

## Writing with Video

### WRITING A PROPOSAL + TREATMENT

A **proposal** presents the film or video in a series of categories whereas technically a **treatment** is a narrative version of what is or will be on the screen. Although both terms tend to be used interchangeably, they have different functions. The proposal is written first – and that information informs the treatment. Both are written to convince the reader that you can produce a video or film with impact and significance.

### PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDE

**Working title:**

**Director:**

**Camera:**

**Sound:**

**Editor:**

**Others:**

#### 1) WORKING HYPOTHESIS and INTERPRETATION

What are *your* persuasions about the world you are going to show in your video, the main 'statement' that you want to emerge out of the video dialectics. Write a hypothesis statement incorporating this wording:

In life I believe that...

My video will show this in action by exploring...

The main conflict is between --- and --- ...

Ultimately I want the audience to feel --- and understand that ---

#### 2) TOPIC

Write a concise paragraph about:

a) The subject of your video

b) The necessary background information the audience will need to understand and be interested in the 'world' you will present. Address how this information will emerge.

#### 3) ACTION SEQUENCES

Write a brief paragraph for each sequence that shows activity. A sequence is usually what occurs in one location, at one specific time, or an assembly of material to share one topic). Incorporate the following:

a) what is the activity and what conflict is it evidence of

b) a metaphor to explain its subtextual meaning

c) the expected structure of events

d) what the sequence should contribute to the whole video and to the hypothesis

e) what facts the audience must gather from watching it

f) what key, symbolic imagery you hope to encounter

#### 4) MAIN CHARACTERS

Write a brief paragraph about each of your main characters (subjects). For each include:

a) who (name, relationship to others in video, etc)

b) where (where does this person belong in the scheme of things)

c) what (what is the character's role, what makes the character interesting, significant? what is the character trying to do or get at?)

#### 5) CONFLICT

What is the issue in the video? Consider:

a) who wants what from whom

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- b) what conflicting principles do the characters stand for?
- c) does your piece put different principles in opposition (of opinion, of point of view, of vision, of background, context etc...)
- d) how will we see on force meet another – the “confrontation”
- e) what range of possible developments do you see emerging from this confrontation?

### 6) AUDIENCE/AUDIENCE BIASES

Who is your audience? But go deeper – what are the stereotypes or expectations carried by your audience that your video must deliberately set up to alter?

- a) list and describe audience
- b) list biases (positive or negative)
- c) what alternative views, facts, or ideas does audience need to understand?
- d) what evidence will you show to get the audience to see those different truths?

### 7) TO-CAMERA INTERVIEWS

For each interview list:

- a) name, role in life, metaphoric role in video’s dramatic structure
- b) main elements your interview will seek to establish

### 8) STRUCTURE

Write a brief paragraph on how you hope to structure your piece. Consider:

- a) how you will handle the progression of time in the piece
- b) how and at what point will important information to story development appear
- c) what you intend as the climatic sequence and where this should go
- d) how this relates to other sequences in terms of action, rising toward the ‘crisis’ or emotional apex and the falling action after, leading to conclusion etc...
- e) sequence or interviews you intend to use as parallel storytelling

### 9) FORM AND STYLE

Any special considerations in shooting or editing style that might further your video’s content. Things like narration, lighting, camera handling, type and amount of inter-cutting, juxtapositions of scenes, parallel storytelling, use of text, special effects, color etc...

### 10) RESOLUTION

Write a brief paragraph about how you imagine your piece will end and what you would like the ending to accomplish for the audience. Comparing any intended ending with the video’s beginning also exposes what it must accomplish as a story to get there. The ending is your last word – and has a disproportionate impact on what in the end, the video will mean.

### 11) BUDGET

Typically includes: all personnel, materials (tapes, gels etc...), equipment, location (travel, per diems etc), post-production costs, graphics etc...

### 12) LOGISTICS

Shooting schedule, address feasibility etc...

### TREATMENT

Using the information from the proposal, restructure your presentation into a written narrative, descriptive form written in the present tense. Write so the reader can see and hear the video you have in mind as a result of researching and careful consideration of each idea presented. Do not be afraid to use the language that elicits the emotional response you expect your video to evoke. A treatment does not include any philosophy or directorial intentions – so be sure to only write about what an audience would get from the screen (thus our early aesthetic writing assignment!).