BASICS OF SCRIPT WRITING (SEC, 1ST SEM, FYUG, 2024)

WHY STORYTELLING IS IMPORTANT IN SOCIETY

Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of human culture, serving as a means to share knowledge, preserve history, foster empathy, and entertain. It provides a framework to transmit values, traditions, and cultural identity across generations. By engaging with stories, individuals connect emotionally and intellectually, promoting understanding and strengthening communal bonds. Stories often inspire action, challenge norms, and enable people to envision alternative realities, driving societal change.

Evolution of Storytelling Modes

1. **Oral Tradition:** Early societies relied on oral storytelling, using myths, legends, and folktales to educate and entertain. These stories were passed down verbally, often accompanied by gestures and performances.
2. **Written Forms:** The advent of writing systems, such as cuneiform and hieroglyphs, allowed stories to be recorded. Classical literature, epics, and religious texts (e.g., The Iliad or The Mahabharata) became enduring cultural artefacts.
3. **Print Revolution:** The printing press (15th century) democratised storytelling by making books and newspapers widely accessible. This period saw a flourishing of novels, poetry, and journalism.
4. **Audio-Visual Media:** In the 20th century, radio, cinema, and television transformed storytelling into immersive experiences, combining visual, auditory, and narrative elements.
5. **Digital Age:** The internet and digital technology introduced interactive and multimedia storytelling through blogs, podcasts, video games, and social media platforms. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) now offer highly personalised and participatory narratives.

Through these evolving modes, storytelling has adapted to the needs of society while retaining its essential role as a tool for communication, connection, and creativity.

FROM STORY TO SCRIPT

Storytelling, in its many forms, has shaped societies by conveying emotions, values, and ideas. Among these forms, scriptwriting stands out as a structured method to bring stories to life on stage or screen. But what exactly is a script, and how does it differ from a story?

A script is a written document that outlines the dialogue, actions, characters, and settings of a performance meant for a specific medium, such as a play, film, television show, or radio

programme. It serves as a blueprint for production, providing detailed instructions for actors, directors, and production teams to bring the narrative to life.

A story, on the other hand, is the sequence of events or the plot that forms the core of a narrative. It encompasses the characters, conflicts, and themes, but it is not bound by a specific format or medium.

Key Differences:

Aspect	Script	Story
Purpose	Designed for performance; includes technical and artistic details for production.	Written with dialogues, stage directions, scene breakdowns, and character cues.
Format	Provides the narrative content; focuses on what happens.	Prose or outline form, often more fluid and descriptive.
Medium	Intended for visual or auditory presentation (e.g., theatre, film, TV).	Can exist independently as written or oral narration.
Focus	Combines narrative with visual and auditory elements for execution.	Primarily on the narrative arc and thematic elements.

FROM CONCEPT TO CREATION

While a script provides the structure and details for bringing a story to life, its effectiveness depends on key elements that keep the narrative engaging and purposeful. These elements can be summed up as the "Three C's" of scriptwriting.

The Three C's of scriptwriting—Concept, Characters, and Conflict—are key to writing a good script.

Concept is the main idea of your script. It is the starting point for your story. A strong concept is fresh, interesting, and catches the audience's attention. It should feel different from other stories and make people curious.

Characters are the people in your story. They are the heart of the script and carry the story forward. Good characters feel real. They should have strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for their actions. When the audience understands and cares about the characters, they connect more with the story.

Conflict is what makes the story exciting. It is the problem or challenge that the characters face. Conflict can be outside (like fighting a bad person or surviving a storm) or inside (like feeling scared or unsure). Conflict gives the story purpose and keeps the audience interested.

By focusing on these Three C's, you can create a script that is engaging, emotional, and memorable.

OTHER IMPORTANT COMPONENTS

While the Three C's—Concept, Characters, and Conflict—are essential to shaping the core of a script, there are other critical components that enhance its emotional depth and atmosphere. Two such elements, setting and dialogue, are key to influencing the mood and tone of the story, creating the emotional landscape in which the characters and plot come to life.

