

Welcome to *Being a Screenwriter, Part 2: Writing Your Screenplay*

Being A Screenwriter, Part 2 is the second in a two-course series designed to teach students what it takes to create their own scripts from start to finish, from developing an idea, to writing it out, to pitching it to a studio. In these two courses, they will learn every step that professional screenwriters take to brainstorm, organize, and compose ideas, and play a few games along the way. This section of the course is devoted to writing the screenplay. It's divided into 10 exciting lessons that will lead students through the entire process of composing a movie script. When they're finished they will have their own professionally formatted screenplay ready to shoot a five-minute movie that they've dreamed up themselves.

To help illustrate the concepts we will learn in this class, students will view portions of the movie *Groundhog Day*. A DVD of the film is included in the kit for instructors to use during their classes. Instructors will need to obtain a DVD player and television.

In the first course of this series, *Being A Screenwriter, Part 1: Generating Ideas for a Screenplay*, students studied how the basic Hollywood movie script works. They learned how to successfully utilize the three-act-structure to tell a story and how each part of that structure works together to help the movie's protagonist (or hero) accomplish some sort of goal. They also learned about the importance of conflict, subplots, and complications, as well as the need to "show" rather than "tell." They brainstormed and organized their ideas, and when finished were able to walk away with both a logline (a succinct sentence that describes the overall story of a movie) and a treatment (a short summary of a movie).

This section of *Being A Screenwriter* will build on what was learned in *Part 1* as we turn now away from developing ideas to actual writing. While in *Part 1* a lot of time was spent brainstorming and throwing ideas around, this course will focus on refining those ideas. There will be less time spent deciding what to write about in *Part 2* than in *Part 1* as it is assumed that students at this point have either decided on an idea in *Part 1* or are well enough equipped to come up with one on their own based on what they learned in *Part 1*.

Important Notes on Student Journals, Loglines, and Treatments

Students who took *Being a Screenwriter, Part 1* left with three take-aways: Student Journals, Loglines, and

Treatments. The student journals were used throughout as a place where students gathered their thoughts however they worked best—jotting down notes, drawing pictures, pasting magazine clippings, etc. **Students are encouraged to bring the journals along to help them review the concepts they learned and ideas they came up with in *Part 1* and they are encouraged to continue working in them if new ideas strike them throughout the course of *Part 2*.** The loglines students developed will also be useful to them here in *Part 2*. Since most of the work in *Part 2* is focused on writing instead of developing, it will be helpful for students to come to class with a solid idea of where their screenplay is going. Their treatments will also be helpful on this front. They will be able to look back to the treatments as a blueprint of the movie they are going to write. Because so much was covered in *Part 1*, a student taking *Part 2* without having taken *Part 1* will be at a disadvantage. They will not only be without the same foundation as students who took *Part 1*, but they will not have the journal, loglines, and treatments that will be extremely helpful in *Part 2*. Students who have not taken *Part 1* are strongly encouraged to do the following at the beginning of the course:

- Find a notebook to use as their screenwriting journal.
- Develop a logline.
- Write a treatment.

About the Organization of This Course

The step-wise presentation of each lesson makes Community Learning materials and activities easy to follow for any instructor.

Each lesson in the **Instructor's Guide** contains the following helpful elements:

Objectives: what students can be expected to learn from this activity.

Materials List: clear identification of the materials required from the Course Kit (provided) for each lesson.

Preparation Notes (set-up): easy set-ups that ensure learner engagement is on task and on time.



Notes for the Instructor: a brief introduction to the subject matter and challenges presented in each lesson, often with real-life examples from history, popular culture, and of course movies.



Notes for the Students (including new vocabulary): introductory material for the students to read, discuss, watch or listen to in order to “set the stage” for each lesson.



Activity Descriptions: step-by-step procedures for the participants’ immersion in the activity.



Wrap-up: questions designed to summarize learning objectives, lead a discussion, and encourage journal entries.



Clean-up Notes: wrap-up and storage instructions for the most cost-effective use and preservation of materials.



Other Directions, Discussions and Destinations: helpful links to media, books, and Internet resources that extend lessons and help learners understand new concepts across disciplinary and cultural divides.

Student Activity Books (20 in each course kit) are companions to the Instructor’s Guide, and provide worksheets and supplemental information for learners’ knowledge. These are designed for students to keep, so they can add to and refer back to the information they learned in this course.

Course Kit Materials include materials needed to complete each activity outlined in the Instructor’s Guide.

A Note about Volunteers

Being a Screenwriter has a variety of responsibilities that can be shared with a volunteer, or other adult, willing to assist in the preparation and implementation of the lessons. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- organizing supplies
- assembling materials beforehand, cutting, labeling
- answering students’ questions
- helping students with individual writing tasks
- passing out and collecting materials

About the Author

Sarah Carson is a writer and filmmaker with a passion for helping young people learn to express themselves. For most of her life she has been making movies and telling stories from the heart—and encouraging her students to do the same. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Film Studies and a Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing with concentrations in screenwriting and poetry. She has taught creative writing and filmmaking workshops in summer camps, after-school programs, public schools, and a technical institute.

About the Community Learning Team

Community Learning’s mission is to provide thought provoking, hands-on and academically enriching learning experiences for elementary through high school students to be used after school, over the summer or during the school day. Our courses are developed by subject area experts and provide complete support for program administrators desiring a rich, engaging program for their participants.

Thematic integration is what makes Community Learning courses work—youngsters get extended engagement over several days or weeks that builds confidence, character and competency in a variety of subject areas. With an emphasis on fun, Community Learning’s courses work to ignite curiosity and stimulate authentic learning in contexts ranging from art to criminal investigation. Instructors provide guidance in every lesson—and are supported by step-by-step plans and easy-to-manage materials. Watch our website, www.CommLearning.com for more information about our forthcoming Course Kits!

We look forward to working with you and your staff to create a great program for children. If you would like to contact us with any questions or comments, please contact us at support@CommLearning.com.

Community Learning is partnered with you!

No one knows how to make these classroom tested activities work better than you do, and each group of students is likely to have a unique experience. We are eager to hear from you! Please take a moment to drop a note or email regarding your experience with this course. You can reach us at info@CommLearning.com.

