Writing A Screenplay

Student Name(s): _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Required Elements **Time:** **1 person** **2-3 minutes** **2 people** **3-5 minutes** **3-4 people** **5-8 minutes**	Student included **more** information than was required and presentation was exceptional. • Script was 75-80% memorized • Fully developed characterization • Character(s) truly embodied by the actor(s)- facial expressions & body movements	Student included **all** required elements: • Detailed plot map/timeline • A practiced presentation • Typed screenplay of the scene with MLA heading as explained in directions • Props/Costumes are incorporated into the presentation • All members participate equally	Student included **some** of the elements that were required.	Student included **little to none** of the elements required.
Plot Map (fiction) Timeline (nonfiction)	Poster contains all required plot elements as well as title, author & "what if" statement Timeline – minimum of 8 events in chronological order including who, what, when, & where as well as title, author & "what if" statement(s).	Poster contains most of the required elements	Poster contains some of the required elements and is vague in detail	Poster is missing most of the required elements and is difficult to understand
Flow/Rhythm (sentence fluency) & Role(s)	All sentences sound natural and are easy on the ear when read aloud. Dialogue is **always** consistent with the story line and allows for realistic characterization.	Almost all sentences sound natural and are easy on the ear when read aloud, but 1 or 2 are stiff, awkward, or difficult to understand. Dialogue is **mostly** consistent with story line and allows for characterization.	Most of the sentences sound natural and are easy on the ear when read aloud, but several are stiff, awkward or difficult to understand. Dialogue is **sometimes** not consistent with story line.	The sentences are difficult to read aloud because they sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive, or difficult to understand. Dialogue is **not consistent** with the story line.
Formatting of Script	The formatting is correct in **virtually every detail** as outlined in the packet.	The formatting is correct **most of the time** as outlined in the packet with few errors to distract the reader.	The formatting contains **several errors** that distract from the reading experience.	There are **excessive errors** in the formatting of the script.
Mechanics & Details	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract from the content.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.
Characterization	**Strong** choices are made to create the character fully. **Consistently** uses face, body and voice, dialogue and movements to create detailed and specific character portrayals.	Makes **effective** choices as to use of face, body, and voice to show character's personality and emotion.	Demonstrates **some** attention to detail in character portrayals. Portrays character's emotion and personality using at least two of face, body, and voice.	**Minimal** characterization. Uses minimal facial and/or vocal expression, and overall personality of character(s) is unclear.

Writing a Screenplay Instructions

1. Choose a book from the AP Reading List.

2. After reading the book create a **plot map (fiction)/timeline (nonfiction)** on a <u>poster</u> of the story or content. **Plot map includes** the Title, Author, Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution and Theme using the format given. **Timeline includes** the Title, Author, 8 events in chronological order including the: who, what, when, and where of each event.

3. Next, on the poster, describe your story's "<u>high concept</u>." This is the term they use in Hollywood to mean the **<u>main idea</u>** of your story. Put it in a **"what if"** format. For instance, think about the movie Mary Poppins, the "what if" statement would be "What if a nanny with magical powers came to take care of two children and changed their lives forever?" Create your "What if" statement and include it on your plot map or timeline.

4. **Create a TITLE PAGE for your Screenplay.**
    - In the middle of the page – **centered,** type the title of your book.
    - Under the title, write, **Written by: (author's name)**
    - On the **bottom right corner** of the page, type your **MLA heading** (on title page only).

5. As a group, identify the scene(s) that you will be presenting. You will need to present at **least one scene** from your book. Make sure there is **enough content to fulfill the required time limits**.

6. Setting the Scene: Scenes are the pieces of the whole movie that you are going to present. Each scene has to establish who is in the scene, where it is, when it is and what is happening. (What is happening is very important!) At the end of every scene, your audience should be able to answer the question "So what?" identifying why that scene was chosen & important.

7. Adding Action – You're ready to write the action now. When writing a screenplay, we use what is called the **<u>literary present tense</u>**. That means that we write as though whatever is happening in the scene is happening right now. Write in the present tense only. *All direction and setting detail needs to be typed in italics.*

8. Adding Characters – Now that you've brought your characters into the scene they need to speak.

9. Adding <u>Dialogue</u> - Make your characters talk!

    - You as the writer has an idea of how something should be said or some actions that need to be taking place at the same time. This is called a <u>"parenthetical"</u> because you put it in parentheses. The actors do not verbally say the parentheticals, but they use them to direction their actions.
    - Example: *(Quickly controlling himself)* -OR- *(Then pleading)*

10. Stage Directions - The introductory scene of a script is very important in creating a foundation for the rest of the piece. In order to begin writing an organized scene, the author must include the following:

    - Title of the Scene (written in *italics*)
    - Scene Number (**bolded**)
    - Stage Directions *(written in italics)* such as the <u>Location</u> (where the scene takes place) and <u>Characters Present</u>

(Refer to the example of introductory scene.)

Additional stage directions within the scenes are also vital for the actors as well as the intended audience. Each additional stage direction should be written in *italics*.

- *Aside:* usually signifies the speaker breaking away from the other characters and speaks to his/herself (or the audience)
- *Exit:* character(s) leaves the scene
- *Enter:* character(s) are introduced to the scene

Narrators are often used to present a more thorough description of the setting, characters (physically, emotionally, etc.), and sometimes to clarify situations. A narrator is also an effective method of direction—they can be used to detail where and how a character is position within the scene, who is entering the scene and why, etc. **<u>You must include a narrator in this assignment for a minimum of one scene.</u>**

Example of an Introductory Scene:

Returning to the Annex

Scene 1

The scene remains the same throughout the play. It is the top floor of a warehouse and office building in Amsterdam, Holland. The sharply peaked roof of the building is outlined against a sea of other rooftops in the distance. We hear footsteps on the stairs. Miep Gies comes up, looking for Mr. Frank.

Enter Mr. Frank and Miep Gies

Miep: Are you all right, Mr. Frank?

Mr. Frank: *(Quickly controlling himself)* Yes, Miep, yes.

Miep: Everyone in the office has gone home… It's after six. *(Then pleading)* Don't stay up
               here, Mr. Frank. What's the use of torturing yourself like this?

<u>Character's speeches are indented if they are longer than a single line</u>

11. Do it right! Use perfect spelling and grammar. Have someone check it for you! Read it aloud to check for errors.

12. Finally, practice, practice, practice! Practice your scene as much as possible. Be sure to use costume pieces and props as needed. Use the rubric to evaluate your selves in practice to insure you are doing everything to earn points.