Setting:

The setting is where and when the story takes place. It helps create the mood and tone of the script. For example, a scene set in a dark, stormy night can make the audience feel scared, tense, or uneasy. On the other hand, a scene set in a sunny, calm park can create a happy or peaceful mood. The setting also shows the emotional state of the characters. If the setting matches what the characters are feeling, it helps the audience connect better with the story. A well-chosen setting adds depth and helps make the script feel real and grounded.

Dialogue:

Dialogue is the conversation between characters in a script. It is very important because it helps set the tone of the story. The way characters speak can make the scene feel funny, serious, sad, or tense. If characters use short, sharp sentences, it can make the scene feel fast-paced and full of tension. If the dialogue is slow and thoughtful, it can make the scene feel more emotional or reflective. Dialogue also shows who the characters are, what they want, and how they feel. Well-written dialogue brings the characters and their emotions to life, making the story more engaging.

OVERALL STRUCTURE OF A SCRIPT

While the Three C's—Concept, Characters, and Conflict—along with the setting and dialogue, lay the foundation for the story, it is equally important to organise these elements within a clear structure. A well-structured script keeps the audience engaged and ensures the story unfolds in a way that builds tension and emotional payoff. This is where the classic script structure comes in, with key stages like Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution, each playing a critical role in guiding the story from beginning to end.

1) Exposition:
   - **Purpose:** Introduces the characters, the setting, and the beginning of the story.
   - **Function:** It gives important background information and shows where the story is taking place. This part sets up the conflict that will happen later.
2) Rising Action:
   - **Purpose:** A series of events that build excitement and develop the main problem.
   - **Function:** The main character faces challenges and the story gets more intense. This part leads to the most exciting part of the story.
3) Climax:
   - **Purpose:** The turning point where the main problem reaches its highest point.
   - **Function:** This is the most intense moment of the story, where the character faces the main challenge. How this moment turns out changes the story.
4) Falling Action:
   - **Purpose:** The events that happen after the climax, moving towards the end of the story.
   - **Function:** It shows the results of the climax and starts to solve any remaining problems.
5) Resolution:
   - **Purpose:** The end of the story where the main problem is solved.
   - **Function:** This part ties up loose ends and gives the audience a satisfying ending.

By using this structure, writers can create a clear and interesting story that keeps the audience's attention and gives them a good ending.

How is the 5-Part Structure (Exposition to Resolution) Different from the Three C's, Setting, and Dialogue?

The **Three C's (Concept, Characters, Conflict), Dialogue, and Setting** are the basic parts of a script that help create the story. The Three C's give the main idea of the story, the people in it, and the problems they face. Dialogue is what the characters say to each other, and Setting is where and when the story takes place, helping set the mood. These elements build the world and characters. On the other hand, **Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution** are the steps in the story's plot. They show how the story moves from the beginning (Exposition), builds tension (Rising Action), reaches the most exciting point (Climax), calms down (Falling Action), and ends with a solution (Resolution). So, the Three C's and Setting create the world, while the Exposition to Resolution shows how the story moves forward.

Element	Three C's, Setting, and Dialogue	5-Part Structure (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution)
Purpose	Establishes the world, characters, and conflict.	Guides the plot's progression from start to finish.
Focus	Focuses on the characters, setting, conflict, and how they interact.	Focuses on the sequence of events and the development of the plot.
Role	Builds the foundation and atmosphere of the story.	Provides a clear roadmap for how the story unfolds.
Elements Involved	Concept, Characters, Conflict, Dialogue, Setting	Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution.
Function	Creates the world and the emotional tone of the story.	Organizes the flow of events and resolves the main conflict.
When It Appears	Appears throughout the script to build the narrative.	Appears in the overall structure of the script to create a balanced plot.

As the story moves through the Exposition, Rising Action, and Falling Action, the plot builds towards its most intense moment—the Climax. This is where all the events, conflicts, and character decisions converge, and the main problem reaches its peak. The Climax is the turning point, where everything that has been building up throughout the script comes to a head, deciding the outcome of the story.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is storytelling an important part of human society?
2. How do stories help in transmitting cultural values and traditions?
3. How have storytelling methods evolved from oral traditions to the digital age?
4. What is the difference between a script and a story?
5. Can you explain what the Three C's (Concept, Characters, and Conflict) are in scriptwriting?
6. How does the concept of a script influence the story?

