

# Production Binder Checklist

## Contents

A production binder is a 3-ring binder, identifying the film and filmmakers on the front (logos/images good creative additions) and the film name on the spine.

Inside: Main Sections (listed here in red) should be tabbed with all sub categories having their own page within each section. Do NOT use sheet protectors.

\*\*\*Necessary Item to Include in Class & Individual Film Binders\*\*\*

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\*\*\***ASU SAFETY FORM – Signed & Completed**

\*\*\***Screenplay**

\*\*\***Log Line**

A log-line is the basic idea for your movie written in one or two sentences. It's the "elevator pitch." It should show what the genre is, who the lead character is, what they want, what they are forced to do to try and get it, and what happens without revealing the ending.

\*\*\***Synopsis**

This is a paragraph about the film that sells the film, almost like a trailer VO. There is of course no 'right way' to write a synopsis, but they usually include the following elements.

1. The name of the lead character
2. The setting of the movie
3. An idea of what they want
4. What or who tries to stop them
5. What challenge they will have to complete to try and get what they want,  
and
6. Whether they are changed by their experiences or not.

# Beat Sheet

This is effectively your first attempt to map out the main scenes that you will need to tell your story. So that you can keep track of the overall structure of your screenplay, it is usually best to limit yourself to a one sentence description of each scene - though certain big scenes (e.g. a family party) might need to be broken down into sub-beats describing the mini scenes taking place throughout the house between different characters. Write your story out scene by scene; and see if you can group them into sequences. Like this:

1. Galadriel narrates the story of Sauron and the One Ring
2. Frodo is relaxing in the idyllic surroundings of the Shire, when Gandalf the Grey arrives for Bilbo's birthday party
3. Gandalf talks with Bilbo about the ring
4. The Birthday Party - Clips of guests enjoying the party
  - Gandalf starts the firework display
  - Merry and Pippin let off a big rocket
  - Bilbo and Gandalf smoke their pipes and talk about old times
  - Bilbo gives his speech and uses the Ring to disappear
5. Gandalf finds Bilbo back at Bag End and forces him to leave the Ring for Frodo on the mat
6. Frodo picks up the Ring and drops it in Gandalf's envelope. Gandalf tells Frodo to keep the Ring in a safe place.

# Step Outline

This is effectively an expanded Beat Outline. But instead of writing scenes in a single sentence, you expand each beat to give some indication of how it might be shot. For instance in a beat outline, you might write, "James goes to the Church to see the priest and beg forgiveness for his sins." In a Step Outline this would become:

## **INT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH. DAY.**

James walks into the Church. He stops at the door. Crosses himself. Then staggers on down the aisle. He reaches the altar

and collapses sobbing with shame. The young priest sees him and hurries over. James looks up.

## **INT. CONFSSIONAL BOX. DAY.**

James confesses to the murder. The priest lets out an involuntary groan of sympathy. James bows his head and continues.

### **\*\*\*Script**

This is effectively the Step Outline with the Action expanded in greater detail to give an impression of the succession of shots, and with the Dialogue and Reaction Shots added. Since movies are told primarily with images, the Dialogue should only be added after all the other stages have been completed. This is because writing dialogue often makes the writer lazy about describing what is happening and the screenplay becomes overloaded with unnecessary conversation instead. The more of the story you can tell with images alone the better the audience will like the movie. If you are writing a comedy it is often worth writing sample scenes to explore the way characters interact on a comic level.

Screenplays are always written in the present tense – even when you are writing a FLASHBACK. You must always describe what the audience is seeing at that moment on the screen. If it's something the audience can't see, don't write it. It's a cheat that will be found out in the edit and cause the rest of your team no end of problems. So when you write a synopsis, treatment or outline make sure that you stick to the active present tense (e.g. He kisses her and smiles. She picks up the Wedding register. He stares at her confused. She whacks him on top of the head with the book.)

**IMPORTANT: PRODUCTION SCRIPTS INCLUDE SCENE NUMBERS!**

### **\*\*\*Script Breakdown**

There is a proper form to be used for this important document, which lists, scene by scene, what is needed for the production from pre-production through post-production. Must include color-coded copy of script and a breakdown sheet for each scene.

## \*\*\*Characters & Casting

### \*\*\*CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

Needed for each character in script

Can also give some general thoughts on the characters and casting for this film. For instance, do you need actors that can handle comedy or drama? Do you need extremely naturalistic actors or ones that can play broad in fantastical worlds? Do your actors need to be physically adept in any way or do they need to have special skills like playing a sport or instrument? Do they need special attributes, ethnicities, eccentricities, etc.?

What characters from past films (or books, plays, etc.) are your characters like? Who are your characters' ancestors?

What characters from your life are your characters like?

What does the main character learn?

What is a film where a character has learned something similar?

When does he/she have their epiphany? What films does this remind you of?

What is the action which embodies what they have learned? What films remind you of this?

