

Scriptwriting Skill Module

Keeping It Real

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand that the best television and movie scripts contain an authentic, personal voice
- Learn to draw upon your own life and true feelings to energize your scripts

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – Keep It Real With the Loop Writing Process

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce Keeping It Real: When people talk about “keeping something real,” they are really talking about *authenticity*. Tell the students that the dictionary defines “authenticity” as being “genuine,” and having “an undisputed origin.” As they write their film and television scripts, remind the students that each of them has a unique and valuable perspective upon the world. If the students can bring that unique perspective to bear upon their scripts, their work will be authentic. Even if they are writing about happenings in outer space, their stories will feel real.

2. Teach Keeping It Real: The problem is that, when trying something new, such as writing a television or movie script, it is often difficult to bring one’s unique perspective to the forefront. That is why it is essential to learn techniques that can help one’s true thoughts come to the forefront of one’s mind. Some of the ways to find one’s true voice include:

- *Freewriting*
- *Keeping a journal*
- *Choosing topics that personally matter*
- *Being open to experimentation*

The Loop Writing Process

Of all these methods, the best way for students to discover their own true voices is through freewriting. As one’s pen flies over the paper, one can outrun one’s ability to censor oneself. The Loop Writing Process is a type of directed freewriting. It is different from most freewriting in that it includes the critical appraisal of what one has written.

It comes in three phases. First, students engage in spontaneous freewriting. Second, students look over what they have written, and decide which parts of their writing sound most like themselves, and which do not. Third, the students to use the parts that sound real as springboards for yet more writing.

EXAMPLE: Lead the students through the loop writing process.

The Loop Writing Process
After brainstorming for script ideas, have the students choose their favorite idea and write it at the top of a piece of paper.
Then, for five minutes, have them freewrite , using that script topic as a starting point. If they stray from the topic, or lose the thread of their thought, tell them that is fine, and just to keep going . Anything is fair game: dialog, character descriptions, plot points, images, special effects ideas. The point is for them to keep their pens or pencils moving for five full minutes, and to allow themselves to write down everything

that comes into their head in an uncensored fashion that is relevant to their script idea.

Next, have them **silently read** what they have just written. Tell them to **circle the parts of their text that they like most**. Whether or not they directly pertain to their script idea, have them pay attention to the parts they find most inspiring, the parts that most accurately reflect their concerns, and which “**sound the most like themselves**.”

Finally, **have them choose one or more of the parts they have circled**. Have them copy those passages at the top of a fresh sheet of paper. Then, using that idea as a starting point for further thinking about their script, have them **freewrite for another five minutes**. When the five minutes is over, once again, as before, have them evaluate what they have written, looking for passages in which they speak with their own unique voices. Repeat this process.

After going through this process a few times, **have the students look back** at all the parts of their writing that they have circled. Ask them: do those parts **sound like you**? What has this taught you about **finding your voice**? How can you integrate these real-feeling parts into your script?

3. Apply Keeping It Real: Hand out copies of “You Try It: Technical Instructions that Make Your Script Look Professional.” After reading the directions, have the students work through the exercise individually. When all are finished, to ensure that all questions have been answered, work through the exercise as a class.

QUICK CHECK Ask students to define “technical instructions” in TV and movies. Have them give examples of the most common formatting headings, and tell how they are used.

YOU TRY IT!

Keeping It Real With the Loop Writing Process

GOAL

Keeping It Real is a great goal to have as you are competing in the Blue Nose Scriptwriting Contest. No matter what type of script you are writing, your writing will become more engaging—as well as more personally rewarding—if you courageously infuse it with your own sense of what is real and important in life.

DIRECTIONS

The best parts of your scripts are going to come from those moments in which you are writing in your own personal and unique voice. To help you give free rein to your voice, use the loop writing process.

First, **brainstorm**—that is, quickly make a list of potential script ideas. One way to do this is to make a list of topics (examples: family, nature, fitting in, friends, world events) and then jot down script ideas that those topics trigger in your imagination.

Second, using that script idea that as a springboard, **write for five minutes without stopping**, free-associating from that lyric. Write down anything that comes to mind: dialog, character studies, or plot points.

Third, read what you have written. Pick out what looks most interesting to you.

Finally, **use the interesting parts for another round of free-association.**

Do this several times. At the end of the session, compile all the parts that you like most, and find a way to include them in your script. **Don't be surprised if you wind up writing much of your script based upon this process!**

Starting Script Ideas:

Free-Writing Triggered by This Idea:

Best Parts from 1st Block of Free Associations:

Free-Writing Triggered by These Parts:

Best Parts from 2nd Block of Free Associations:

Free-Writing Triggered by These Parts:

**Self-Check**

Re-read everything you have written during the Loop Writing Process. What can you use in your script? Think about how you felt as you wrote. Did you experience the sensation of easing up inside, and writing with more confidence, and less self-consciousness? As you continue to work on your scripts, keep using the Loop Writing Process. It is one of the best ways you will find to keep your script real.