7. Why are characters considered the heart of a script?
8. How does conflict create excitement and drive the story forward in a script?
9. How does the setting contribute to the mood and emotional tone of a script?
10. What impact does dialogue have on shaping the characters and story in a script?
11. How does the 5-part structure (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution) guide the flow of a script from beginning to end?
12. What role does the Climax play in a script?

UNIT II

Mastering Script Writing - Genres: Romance, Drama, Comedy, Tragedy, Fantasy, Horror, Mystery, Genre-Defying

GENRE:

A genre is a category used to sort different types of literature, music, or other art forms based on their style, form, or content. It helps group similar works together, making it easier to understand and explore various kinds of art. In simple terms, genres are like labels that organise art into distinct types, so we can better appreciate and compare them.

ROMANCE

Romance is a type of story about love between two people. It shows how they meet, fall in love, and face problems in their relationship. The key components of a romance story are the growing love between the characters, the challenges they face, and how they overcome those problems. The characters may have conflicts or struggles that make their love hard, but in the end, they usually find happiness together. Romance stories often end with the couple staying together, showing that love can win over difficulties and bring people closer.

DRAMA

Drama is a genre that tells serious stories about real-life situations. It focuses on characters dealing with emotional or personal struggles, and the plot often includes conflicts that affect the characters' lives. Dramas show deep emotions and aim to make the audience feel something strong, like sadness, anger, or hope. The characters are usually realistic and face challenges that lead to change or growth. Some common themes in drama are overcoming flaws, seeking redemption, feeling like an outsider, dealing with the past, and making sacrifices for others. Dramas can also mix different types of conflict, like crime or historical events, to make the story more interesting.

COMEDY

Comedy is a type of story that makes people laugh. The main goal of a comedy is to entertain and make the audience happy. Comedies often have funny situations and silly characters. The dialogue

is usually clever and quick, making people laugh. In many comedies, there are love stories that create funny moments. Comedies usually end happily, with problems being solved and everyone feeling good. Some examples of comedy types are slapstick (where characters do funny, physical things), satire (which makes fun of serious topics), and romantic comedy (which is about funny love stories).

TRAGEDY

Tragedy is a genre where the main character faces difficult situations caused by their own mistakes or flaws. These stories focus on serious themes like fate, morality, and human suffering. The protagonist's actions often lead to their downfall, making the ending sad or tragic. Tragedy aims to make the audience feel emotions like pity and fear. The story usually ends with a major loss, such as death or failure, showing the consequences of the character's choices. Tragedies teach us about the struggles people face and the harsh realities of life.

FANTASY

Fantasy is a genre that involves magical elements, mythical creatures, and imaginary worlds. These stories take place in places where anything is possible, such as worlds with magic, dragons, or heroes with special powers. Fantasy stories often follow characters on grand adventures, where they fight evil or solve big problems. The genre is known for the battle between good and evil, with heroes often destined to save the world. Fantasy allows readers or viewers to escape the real world and experience the impossible, offering a sense of wonder and excitement.

HORROR

Horror is a type of story that makes people feel scared or anxious. It often includes ghosts, monsters, or other frightening creatures, but it can also involve terrifying situations or supernatural events. The story creates a spooky, dark, or eerie atmosphere that builds tension and fear. Sometimes, the horror comes from within the characters' minds, causing them to experience fear, paranoia, or confusion. Often, the characters are placed in isolated or dangerous places, such as haunted houses or deep forests, which makes them feel even more vulnerable. Horror stories can also explore the unknown, where people face things that they cannot explain. The goal of a horror story is to make people feel both scared and excited by creating suspense, fear, and unexpected moments. It keeps people on edge, making them wonder what will happen next, while offering a thrilling experience of fear.

