

## UNDERDOGS

## HOW TO WRITE A SCRIPT FOR YOUR COMIC

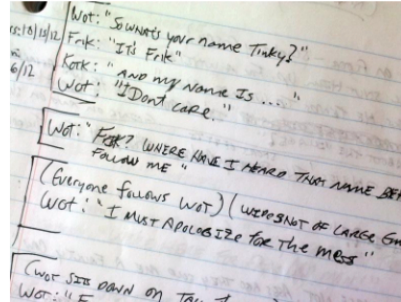
March 8, 2014 — Made by [Todd Tevlin](#)

Intimidated by the writing process? Having a hard time getting what's in your head down on paper? (Do you even use paper? If so, does it have "From the desk of..." printed at the top or is it 23 napkins that you snatched from the coffee shop?) In any event, I want to teach you the "quick and dirty" way of making a script for your comic. It's not as complicated as you might think, and you don't need any fancy software to do it either!

## The Basics of Writing a Script

Before diving into writing a script, you really should write an outline first. Outlines are a way of organizing your thoughts so that you can write your script. List each idea as a bullet point, then revise it to find a logical flow for the story. Once that's done, you'll be able to approximate the number of panels needed to pull off each bullet point. This will give you an idea of how much you can do within each issue of your comic.

The principle is the same regardless of whether you're creating a webcomic or a 22-page comic book. For my comic, *Frik'in Hell*, I only had to plan out 8-11 panels per episode, so my scripts tended to be half a page at most. If you're working on a 22-page comic you might have around 132 panels per issue, which is why it's a good idea to create an outline first so you know where you're going with the story.



Once you have an idea for the length of time each bullet point represents, use your favorite writing implement (pen and paper, computer, telepathic goat) and write down the action and dialogue, including key elements that need to be in each panel. Let me emphasize that you *do not* need to buy fancy scriptwriting software for this! An example script could look like:

**PAGE ONE**

Panel #1: Wide shot of Hank walking into a long hallway lit only by his flashlight. Hank is framed slightly off-center. A storm can be seen outside through the window. The power is out in the house.

Panel #2: Close-up of a broken dump truck on the floor with Hank's feet shown in the background, walking towards the truck.

**Hank:** Hmmm, what is this?

Panel #3: Same shot as #2, as Hank's hand picks up the broken toy. A rolled-up note is jammed into the side of the toy.

Panel #4: Down-angle close-up of Hank opening the note. The note is in center frame.

**Note:** Next time will be your car, now bring me dinner! Love, Bobby.

Panel #5: Lightning strikes outside, causing Hank to jump and scream from fright.

Panel #6: The walls of the hallway begin to melt for no apparent reason other than to end this script...

Notice how the dialogue is separated into its own line? That makes it clearer to read, especially if there's more than one character talking. Notice how some panels describe shot composition (close-ups, wide shots, down-angles, etc.)? This will help to explain what you've pictured in your head, even if the only person that will read this is you. Every detail matters; the more information that you put in the script, the better equipped you will be to visualize this world when you later draw it.

The photo up top is from my notebook for *Frik'in Hell* (not pictured: legible handwriting). I use a very stripped-down scriptwriting approach since I'm both the writer *and* artist. I don't use panel numbers and such — I bracket-off each panel and put the descriptions inside parentheses to separate them from dialogue. As I said, there's more than one way to do this. If I were tackling a 22-page comic, I would probably not use this technique at all.

## Are You Handing the Script Over to an Artist?

If you are the writer and plan to pass the script off to an artist, you will need to be meticulous in the details. Don't assume that the artist will figure out what you want. Make sure that the script has everything that is important to you so that the artist can include it. The example script (above) may be fine if you're also the artist, but if not, you will probably need to explain what the hallway looks like, or the furnishings, lighting, and facial expressions, just to name a few.

Also, consider incorporating screenplay terminology in your script. Use keywords like Exterior or Interior, Day or Night, and reference the scene's location. In the example, I would include in my description: INT. HOUSE HALL-

WAY – NIGHT. Doing this will help the artist figure out where each shot is located, as there will be times when multiple locations are shown in the same page.

Of course there's a fine line between "detailed-oriented" and "dictator." Your artist needs some degree of creative control and should not be treated as a robot to your whims. ("Robot to Your Whims" sounds like a band name... if anyone uses that, I would like credit please.) Your script should tell the story, not micromanage the look of every pen stroke. That's the artist's job!

For more information about this process, check out Gene Kelly's article on Rocketbot called [Writing a Comic Script: From Plot to Outline to Final Draft](#).

Thanks for reading!



How To Write A Script For Your Comic by [Todd Tevlin](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Liked it? Take a second to support MakingComics.com on Patreon!



 [BECOME A PATRON](#)

### Related Posts:

1. [Why should one write a script when in the end they draw the comic as well?](#)
2. [How To Write An Outline For Your Comic](#)
3. [How To Write A Story For Your Comic](#)
4. [Comic Road 2: Scripting Time!](#)

UNDERDOGS

Tags: [articles](#), [Comic](#), [scripting](#), [Underdog](#), [writing](#)

## 9 Responses to "How to Write a Script for Your Comic"



**Panda Cron**

July 23rd, 2016

That Rocketbot article link leads to a 404 😞

[Reply](#)



**Shaye**

May 5th, 2017

Gene Kelly's article on Rocketbot called Writing a Comic Script: From Plot to Outline to Final Draft still leads to a 404 error, please fix the link. Thanks (May 2017)

[Reply](#)



**Patrick Yurick**

May 11th, 2017

Fixed! Thanks for the head's up.

[Reply](#)



**shahnewaz bhuiyan**

December 11th, 2018

hi my name is shawn and i want to know more and learn how to write comics.is there a refund? how much does it cost to learn to write comics? pls let know on my email.thanx

[Reply](#)



**Patrick Yurick**

December 14th, 2018

Confused... Refund?

[Reply](#)




**Independent Research | Jack Hilder Interactive Media**

May 4th, 2016

[...] Tevlin. (2014). How to Write a Script for Your Comic. Available: <https://www.makingcomics.com/2014/03/08/write-script-comic/>. Last accessed 4th May [...]

[Reply](#)



**Development diary: week 3 | jack hilder interactive media**
June 23rd, 2016

[...] Tevlin. (2014). How to Write a Script for Your Comic. Available: <https://www.makingcomics.com/2014/03/08/write-script-comic/>. Last accessed 4th May [...]


Reply



**The Pre-Steps | Memento Vivere**
January 28th, 2017

[...] How to Write a Script for Your Comic by Todd Tevlin on <https://www.makingcomics.com> [...]

Reply



**Script Writing (Response to Kroll) #RP10 | Jed Clancy Vinson**
September 22nd, 2017

[...] Tevlin, T. (2014, March 8). How To Write A Script For Your Comic. Image retrieved from Making Comics: <https://www.makingcomics.com/2014/03/08/write-script-comic/> [...]

Reply

## Leave a Reply






XHTML: You can use these tags: <a href="" title=""> <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <b> <blockquote cite=""> <code> <del datetime=""> <em> <i> <q cite=""> <s> <strike> <strong>