



## Script Frenzy Plot Handout and Worksheet

### For High School Students

Now that you have the characters for your script, it is time for you to get them into action. They need to make their dreams come true without letting their fears and those pesky antagonists stop them. You may be wondering how you get from the beginning of your script to the end. Well, it is not as hard as you think once you have a good, solid plan. Most scripts, whether for a play, movie, TV show, or comic book, follow the same outline, and we have mapped it out for you in this handout. Once you understand all the parts that make up a script's plot, it will be a lot easier to map out your own.



**1. The Set-Up:** Though some scripts begin with an “inciting incident”—which you will read about soon—many of them start by telling the reader a little bit about the characters, the setting, and the conflict before jumping right in to the plot.

*Here is an example of a script's set-up. Note that the following examples are written using the format for screenplays:*

INT. BORIS THE UNICORN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The unicorn BORIS is in his bedroom playing GUITAR and eating FROSTED STRAWBERRY POP-TARTS. Boris is a young unicorn with a hot-pink MOHAWK and a messy room filled with ROCK BAND POSTERS, GUITAR MAGAZINES, and many different GUITARS, AMPS, AND PEDALS. His mom, WILMA, walks into his room with another PLATE OF POP-TARTS.

BORIS  
Mom, I'm SO over it!

WILMA  
Over what? What does that even mean?

BORIS  
Everything. I am bored with everything.

WILMA

I don't understand you at all, little man. You have every guitar and guitar gadget in the world! What else do you need?

BORIS

How many times do I have to tell you to stop calling me "little man." I'm 18. I'm way too old to be sitting in my bedroom like a loser. I want to be in a band. I want to travel the world  
. . . .

WILMA

Why don't you try out for that new reality TV show, *So You Think You Can Rock?! I hear auditions are coming to Detroit next weekend, and the grand prize is a two-million dollar contract with Capital Records.*

BORIS

I wish. I've looked into it, but like everything in this world, unicorns are not allowed. Billy Van Carnage is the judge, and he thinks all unicorns are wimps. Plus, I wanna vomit just thinking about getting on stage.

Okay, that was a good set up. We have been introduced to the main character and the main problem of the story: Boris wants to join a rock band and travel the world (who doesn't, really!), and the antagonist, Mr. Van Carnage, has banned unicorns from the show. Plus, he has stage fright, which is going to make it pretty hard for him to perform in front an audience, let alone millions of TV viewers.

**2. The Inciting Incident:** This is the event that starts a script on the road to the action-packed part of the plot. It is something exciting that happens to your character that changes him or her in some way. Usually, it is an event or encounter that causes your character to begin the journey to make his or her dreams come true.

*Here is the inciting incident that happens in this story:*

INT. GUITAR CENTER - NIGHT

Boris is looking at a STRATOCASTER when he sees ABIGAIL the beautiful unicorn at the counter. Boris ducks behind a DRUM SET, but it's too late. He's been spotted.

ABIGAIL

Hey Boris, guess what?

BORIS

(Stammering)

Um, Nothing. I mean, I'm great! I mean, what?

ABIGAIL

My band is trying out for  
*SO YOU THINK YOU CAN  
ROCK?! this weekend.*

BORIS

Wow, you're so cool. I mean, that is so cool. Um, what is your band called?

ABIGAIL

Crude Medicine. We totally rock. I am so glad I ran into you. I've heard you're a pretty awesome lead guitarist, and our guy just dropped out. He eloped with his lady, and is M.I.A. We are totally freaking out! Will you be our new lead?

BORIS

Um, wow, um, wow . . .

ABIGAIL

I'll take that as a yes. I'll be at your place at 8 AM sharp Saturday morning. Make sure you know the guitar solo in Van Halen's "Jump" by then.

If an inciting incident never happened to Boris, he would more than likely continue to eat breakfast pastries and play guitar alone in his bedroom. This might sound like a pretty fun life to live, but it is not a very fun life to watch.

**3. Rising Action:** This will be the longest part of your story. You will write all about your characters and about what happens to them during their adventure. It might be good to think about a script as if it were rollercoaster—the higher you go, the more suspenseful it gets. The rising action is like climbing that roller coaster. It is made up of many events (many of them unexpected), each of them building up to the most exciting part of your story, the climax.

*Here is a summary of some of the rising action in Boris the Unicorn:*

1. Abigail pulls up outside in her beat-up Volkswagen Jetta and Boris—trying not to look back to his room where his guitars, amps, and pedals are looking sad and deserted—says goodbye to his mom

Abigail honks until Boris finally hugs his mom, grabs his vintage Fender *Jaguar* and runs out the door.

2. As soon as they get to the auditions, Boris starts to get nervous. He can barely talk to people, but Abigail and the other two band members, Zach (the drummer) and Megan (the bassist), do all the talking. Everyone they meet is in awe that unicorns would even come to the tryouts knowing how much Billy disliked them. Though Boris is nervous about getting on stage, he finds himself becoming more and more comfortable around Abigail. She is unlike any other girl he has ever met. And she seems to like him!

3. When it's time for Crude Medicine to get up in front of the judges to play Van Halen's "Jump," Boris can hardly see straight. Boris knows the song like the back of his hand, all he has to worry about is not throwing up or passing out.