MYSTERY/THRILLER

Mystery/Thriller is a story where there is a puzzle or crime that needs to be solved. The characters, like detectives, try to find out what happened, such as who committed a crime or how something mysterious occurred. The story is full of clues that help the characters solve the mystery, but

sometimes there are false clues to trick them. The audience stays excited and curious as they watch the characters try to figure out the answer. At the end of the story, the mystery is usually solved, and the truth is revealed.

GENRE-DEFYING

Genre-defying works mix different types of stories, like comedy, drama, or horror, to make something new and exciting. These stories don't follow the usual rules of one genre. Instead, they mix different styles and ideas to surprise the audience. Sometimes, a story might start like one genre but then change into something unexpected. This keeps the audience interested because they don't know what will happen next. By combining genres, these works offer new and creative ways to tell a story, making the experience fresh and different from what people usually see.

STORYTELLING TECHNIQUE: USE OF SOUND AND IMAGES TO TELL A STORY

In storytelling, sound and images work together to make the story more interesting and emotional. The sounds, like talking, music, or background noise, help the pictures and actions feel stronger. For example, if you hear footsteps in a quiet hall with dim lights, it can make you feel scared or nervous. On the other hand, happy music with bright, exciting scenes can make you feel joyful when a character wins. When sound and pictures work together, they help set the mood and guide how the audience feels, making the story more real and enjoyable.

MEDIA FORMATS: FEATURE FILM, DOCUMENTARY, SHORTS, RADIO SCRIPTS

Media Formats and Their Characteristics

Feature Films: Feature films are long movies that last between 90 to 180 minutes. They tell a complete story and use a clear plot, well-developed characters, and many film techniques to keep the audience interested. These films can be in different genres, like drama, comedy, action, or fantasy. They include music and sound effects to make the story more exciting and emotional. Feature films aim to entertain and create a strong connection with the viewers, making them feel involved in the world of the movie.

Documentary: Documentaries are films that show real-life events, people, or topics. They aim to educate and inform the audience about the world. Documentaries can be short or long. They often use interviews, real videos, and on-location footage to show facts. The main goal is to help people understand important topics, such as history, society, or the environment. Documentaries offer a deeper look into the world by presenting different points of view or explaining real-world issues.

Short Film: A short film is a movie that is less than 40 minutes long. It tells a complete story or explores a single idea in a short amount of time. These films focus on telling a strong, simple story with a big impact. They are less expensive to make than feature films and are often used by

filmmakers to try new ideas or show their style. Short films are a good way to share a message quickly, using visuals or emotions that make the audience think or feel deeply.

Radio Script: A radio script is written for radio shows, which use only sound. These scripts focus on dialogue, sound effects, and music to tell a story. The actors' voices show the emotions and actions of the characters. Since there are no visuals, sound effects create the mood and help the audience imagine what is happening. Radio scripts give notes for the sounds that should be used, helping guide the actors and production. The stories can be short news reports or long radio plays, all told through audio.

READING: READ THE SCRIPT OF AN AWARD WINNING FILM, DOCUMENTARY, OR RADIO DRAMA

Logline Creation: Techniques for Writing an Effective Logline

A logline is a short summary of a movie or script. It tells the main idea in one or two sentences. A good logline grabs attention and makes people want to know more about the story. It should mention the main character, what they want to achieve, the problem they face, and what's at risk. The logline should be clear, short, and interesting. It gives just enough information to make people curious but doesn't spoil the story. When writing a logline, focus on the heart of your story and what makes it special or exciting.

How to Write a Logline: 5 Simple Steps

a) **Main Character**: Start by naming the main character.
b) **Goal**: What does the character want to achieve?
c) **Conflict**: What problem or challenge does the character face?
d) **Stakes**: What's at risk if the character doesn't succeed?
e) **Keep It Short**: Write it in one or two sentences. Make it interesting!

