action shows what we can see or hear. An uppercase cue names the speaker. Indent dialogue and use short parentheticals sparingly.

Before you export

Keep headings and cues with the lines they introduce.
Use camera directions sparingly in a spec draft.
About one page per minute is a rough timing estimate.
Follow your recipient’s format and title-page instructions.

Sources

Academy Nicholl Screenwriting Resources
oscars.org/nicholl/screenwriting-resources

Academy Screenwriting Activities Guide, Activities 1 and 2
oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/complete_screen_writing_activities_guide.pdf