Boris makes it all the way through the song just fine, and Abigail sings lead and nails it. All the judges are blown away after they finish, except one.

"No unicorns on the show!" Billy says, "Unicorns are inherently wimpy. They can't be rock stars. Just look at them."

But the rest of the judges outvote him. Crude Medicine is on its way to stardom.

4. Crude Medicine makes it all the way to the final episode and each performance gets easier for Boris. By the end, he is more worried about impressing Abigail than the judges, and he feels confident that Crude Medicine is going to be chosen to win the grand prize.

**4. The Climax:** This is the moment where things get really exciting. The antagonist appears from out of the blue, the moment the characters have been waiting for is finally here, and the audience gasps. This is the moment at the very

top of the roller coaster, right before your high-speed drop. This moment doesn't last long. Your climax doesn't have to be very long either. It can be as short as one scene with a couple lines of dialogue—just enough to make the audience hold their breath in suspense and ask “What’s going to happen next?!”

*Here is an example of a climax:*

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK!? AMPHITHEATER/STAGE  
- 6:30 PM

BILLY is pouring a BUCKET of LIQUID into a FOG MACHINE. He is laughing maniacally. The BUCKET'S LABEL says CAUTION: WILL CAUSE SUDDEN SLEEP.

BILLY  
Sleep my pretties, sleep!

Billy turns the FOG MACHINE on.

INT. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK!? AMPHITHEATER/STAGE  
- 6:35 PM

CRUDE MEDICINE makes their final entrance onstage. They have new HAIRCUTS and they're wearing MATCHING ORANGE JUMPSUITS. The band begins to play. FOG comes in from the back of the stage and puts MEGAN and ZACH to sleep right before Boris' big guitar solo. The bass and drum fall silent, leaving only the sound of Boris' unaccompanied guitar.

*Gasp!*

**5. The Falling Action:** The falling action is when you find out what happens next. It is the fast-paced, action packed part of your script. You are finally speeding down the tracks of the rollercoaster with your hands in the air! Does the antagonist get defeated? Do the main character's dreams finally come true? If so, how?

*Here is an example of falling action:*

BORIS  
(To Abigail)  
Hey, I think something is up with the fog machine. Stay to the front of the stage.

ABIGAIL  
Yeah, can you sneak back there and turn it off.

BORIS  
I have a better idea.

Boris finishes his solo, and Abigail begins to SING again. Boris holds his breath, sneaks to the back of stage, and kicks the FOG MACHINE so it BLOWS fog directly at Billy who is standing at the Back Stage entrance. Billy falls fast asleep. Boris and Abigail finish the power ballad, and THE CROWD goes wild.

INT. *SO YOU THINK YOU CAN ROCK!?* AMPHITHEATER/JUDGES TABLE/STAGE - 6:45 PM

All the JUDGES are in their seats, including Billy who is still sleeping. The JUDGES are shaking Billy and SPLASHING WATER on his face, but he is not waking up.

JUDGE #1  
What should we do? We need a unanimous vote to declare one of the bands the winner.

JUDGE #2  
Well, I guess we will have to vote without Billy. He is out for the count.

JUDGE #3  
I agree. Plus, I'm sure I'm not the only one here who thinks the fog machine trick was his idea.

The JUDGES talk amongst themselves for a few moments. Then JUDGE #1 steps onto stage.

JUDGE #1  
We are proud to announce that the winner of the 2008 season of *So You Think You Can Rock!?* is Crude Medicine!

**6. The Resolution:** This is how things work out in the end. This is when your protagonist realizes his or her dreams have come true.

An example of a resolution:

INT. SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT

CRUDE MEDICINE is playing an arena full of RABID FANS.

BORIS  
Hello Detroit! It is good  
to be home!

ABIGAIL and BORIS KISS and the FANS SCREAM.

ABIGAIL  
All right, enough of  
that. Let's rock!



Now it's your turn to create your plot. This worksheet will come in really handy during April when you're writing your script. Basically, during Script Frenzy, you will be using this worksheet as an outline. This means you don't have to write everything that will happen in your script right now. Don't worry about formatting now either. This is just to help you get an idea of how your story will go. On a separate sheet of lined notebook paper write the following (try to write one to two paragraphs for each unless otherwise stated):

1. **The Set-Up** (Using your Conflict Worksheet, describe a scene that introduces your characters and the main conflict in your script.)
2. **Inciting Incident** (Describe the event or encounter that causes your protagonist to begin his or her adventure.)
3. **Rising Action** (Write down five events that build up to the climax of your script. Don't forget to include all of your supporting characters.)
4. **The Climax** (This doesn't have to be long—one sentence to one paragraph—but it does need to be exciting!)
5. **The Falling Action** (Describe what happens next.)
6. **The Resolution** (Describe how everything works out in the end.)



That, as they say, is how the story goes. As you probably know, not all scripts follow this outline. Sometimes they begin with the inciting incident or work backwards from the resolution to the beginning. Scripts are filled with flashbacks, flash forwards, and unexpected plot twists. And scripts don't have to have happy endings either. Just like life, sometimes things don't work out exactly the way you planned them to. In April, experiment with the plot you created. Rearrange events, add some twists, and flip that resolution on its head. You might be surprised at how it improves your story.