QUESTIONS:

1. What are key elements of romance?
2. Write a dialogue between two characters in love.
3. What are the key elements of drama?
4. Write a dialogue where two characters express deep emotions in a drama.
5. What are the key elements of comedy?
6. Write a dialogue between two characters who are in a funny situation.
7. What are the key elements of tragedy?
8. Write a dialogue between two characters who have just lost their home in an earthquake.
9. What are the key elements of fantasy?
10. Write a dialogue where a hero asks a magical creature for help on their adventure.

11. What are the key elements of horror?
12. Write a dialogue between two characters trapped in a scary situation in a horror story.
13. What are the key elements of mystery/thriller?
14. Write a dialogue between a detective and a suspect in a mystery/thriller.
15. What does the term "genre-defying" mean in scriptwriting?
16. What do you understand by a feature film?
17. What do you understand by a documentary?
18. What do you understand by a short film?
19. What are the key components of a radio script?
20. How do sound and images enhance the effect of a script?
21. What is a logline?
22. Write the logline of the following film:

Aarti is a student in a small village. She loves to study, but her family is poor, and they cannot afford to send her to a good school. One day, a rich businessman comes to the village and announces that he is offering a scholarship for the best student to study in a big city. Aarti is excited but also worried because many students, including her best friend, are competing for the scholarship. Aarti studies hard every day, helping her mother at home and working on her studies whenever she can. On the day of the competition, Aarti is nervous but determined to do her best. In the end, Aarti wins the scholarship and moves to the city to study. She is happy but faces the challenge of adjusting to life away from her family.

23. Describe what is happening in this scene from a famous film screenplay:
    (As the train moves out of the station, Ginny chases after. Harry watches her from his· window until she drops back. King's Cross, and the life he's known, drift away. Harry sits quietly. Then the compartment door slides open. Ron stands there. Seeing Harry, he hesitates.)
    Ron: Mind? Everywhere else is full.
    Harry: Not at all.
    Ron: I'm Ron, by the way.
    Harry: I heard. I'm Harry.
    Ron: I… heard. Is. it true? I mean, have you really got the… you know…
    (Without prompting, Harry lifts his hair… Shows the scar.)

UNIT III

DRAFTING A PITCH TO SELL THE SCRIPT TO POTENTIAL PRODUCERS

A pitch is a short summary of your story that you share with others, usually to make them interested in your idea. It is like a quick advertisement for your script. A good pitch explains who the main character is, what problem they face, and why it's important to solve that problem. You also mention the type of story it is, like romance, comedy, or action. A pitch should be clear, exciting,

and to the point. It helps producers or readers decide if they want to learn more about your script or story idea.

When you want to sell your script, you need to pitch it to producers. A good pitch will make them excited to read your script. Here's what to include:

1. **Introduce Yourself and the Script**: Start by saying your name and the title of your script.

2. **Summarise the Story**: Describe the main idea of your story in 2 or 3 simple sentences.

3. **Describe the Main Character**: Tell the producer who the main character is and what they want to do.

4. **Mention the Conflict**: Explain what problem the character faces in the story.

5. **Why It is Special**: Finish by saying why your story is interesting or different from others.

Keep it simple and clear so the producer wants to know more. Make them excited to read your script!

QUESTIONS:

1. Based on the following prompt, write a dialogue between the two characters: **Prompt:** A person arrives at a new school and feels nervous about meeting new people. He/She sits alone in the cafeteria when someone unexpectedly invites him/her to join their table.
2. Based on the following prompt, write the description of the scene: **Prompt:** A character is sitting alone in a park at dusk, watching the sunset while thinking about the past.
3. **Identify four kinds of audio clues used in this scene:** It was early morning, and the birds were singing in the trees. The sound of a car engine started in the distance, getting louder as it came closer. Soon, the car passed by, and Sarah could hear the tires rolling over the road. As she walked down the street, the sound of children laughing came from a nearby park. The wind blew gently, making the leaves rustle in the trees. Everything felt peaceful, and Sarah smiled as she continued on her way.
4. You have prepared a script with a singer as your main character. What four visual clues will you use to make the audience understand that the character is a singer?
5. What are the key elements in preparing a script pitch for potential producers?
6. Write a short pitch for your script highlighting its unique features, to draw sponsors.