ELEMENTS OF FORMAT

SLUGLINE - The slugline marks the beginning of a scene. It is always typed in ALL CAPS and should be contained on a single line. It contains 3 pieces of information. The staging, the location, and the time.

INT. JOHN’S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

STAGING: Tells us whether the scene takes place indoors or outdoors.
- Indoor scenes are marked INT. for Interior
- Outdoor scenes are marked EXT. for Exterior

INT. JOHN’S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

LOCATION: Tells us the set where the scene takes place. The location is never abbreviated and must be consistent throughout the screenplay.
- It must be specific but not detailed.

INT. JOHN’S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

TIME: Tells us whether the scene takes place at day or at night. It is preceded by a dash.
- It can be either - DAY or - NIGHT

INT. JOHN’S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

SPECIFICS: You can add specifics to the slugline by using parentheses at the end of it.

INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

ACTION: Stage directions and descriptions in a screenplay are known as "action”. Anything that happens on screen should be written in the action.
- Only use the simple present verb tense.
- Do not use "We see" or "We hear”.
- Avoid technical language.

John reaches for the ball pein hammer.

SHOULD BE

John reaches for the hammer.

- Double check the order in which the information is presented.

EXT. MANSION, ENTRANCE DOOR - DAY
John arrives and rings the bell. The Butler, dressed in a black tuxedo, walks through the foyer of the mansion. He opens the door and escorts John inside.

SHOULD BE

EXT. MANSION, ENTRANCE DOOR - DAY
JOHN arrives and rings the bell.

INT. MANSION, FOYER - DAY
The BUTLER, dressed in a black tuxedo, walks through the foyer of the mansion. He opens the door and escorts John inside.
THE SOUND OF DRUMS, from a great distance, growing louder.

FADE IN:

WE ARE FLYING through mist, a dimly glimpsed forest below.

VOICE (V.O.)
When I was lying there in the VA hospital, with a big hole blown through the middle of my life, I started having these dreams of flying.

We are very low over the forest now, gliding fast, the drums BUILDING to a PEAK --

VOICE (V.O.)
Sooner or later though, you always have to wake up...

CUT TO:

PRELAP: A sound transition where the sound from the upcoming scene precedes the cut.

CAPITALIZATION: All caps is used to introduce characters and to provide emphasis to production certain production elements like SOUNDS or EFFECTS.

TRANSITIONS: Are bridges that join different scenes together. Transitions include:

CUT TO:
DISSOLVE TO:
FADE TO:

Transitions are written in all caps, followed by a colon, and positioned on the right margin of the page.