



Writing for the Screen

Hi there,

Thank you for registering for the Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series program, *Writing for the Screen*.

A little bit about us

If you're not familiar with us, we are [ACMI](#) – the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. We love the moving-image in all its forms, including film, animation, television, videogames, digital art and digital culture in general.

A little bit about the program

The *Writing for the Screen* program will focus on developing and writing stories for a short film or animation. In this program we will go through ideation, how to develop an idea into a story, how to script your story, and how to pitch your story.

You might already know that we will run two forty-five-minute videoconferences for this program, but we also have three 'lessons' for you to do in your own time – one before the first videoconference, one in between the two videoconferences, and one after.

These lessons will involve activities and information around developing an original story of yours into something that will work for the screen. We'll email you these lessons and resources soon.

A little bit about you (our guess anyway)

If you've registered for this program then chances are you love films, or animation, or storytelling, or all of these things.

You might be shy, an extrovert, or somewhere in between. You might love telling stories verbally, or prefer to write them down, or you might like to just imagine them in your head.

The main thing is we want you to be willing to use your imagination, draw upon your ideas, and be ready to try out some of the tools we suggest to turn those ideas into a story fit for the screen.



What can you do between now and the first lesson?

We'll send you a link to your detailed lesson pages soon, but if you can't wait until then and you're dying to get started, here are some things to get you into the right head space for *Writing for the Screen*.

We encourage you to watch, read, and write a little bit before we get started.

1) Watch some short films and animations

Get inspired and watch short movies and animations. We love shorts (as in short films, not abbreviated pants) but the reality is, people probably watch more feature-length films (usually around the 90 minute mark) than they do short films. Short films range in duration but most are in the 5-15 minute range. This means they are told a little bit differently to longer films, so watching shorts is a great way to get a feel for how they are similar and different to regular length movies.

On the following page, is a **recommended viewing** list of some short live-action and animated films that we think will inspire you.

2) Keep an ideas bank

Story ideas rarely come to us fully formed, most are like seeds that grow over time the more we think about them. Sometimes we leave ideas or get stuck with them and return to them later when we have fresh ideas. Some get stuck in our brains and we think about them for days or weeks on end.

Either way, jot your ideas down and keep them handy in a notepad or a word document. As the idea develops, or you think of a character, or a moment, or an entire scene - add notes to your idea bank. These 'notes' could be sentences, single words, illustrations, questions, whatever!

Do what works for you but get them out of your head so you don't lose them.

3) Read a film script

You might already know this, but film scripts look different to novels. Even if you don't know a lot about these differences you can still read film scripts. You'll pick up on the ways they are different and similar to books by reading scripts, and you can also check out our quite silly [introduction to Screenwriting](#).

Short film scripts are harder to find, but there are lots of feature length film scripts you can view online. You can find one to read yourself and read it online for free on [The Internet Movie Script Database](#).

Don't feel you need to read the entire script (unless you get hooked and simply have to finish it), we just want you to see what a script looks like and get a feel for how they're written.

That's it for now and see you soon!

We'll be in touch soon with more details about the lessons and videoconferences. Don't forget you can contact us if you have more questions. Email us at education@acmi.net.au if it's about your registration, but our special contact email for this program is writingforscreen@acmi.net.au.

You can get in touch with us any time with questions about the program and to share your work or ideas with us.

Good luck. We can't wait to meet you!

Recommended viewing

***Kobold* (2019) directed by Jasper Margaritas**

Ida is given the chance to move out into her grandparent's old and uninhabited house in the countryside. She accepts and drives off to move in. Yet little does Ida know that this seemingly empty and overgrown house is hiding something cheeky and disruptive that does not do well with new roommates.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

***Daisy's Pickle* (2017) directed by Frankie Hopkins**

Daisy's Pickle explores the complexity of changing relationships as people mature, and the power of imagination. The film follows Daisy, a young girl who takes extreme measures to be with her brother after she finds out he is moving school.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

***Marry-Me* (2008) directed by Michelle Lehman**

Little girl likes little boy. Little boy likes BMX bike. Something has to give.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

***Rebooted* (2020) director Michael Shanks**

It's not easy for a movie-star to age - especially when you're a stop motion animated skeleton monster. Phil, once a terrifying villain of the silver-screen, struggles to find work in modern Hollywood due to being an out-of-date special effect.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

***Two Piece* (2018) director Greta Nash**

Ava is on the way to the beach with her mum Kelly and little brother Wally, but before they go she needs to find a new swimsuit. At the age of 13, this task is nowhere near as simple as it sounds.

[Watch on Vimeo](#)

***Shakespeare in Tokyo* (2018) director Genevieve Clay-Smith**

Ben, an artist with Down Syndrome seeks to help people see all the beauty of Tokyo. Giving up on his busy brother, he starts exploring Tokyo by himself. With his knowledge of Shakespeare, improvisational illustration skills and talented humor, he catches people's hearts.

[Watch on YouTube](#)