### \*\*\*Complete Cast List

Include photos/head-shots if possible, must have contact information and talent releases

If animals or children are involved, have guardian information and have them on set.

## **\*\*\*Locations**

### **Scouting Links**

Possible locations listed with photos and notes.

### **\*\*\*Location and Scene information**

\*\*\*Include permits and/or permission contracts for use, whether ASU Campus or other location

Add location photos and info to this page. A map is helpful. Directions, contact information, availability times.

## **\*\*\*Production Design**

### **Production Design Notes**

\*\*\*Visual References for Production Design

Give an overview of how the elements of Production Design (i.e. color palette, color saturation, overall brightness or darkness, texture, line, shape, etc.) will express the emotions and ideas conveyed by the narrative and how these elements will progress as the emotions created by the narrative progress.

What are the films that will inspire the Production Design for this project and why?

What are the colors that come to mind when you think about this project and why? Is this a bright film or a dark film? Why?

What are the types of lines and shapes that come to mind when you think about this project and why?

What you want the Production Design to say about the characters, the world they live in, or anything else:

How you intend to use Production Design to help communicate these ideas:

The Production Design in this scene reminds you of (a scene from a film, a picture, a poem, a song, a memory, a scent, a taste, a texture, something you used to own, something you grew up with, etc.)

### **\*\*\*Props**

What's required to make this film work?

Set Dressing List (family photos, desk items, etc.)

Furniture List (chairs or items not on location)

Specific Location Needs (home office, hot tub, etc.)

Other List (i.e. automobiles or items not covered in set dressing, furniture and props. All should have contact info. and proper documentation of permission for use)

### **\*\*\*Wardrobe**

\*\*\*According to location, day and character, specifically list what will be provided and/or what actors need to provide.

Give an overview of how the Costume Design will give insight into the world you are creating and the characters who live in that world. Also explain how the costume design contributes to the overall emotional quality of the piece?

What are the films that will inspire the Costume Design for this project and why?

What sort of clothing comes to mind when I think about this project and why?

### **\*\*\*Hair & Makeup**

\*\*\*Per character and what is needed. For special makeup (tattoos, etc.), scars or injuries, use drawings and on set photos for precision and continuity.

## **\*\*\*Production**

### **\*\*\*Cinematography**

\*\*\*Visual References for Cinematography

Give an overview of how the Cinematographic elements (i.e. camera movement, composition, aspect ratio, format choice, lens choice, depth of field, space, contrast levels, saturation levels, exposure, grain, etc.) will express the emotions and ideas conveyed by the narrative and how these elements will progress as the emotions created by the narrative progress.

What are the films that will inspire the Cinematography for this project and why?

What are some images (paintings, photographs or other images) that come to mind when you think about this project and why?

What sort of spaces come to mind when you think about this project and why?

### **\*\*\*Storyboards**

These may be hand-drawn and provide primary frame pictures for each scene and shot. Dialogue must be provided as well as scene numbers. This insures proper coverage for each shot.

### **\*\*\*Shot List & Overhead Floorplan**

Insert Shot List here. Use the proper form for this purpose based upon your scenes and shooting days. There need to be updated copies provided (along with call sheets) for the production team for EACH day of the shoot.

### **\*\*\*Equipment List**

Normal Gear – What does this include? Be specific so nothing is missed; don't just list "light kit" What's available from ASU and what needs to be bought/rented?

Special Gear, Scene #, Item #:

Why do you need it?

Have you consulted an expert?

Are you sure this will achieve the desired effect?

### **\*\*\*Crew (include contact information)**

#### **PRODUCTION**

DIRECTOR  
EXEC. PROD / PRODUCER  
1ST ASST. DIRECTOR  
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT



## **CAMERA DEPARTMENT**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
1ST ASST. CAMERA  
2ND ASST. CAMERA  
CAMERA OPERATOR

## **ELECTRIC**

GAFFER  
BEST BOY ELECTRIC  
ELECTRIC GRIP

## **GRIP**

KEY GRIP  
BEST BOY GRIP  
GRIP

## **SOUND**

SOUND ENGINEER  
BOOM OPERATOR

## **PRODUCTION DESIGN**

SET DESIGNER  
WARDROBE  
HAIR  
MAKE-UP

## **POST-PRODUCTION**

EDITOR  
SOUND EFFECTS/FOLEY  
VISUAL EFFECTS/CGI

## **\*\*\*Budget & Schedule**

### **\*\*\*Budget**

Use a proper form for this purpose. EVERY film has a budget and expenses of some kind, whether donated, loaned or purchased.

### **\*\*\*Schedule**

This is the overall schedule of shoot days and locations.

### **\*\*\*Call Sheets**

Insert Call Sheets. There is a form for this purpose and everyone on set should have the most updated version of this form provided to them at least 12 hours before each shoot day.

## **Notes**

If there are problems, replacements, safety incidents, script changes or additional paperwork/agreements, include them in this section. A copy of your safety form should be included here.

This is also a great place to put production photos, thank you letters and any available paper deliverables.