

TRANSITION — FADE IN:

SCENE HEADING — INT. NORA'S APARTMENT - DAY

ACTION — Blackout curtains. A digital clock reads 4:02 PM.

NORA VANCE (30s), a late-night radio host who hasn't seen a sunrise in years, slaps the alarm off and stares at the ceiling.

Her phone buzzes. A text from EDDIE: "Don't be late. Again."

CHARACTER —

NORA

PARENTHETICAL —

(to the ceiling)

DIALOGUE —

I'm never late. I'm fashionably on air.

She rolls out of bed.

EXT. RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY RADIO - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rain on a single flickering lamp. Nora's hatchback swings into the spot marked TALENT.

WALT (60s), the night guard, holds the door open with a paper cup of coffee.

WALT

Your fan club called. Twice.

NORA

Tell them I sign autographs at two.

She takes the coffee and heads inside.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

A cramped booth. One mic, one lamp, a wall of foam. Through the glass, EDDIE (40s) counts her in from the control room. Three fingers. Two. One.

NORA

(into the mic)

It's midnight on 88.1 and this is Dead Air. If you're awake, you're family.

The phone line on the desk blinks red. Through the glass, Eddie shrugs. Take it.

NORA (CONT'D)

Line one, you're on the air.

SCREENPLAY FORMAT CHEAT SHEET

iFILMthings

Standard US spec format. All positions measured from the left edge of the page.

Element	Starts at	Ends at	Caps	Space before
Scene heading	1.5"	7.5"	Yes	1 blank line
Action	1.5"	7.5"	No	1 blank line
Character	3.7"	n/a	Yes	1 blank line
Parenthetical	3.1"	5.6"	No	None
Dialogue	2.5"	6.0"	No	None
Transition	Flush right	7.5"	Yes	1 blank line

PAGE SETUP

- US Letter, 8.5" x 11". A4 works outside the US. Keep the same font and indents.
- Font: Courier 12 pt (Courier New, Courier Prime or Courier Final Draft).
- Margins: left 1.5" (room for binding), right 1", top 1", bottom 1".
- About 55 lines per page. One page runs roughly one minute of screen time.
- Page numbers top right, 0.5" from the top, followed by a period. None on the title page or page 1.
- Title page: title centered a third of the way down, "Written by" and your name below it, contact details bottom left.

CHARACTER EXTENSIONS AND COMMON TRANSITIONS

- (V.O.) voice over: a voice not physically in the scene, like a narrator, a phone or a radio caller.
- (O.S.) off screen: the character is in the scene but out of frame, like behind a door.
- (CONT'D) continued: the same character speaks again after an action line.
- FADE IN: opens the script. FADE OUT. closes it. CUT TO: and DISSOLVE TO: go flush right, sparingly.

SCENE HEADING PATTERN

INT. LOCATION - DAY

EXT. LOCATION - NIGHT

INT. inside, EXT. outside, then the place, a hyphen, and DAY or NIGHT.

SPEC SCRIPT MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Camera directions like CLOSE ON or PAN TO. Leave shots to the director.
- Action paragraphs longer than four lines. Break them up.
- Scene numbers. They go on the shooting script, not the spec script.
- Bold, underlining and fancy fonts. Keep it plain Courier.
- Parentheticals on every line. Use them only when the delivery isn't obvious.