



“Hollywood Formula” Worksheet For High School Students

If you’ve decided to write a screenplay this April, use this worksheet to break your script down into even smaller sections than the ones you just learned about in the Plot Worksheet. You do not have to use this "formula," but it might be helpful if you're still not sure what to do with the characters you've created.

Many screenplay writers use similar outlines to write their scripts, but it doesn’t mean that you do. A lot of writers feel that formulaic writing hinders their creative process. If that’s the case for you, you may wait to use this, if you use it at all, until after you’ve written your first draft. Or you can use this now, but when you go to write your script, you can rearrange all the sections and/or make some longer and others shorter so your script ends up being less formulaic or predictable.

Note that this worksheet is modeled for a 100-page screenplay. If your page-count goal is less than 100 pages, you can break this down by percentage. We’ve included the percentages along with the page numbers, so you can write in the right page numbers for your script. For example, if your script is 60 pages long, the 10% mark will be (.10 multiplied by 60) page 6, the 25% mark will be (.25 multiplied by 60) page 15, and so on.



Script Title

Logline (A catchy, one-sentence summary of your script)

Opening Scene

Page 1

The opening scene is an opportunity for you to give the audience the starting point of the protagonist’s journey. It can be an image of your protagonist, an important setting, a revealing conversation between characters, an object that is essential to the plot, etc. This should give your audience a “snapshot” of what the rest of your film might look like, or what your film is all about. The opening image in the *Wizard of Oz* depicts Dorothy and Toto running down a dirt road with storm clouds approaching in the background. Once you watch the whole film, you realize how important that first scene really is. And remember, just like the first page of a novel needs to draw the reader in, the opening image of a script needs to draw the audience in. **Describe your opening image in the space below.**

Setting Up the Story

Pages 1-10 or Pages 1 - ____ (the 10% mark)

All the important characters (your protagonist, antagonist, and supporting characters) in your main plot will be introduced during the first ten pages, or at least hinted at. You want your audience to know all your characters’ strange tics and behaviors—basically, what makes your characters unique. You will also want to set up your conflict (or what your protagonist wants more than anything, and how his or her fears and antagonist are an obstacle to getting it.) By page ten, your audience needs to feel and identify with your characters enough to care about their conflict. **Below, write down your conflict and a few distinguishing features that make each of your characters unique. In the first ten pages of your script, make sure you set up this conflict and portray your characters’ unique personalities.**

The Big Decision

Pages 10-25 or Pages ____ (the 10% mark)- ____ (the 25% mark)

Page 25 is the point of no return. From page 10 until then, your protagonist should be debating whether to embark on his or her journey or just continue living his or her uneventful, everyday life. Unless you want to write a really boring script, your protagonist will choose the more dangerous and exciting path towards his or her goal. But just like it might be hard if you had to decide to leave everything behind, it

will be a hard decision for your protagonist. **Below, write two lists from your protagonist’s point of view. One stating why he or she should stay, and one stating why he or she should embark on the adventure.**

Reasons why I should stay:

Reasons why I should embark on the adventure:

Into the Wide Unknown

Page 25 or Page ____ (the 25% mark)

This is a big moment for your protagonist, and you want to make sure that your audience knows it. He or she is leaving the old world behind, and stepping into a dangerous and unknown world to embark on the adventure. Because these two worlds are so distinct, the act of actually stepping into the new one must be unmistakable. A great example of this is in *The Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy steps out of her house and into the Munchkin City. **Below, describe the moment where your protagonist steps into the new world.**

Subplot

Page 30 or Page ____ (the 30% mark)

The subplot, also known as the “B story,” is oftentimes a love story involving the protagonist, but it can also be based around supporting characters or even a brand new gang of characters. The subplot will make your script more dynamic or exciting; the more subplots you have, the more fun your film will be to watch. **Using the space below, brainstorm some ideas for various subplots and how to introduce them into your script. You may want to go back to your “Supporting Character Worksheets,” and see what each of them wants more than anything in the world.**

ready to come back with a vengeance. **Describe how your antagonist rears his or her ugly head again in your script in the space below.**

The “All is Lost” Moment
Page 75 or Page ____ (the 75% mark)

Just like the 50% Mark, the “All is Lost” Moment is a false defeat. Everything that could go wrong has gone wrong. The antagonist has come back with a bigger army and a brilliant game plan right when your protagonist thought all his or her problems were gone for good (or when he or she thought that things could not get any worse). After such a huge defeat, it is no wonder your protagonist is ready to throw in the towel and give up on his or her dreams. **Describe the “All is Lost” Moment in your script below.**

The “Ah Ha!” Moment
Page 85 or Page ____ (the 85% mark)

This is the moment when your protagonist pulls him or herself off the floor and back into action. Oftentimes, with the help of the supporting characters, he or she will come up with a brilliant plan (Ah ha!) to finally defeat the antagonist—this time for real. **Describe the “Ah ha!” moment of your script below.**



Don't worry about getting all this down right off the bat. There is *a lot* of information here. An easy way to break this worksheet in before Script Frenzy is to use it to outline your favorite films. You may need to watch them again, and as you do, I bet you will be amazed at how closely they follow this formula. Remember that one page of a screenplay is approximately one minute of film time, and that some movies are longer or shorter than 100-minutes, so this won't always be exact.